SJFCC Suicide Prevention and Postvention Policy

Approved : June 2026
Review Date: June 2027
Adopted: September 2026

Contents

1. Statement of purpose

2.Our beliefs about suicide and contributory factors

3. How we maintain an active Person-Centred Suicide Prevention and Intervention policy

4. How we ensure a sensitive and safe Suicide Postvention provision

5. Ongoing support and development of our policy and practice

Appendix 1 - Use of language around suicide

Appendix 2 - Suicide intervention – how to listen to a disclosure

Appendix 3 – Recommendations from Papyrus

Appendix 4 - Training Opportunities

1. Statement of purpose

a) Our school community recognises that suicide is the leading cause of death in young people and that we play a vital role in helping to prevent young suicide.

b) We want to make sure that learners at our school are as suicide-safe as possible. This includes our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be a Suicide-Safer school.

2. Our beliefs about suicide and contributory factors

a) Suicidal thoughts are common.

We acknowledge that thoughts of suicide occur frequently among young people.

b) Suicide is complex

Every suicide is a tragedy. Multiple, often very personal factors contribute, and we believe that there are lessons that may be learned from each death that may help prevent future deaths.

c) Stigma inhibits learning – stigma can kill

We recognise that the stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be both a barrier to seeking help and a barrier to offering help. Our school is dedicated to tackling suicide stigma. In our language and in our working relationships, we will promote open, sensitive talk that does not stigmatise and perpetuate taboos.

d) Suicide is everyone's business

As a school community, we recognise that learners may seek out someone who they trust with their concerns and worries. We want to facilitate the reporting of any risks or concerns.

e) Safety is very important

We want to support our learners, sometimes working in partnership with family, caregivers, external agencies, and other professionals where this may enhance suicide-safety.

f) Suicide is a difficult thing to talk about

We know that a learner who is suicidal may find it very difficult to make their feelings known and speak openly about suicide. We will provide trained adults who are able to identify when a learner may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

g) Talking about suicide does not create or increase risk

3. How we help ensure an active person-centred suicide prevention and intervention policy

a) Our school safeguarding team, supported through suicide intervention training, will be the point of escalation for any concerns about a learner with concerns around suicide. The safeguarding team will keep confidential records of learners at risk of suicide. All such concerns will be logged on CPOMS.

b) We endeavour to ensure that all our staff are suicide aware. This means that staff CPD will include suicide awareness, ie. how to spot signs, what to do and how to escalate any concerns to the Suicide Intervention Team via logging on CPOMS.

c) We ensure that all learners are suicide aware. This means that we will ensure there is an annual programme of awareness-raising events (Mental Health Awareness Campaigns and weekly signposting to Papyrus) This signposting will help to equip our learners to know how to spot signs, what to do and how to escalate any concerns to the safeguarding team or preferred sources of help.

d) We are clear about how we enhance the physical safety of our environment including the removal of sharp objects, restricting access to places which facilitate jumping, and securely storing harmful substances in line with our school's health and safety policy.

e) We recognise that learners may experience periods of poor mental health while attending our school.

All staff are trained to report any safeguarding concerns, including concerns around self-harm and suicide ideation through CPOMS. Learners that are flagged in this way will be reviewed regularly and routinely by the safeguarding team so that patterns of concerning behaviour can be spotted and the necessary steps can be put in place to keep them safe – offering support from our Fisher Wellbeing Provision.

f) When we identify a learner is at risk of suicide and engage external services, we will have explicit guidelines developed in co-operation with the external services, and will be reviewed regularly as the provision of such services change over time. A safety plan will be created to help keep the learner safe within school.

g) We recognise that some learners may relocate to our school community when they join us but that they can struggle to attend school. We will look at ways we can help make the wellbeing support they need consistent so that the learner has a continuity of care.

h) We signpost all learners weekly in our formation time messages to our 'Local Support Offer'. This informs and equips learners about help that is available locally and nationally to support someone who is experiencing poor mental health and emotional wellbeing.

4. How we help ensure a sensitive and safe suicide postvention provision

a) Our school has a safeguarding team whose role it is to respond in the event of a suicide. Each member of our safeguarding team will have a defined responsibility

within our plan including leadership, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media. This is outlined in the school's Postvention protocol.

b) We are clear about how we deal with an inquest after someone has died including by suicide in our school community. We will support the authorities in their work but will be mindful of the distress an inquest causes to the bereaved people. We will also be mindful of the impact supporting an inquest can have on staff.

c) We record and monitor deaths by suicide and the impact on the community. This will include on-going monitoring of pupil deaths including suicides, suspected suicide and self-harm. CPOMS is the school's safeguarding recording platform.

