**Suicide Prevention Statement for Schools**

**of Cheshire East**

**Guidance**

**OCTOBER 2019**

**Gainsborough Primary and Nursery School**



**Last Updated: March 2022**

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**Rationale**

Suicide is preventable yet in England 13 people kill themselves every day; one person every 90 minutes in the UK. In 2015 in Cheshire & Merseyside 17 children and young people aged 10-19 years died by suicide. In 2017 Papyrus commissioned research amongst teaching professionals; amid other barriers they found that 15% said they would not know what steps to follow when faced with a student suffering with thoughts of suicide as their school did not have a suicide prevention policy or guidance.

The Local Authority Directors of Public Health in Cheshire and Merseyside, alongside Public Health England and NHS England, have chosen Suicide Prevention as a key priority for collective action across the region. Suicide is a major social and public health issue. It is a cause of avoidable premature mortality in the community, and is seen as an indicator of underlying rates of mental ill-health.

**Project Team**

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**Endorsements**

**Acting Director of Public Health at Cheshire East Council Dr Matt Tyrer:** “Working together to support and protect our children and young people is key to preventing suicide. School is where children and young people spend a huge amount of their time as they grow and develop and so is one of the most important places to identify those who are at risk and work with them to prevent suicide. I am pleased to endorse this guidance which will help Cheshire East schools to support and improve the mental health and wellbeing of our children and young people.”

**Suicide Prevention Statement for Schools in East Cheshire**

Preventing suicides in children and young people and improving their mental health and wellbeing is a Government priority.

**Gainsborough Primary and Nursery School**is committed to complying with both the national [Suicide prevention strategy for England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england) and the regional [No-More-strategy-2017-final-1.pdf](https://no-more.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/No-More-strategy-2017-final-1.pdf)

The purpose of this document is to outline the school’s position in making sure children and young people at our school are as suicide-safe as possible.

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7. **Introduction**
	1. As a mentally healthy school we recognise suicide is everybody’s business. We believe that awareness of suicidal thoughts and getting more people talking about their mental health and wellbeing is crucial if we are to do our part in changing society’s attitudes and effectively reducing the number of suicides.
	2. The suicide rate in England for children and young people between the ages of 10-29 has remained relatively stable since 2005; however the rate for children and young people between the ages of 15-19 has risen between 2013 and 2017, with the majority of this increase being in females. Although relatively rare, the number of suicides amongst children and young people remains a concern. The risk factors for suicide experienced by children and young people are wide ranging and often complex, however common themes include academic pressures, bereavement, bullying, alcohol or drug misuse and childhood abuse.
	3. We want our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, pupils themselves and other key stakeholders to know that we play a vital role in helping to prevent young suicide, through an increasing focus on preventative activity to improve mental health and wellbeing in the whole school setting, as emphasised in the [Suicide prevention: fourth annual report - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-fourth-annual-report), which was published in January 2019.

**2.0 Our Beliefs about Suicide and its Antecedents**

2.1. We believe every suicide is a tragedy. There are a number of contributory factors surrounding a suicide and the reasons are often complex and individual to that person. However, we believe that there are lessons that may be learned from each death that may prevent future deaths.

2.2. This school is committed to tackling suicide stigma. We recognise that the stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be both a barrier to help seeking and a barrier to offering help. In our language and in our working relationships, we will promote open, sensitive talk that does not stigmatise and perpetuate taboos. This will include avoiding the use of language which perpetuates unhelpful notions that suicide is criminal, sinful or selfish. We know that unhelpful myths and misconceptions surrounding suicide can inhibit young people in seeking and finding appropriate help when it is most needed.

2.3. As a school community, we recognise that pupils may seek out someone whom they trust with their concerns and worries. This school wants to work with our pupils who may be thinking about suicide, or acting on their thoughts of suicide. We want to support them, sometimes working in partnership with family, caregivers and other professionals, where this may enhance suicide safety in line with the [Information sharing and suicide prevention: consensus statement - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consensus-statement-for-information-sharing-and-suicide-prevention/information-sharing-and-suicide-prevention-consensus-statement).

2.4. We will provide our pupils with opportunities to speak openly about their worries with people who are ready, willing and able to support them. We want to make it possible for children and young people, and those who support them at this school/college, to do so safely. This will be in a way that leads to support and help where this is needed. We will do all we can to refrain from acting in a way that stops a pupil seeking the help they need when they are struggling with thoughts of suicide.

**3.0 School Responsibilities and Principles**

3.1. We will have a clear picture of who has received general suicide awareness education and commit to this being refreshed periodically (at least every three years – delivered by Public Health). We will identify a team of people who are trained in Suicide Prevention. This team will be drawn from across the whole school community, not just from one department.