5. Ongoing support and development of our policy and practice

a) Our Leadership Team will ensure that ongoing reviews take place, that processes are updated in line with best practice and that on-going training is undertaken when necessary.

b) We will refresh and update our signposting formation time message on an annual basis and we will share it across our community as part of our regular suicide awareness raising campaigns.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Use of language around suicide

UNHELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

'Commit suicide' In England and Wales, suicide hasn't been a crime since 1961. Using the word 'commit' suggests that it is still a crime (we 'commit' crimes), which perpetuates stigma or the sense that it is a 'sin'. Stigma shuts people up – pupils will be less likely to talk about their thoughts of suicide if they feel judged. 'Successful suicide' Talking about suicide in terms of success is not helpful. If anyone dies by suicide it cannot ever be a success. We don't talk about any other death in terms of success: we would never talk about a 'successful heart attack'.

HELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

You could say: 'Ended their life' 'Killed themselves' 'Took their own life' 'Died by suicide Suicided'

UNHELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

'Unsuccessful or failed suicide.' Young people who have attempted suicide often say, "I couldn't even do that right." Any attempt at suicide is serious. Young people should not feel further burdened by whether their attempt was a 'failure', as this may reinforce feelings of failure in other areas of their life.

'It's not that serious.' All suicide attempts must be taken seriously as there is a serious risk to life. An attempt tells us that they are in so much pain they no longer want to live.

'Attention seeking.' This phrase assumes that a learner's behaviour is not serious, and that they are being dramatic to gain attention from others. However, suicidal thoughts are serious. Young people who attempt suicide need attention, support, understanding and help.

'It was just a cry for help' This dismissive phrase belittles someone's need for help. They may feel they are not being taken seriously, which can be dangerous.

HELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

You could say: 'Attempted suicide' 'Attempted to take their life' 'Engaged in suicide behaviours' 'Acted on thoughts of suicide.'

UNHELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN ASKING ABOUT SUICIDE

'You're not thinking of doing something stupid/silly are you?' This judgemental language suggests that the person's thoughts of suicide are stupid or silly, and furthermore, that the pupil is stupid or silly. When faced with this question, most will deny their thoughts of suicide, for fear of being viewed negatively. This is dangerous.

Appendix 2

Suicide Intervention

Often the term 'Intervention' is used to refer to the effort to prevent a person from attempting to take their own life. Members of our safeguarding team are trained in suicide intervention and are equipped to deal safely and sensitively with a young person who is experiencing thoughts of suicide. Any concerns about a young person should therefore be reported to someone from the safeguarding team in person and recorded on CPOMS.

As a member of staff, what do I do when I have a concern about a learner?

If you have concerns about a learner, record and report via CPOMS and with a member of the safeguarding team.

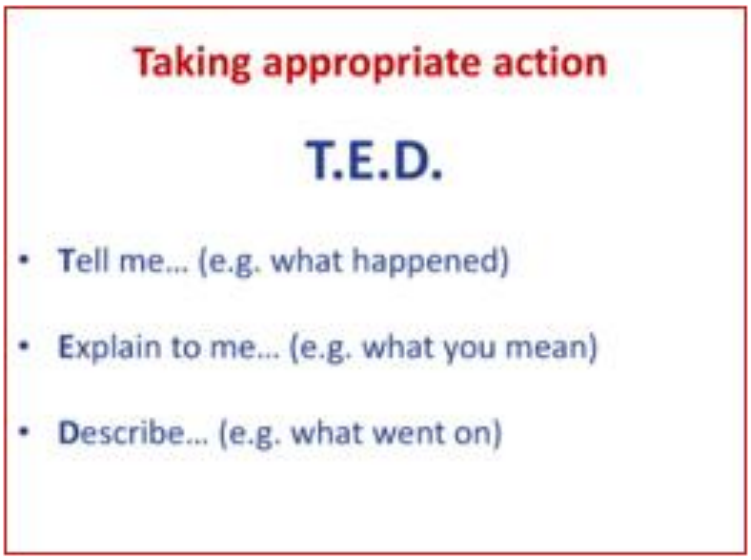
How will I know if a learner is suicidal?

Someone having thoughts of suicide will usually communicate this in ways that could seem more or less obvious. Few young people feel that they can be open about suicidal thinking or tell someone when they are struggling with their emotional health and wellbeing. But suicidal thoughts don't have to end in suicide. It is impossible to provide a definitive checklist of things to look out for to help you to identify a learner who is thinking about suicide because every young person is different. The only way to check whether your intuition is correct is to ask the young person directly and clearly about suicide. This is the appropriate point to make a referral to a trained member of staff from the safeguarding team.

How to listen to a disclosure

If a learner chooses to speak to you, listen carefully.

Use the TED acronym as your approach to listening to a child speak about a difficult issue. Reassure them that you will listen to them. Let them know that you may have to share with other people to help keep them safe.



Thank the learner for sharing this difficult information. You will need to ask particular questions in order to assess the risk they are facing.

1. Have you ever attempted to hurt yourself or take your life?
2. Have you ever thought about hurting yourself?
3. Have you ever thought about how you may hurt yourself or take your life?
4. How likely do you think it is that you will act on these thoughts about hurting yourself today or later today, or over the next few days?
5. Is there anything that would help prevent you from harming yourself?

A member of the safeguarding team should be spoken to face to face following such a disclosure as soon as possible. This is in addition to making a record through CPOMS.

I know that a learner is having thoughts of suicide – what do I do?

This can be a challenging space staff may feel ill-equipped here. If a learner reports that they are thinking about suicide during a class, staff should respond in a calm and sensitive way. Don't dismiss what the learner is saying. They are asking for help, and as staff, it our duty of care to respond. Staff may feel unprepared for the disclosure, but a calm and sensitive response will allow learners in the class know that they can talk about suicide openly and non-judgementally with staff. Staff need to refer to the safeguarding team.

I know that a learner has self-harmed but how do I know whether it is suicide-related?

Self-harm is often a precursor to suicide but not always. Those who engage in self-harm do not all go on to take their own life. Those who die by suicide do not always have a history of self-harm. Self-harm is often a symptom of underlying emotional distress. Follow the school's safeguarding policy and report concerns to the safeguarding team and record on CPOMS.

I know that a learner has attempted suicide – what do I do?

If you determine that a learner has acted in a way that puts their life in danger, act quickly to keep the learner safe and ensure that there is no imminent risk. Report, in person, to the DSL or member of the safeguarding team as a matter of urgency. Do not leave the learner alone. It is very important that medical professionals who take over the care of the person at risk know about the suicidal history and any risks. Our school's safeguarding team have explicit guidelines on what to do, whom to inform and the pathways that apply.

It is important that the learner does not feel judged or shamed for acting on their thoughts of suicide.

Postvention for individuals

WORKING WITH A YOUNG PERSON WHO HAS ENGAGED IN SUICIDAL BEHAVIOUR

How do I support a learner back to school or college after a suicide attempt? Before the learner who attempted to take their own life returns to school, members of staff will meet with them and their parents or guardians. During the meeting staff will explore what support is currently in place in school, and also discuss what further support the school can provide. The learner who attempted to take their life may not be currently suicidal, however suicide may still be an option for them, or become an option again in the future. It is therefore important that a Safety Plan: a plan created with support that details how we can support keeping learners safe within school. It is essential that the plan is created together with the learner – with them at its centre. The plan must be something that they feel they are able to agree to.

A good **Safety Plan** always includes the following:

• Helpline numbers that are available and appropriate – including 24-hour helplines.

• Safety contacts: People and organisations that the learner can contact when they feel they can't keep themselves safe, including a safety contact for when they are at school or college.

The Safety Plan will be shared confidentially with the relevant staff and teachers of the learner.

We will arrange for regular 'check-ins' with the learner once they have returned to school to see how they are doing and to check the plan is working to make them safe.

A Safety Plan is a live document and may change over time. A Safety Plan might also include professional support from a counsellor or therapist during school time and we will accommodate this within their timetable.

Appendix 3

Training Recommendations from Papyrus https://www.papyrus-uk.org/active-training/

- General suicide awareness sessions for all staff.
- Suicide interventions skills for SLT, Pastoral staff who are likely to have to support individuals on a regular basis because of the role they have in the school.
- Papyrus recommends a two-yearly cycle of suicide prevention training to capture new staff and update existing staff. Papyrus therefore recommends that some key staff are trained to set up, manage and maintain the Suicide-Safer community.

SP-ARK - Suicide Prevention Awareness, Resources, Knowledge

An introduction to Suicide Prevention. The key objectives are:

- To raise awareness of Suicide and Suicide Prevention
- To promote PAPYRUS - what we do, how you can help and how we can help you
- To develop HOPE for a suicide safer community
- To understand the importance of self-care

Delivery time is 30 minutes

Cost: FREE