3.2. Trained staff will have the awareness to help identify high risk signs or behaviours (e.g. self-harm, substance misuse) amongst our pupils and will also be able to signpost students and parents to relevant sources of information and support.

3.3 We know that children who are persistently bullied are more likely to suffer from poor mental health. Therefore, we are committed to preventing bullying and where bullying occurs and is reported within our school, we shall act swiftly and effectively to deal with such incidents in line with our anti-bullying/behaviour policies.

3.4. Over half of young people who die by suicide have a history of self-harm. This school will continue to refer and promote the self-harm pathway produced, by the Emotionally Healthy Schools Team, to help support our staff to care for those children who self-harm.

3.5. Clear referral routes to specialist mental health services will be familiar to staff. Please refer to the Cheshire East Emotional Resilience Wellbeing and Mental Health model policy (6.4 in the appendix).

3.6. A co-ordinated school response will be implemented to those at risk, with protocols on how to respond effectively and sensitively. This will include providing support to children and young people whose lives are impacted by the death of someone close by suicide, as exposure increases risk.

3.7. Our governors and leadership team will be clear about how we will respond in the tragic event of a suicide. Each member of our named response team will have a defined responsibility within our plan including leadership, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media. The Cheshire East Critical Incident team is able to support schools in their setting up of such a team and, if a tragic incident should occur, offer immediate practical and emotional support.

3.8. Recent research on ‘copycat’ suicides and suicide ‘contagion’ suggest that, in young people especially, exposure to suicide can lead to increased risk of suicidal thoughts. Therefore, should tragic circumstances arise, we will work closely with the Step by Step service, run by Samaritans, in order to support our school community and reduce the risk of further suicide.

**4.0 Ongoing Support and Development of our Guidance and Practice**

4.1. Our Governors and Leadership Team will keep our practice up to date by maintaining contact with best practice and on-going training.

4.2. This guidance will be reviewed every three years.

**5.0 Guidance Drivers**

5.1. This guidance demonstrates the school’s commitment to suicide prevention; it should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies and the following national legislation:

5.2. Suicide prevention: developing a local action plan [Suicide prevention: developing a local action plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-developing-a-local-action-plan)

5.3. Preventing suicide: lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans young people Preventing suicide: lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans young people - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)13 March 2015 Guidance

5.4. Suicide prevention: identifying and responding to suicide clusters [Suicide prevention: identifying and responding to suicide clusters - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-identifying-and-responding-to-suicide-clusters) 10 September 2015 Guidance

5.5. Suicide prevention: suicides in public places [Suicide prevention: suicides in public places - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-suicides-in-public-places) December 2015 Guidance

5.6. Support after a suicide: a guide to providing local services [Support after a suicide: a guide to providing local services - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/support-after-a-suicide-a-guide-to-providing-local-services) 9 January 2017 Guidance

5.7. Suicide prevention strategy for England [Suicide prevention strategy for England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england)10 September 2012 Policy paper

5.8. Suicide prevention: Fourth annual report [Suicide prevention: fourth annual report - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-fourth-annual-report) 9 January 2019 Policy paper

1. **Appendix**
	1. [Suicide Prevention - elearning for healthcare (e-lfh.org.uk)](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/suicide-prevention/)
	2. [Find the ZSA Zero Suicide Alliance training](https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training)
	3. [Stay Alive App - Grassroots Suicide Prevention (prevent-suicide.org.uk)](https://www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/find-help-now/stay-alive-app/#:~:text=Stay%20Alive%20App%20-%20Grassroots%20Suicide%20Prevention%20The,about%20someone%20else%20who%20may%20be%20considering%20suicide.)
	4. Self Harm Pathway: [Poster CWP CEC\_Portrait (mymind.org.uk)](https://www.mymind.org.uk/media/1618/self-harm-pathway-cwp-ehs-council-east-2020-formatted.pdf)
	5. [Creating response plan | Communicating about suicide in schools | Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/step-step/step-step-resources/creating-response-plan/)
	6. [Step by Step | Samaritans](https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/step-step/)
	7. [Get help now. Free and confidential,for as long as you need it. (amparo.org.uk)](https://amparo.org.uk/)
	8. [Resources-Child-friendly-Safety-Plan.pdf (papyrus-uk.org)](https://www.papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Resources-Child-friendly-Safety-Plan.pdf)
	9. [Critical Incidents Team | Chess Hub](https://www.chesshub.co.uk/Page/17370)
	10. [R;pple Suicide Prevention (ripplesuicideprevention.com)](https://www.ripplesuicideprevention.com/)
	11. [Free, 24/7 mental health text support in the UK | Shout 85258 (giveusashout.org)](https://giveusashout.org/)
	12. [Home - Kooth](https://www.kooth.com/)
	13. [Safety Plan - No More Suicides (no-more.co.uk)](https://no-more.co.uk/safety-plan/)