



# Suicide Prevention Policy

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| <b>Date Agreed by the Governing Body</b>                    | June 2026 |
| <b>Date to be reviewed</b>                                  | June 2029 |
| <b>Date of last review</b>                                  | June 2023 |
| <b>Governors Committee accountable for review</b>           | Education |
| <b>Senior Leadership Team member accountable for review</b> | DPD       |

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## 1. Statement of Intent & Ethos

The Royal Grammar School recognises that suicide is a leading cause of death in young people. We hold an ethical and professional responsibility to provide a proactive "suicide-safer" environment. We acknowledge that suicidal ideation is often a response to overwhelming distress and that timely, compassionate intervention can save lives.

This policy aims to:

- Create a culture of openness where mental health is discussed without stigma.
- Provide staff with clear, step-by-step instructions for responding to students in distress.
- Manage the aftermath of an attempt or tragedy (postvention) to support the community and prevent contagion.

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

To ensure clarity during high-pressure situations, the following roles are defined:

- Overall lead for suicide intervention and liaison with external clinical services (CAMHS).
- Responsible for the preventative curriculum and staff training.
- Responsible for ensuring the school meets its "duty of care" and reviewing the impact of the policy.
- Responsible for identifying "invitations" for help (signs of distress) and following the referral pathway. **Staff must never promise total confidentiality in cases of self-harm or suicide risk.**

## 3. Prevention: Building a Suicide-Safer Culture

Prevention is integrated into the school's daily life through:

- Using the PSHE framework to teach emotional regulation and help-seeking strategies.
- Using clinically sensitive language. We avoid the term "committed suicide" (which implies a crime) and instead use **"died by suicide."**
- Periodic "Gatekeeper" training for staff to recognise warning signs (e.g., withdrawal, talk of hopelessness, giving away possessions).

## 4. Intervention: Immediate Risk Protocol

If a member of staff becomes aware that a student is at risk of suicide, they must immediately refer to a DSL or HOY who will follow the **ACT** model:

### Step 1: Ask

Ask the student directly and calmly: *"Are you thinking about suicide?"* Research shows that

asking does not "plant the idea" but provides a vital outlet.

### **Step 2: Care**

Listen without judgement. Do not minimize their feelings. Reassure them that help is available.

### **Step 3: Tell**

**Never leave a student at immediate risk alone.**

- If the student has already taken action or has a plan/means ready, call **999** immediately and alert the DSL.
- Escort the student to the DSL or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

## **5. Risk Assessment and Safety Planning**

Once a concern is raised, the DSL/Mental Health Lead will:

1. Use a standardised tool to determine the level of intent and access to means.
2. Contact parents/carers immediately, unless doing so increases the risk to the child (as per KCSIE guidelines).
3. Create a written "Safety Plan" with the student. This includes identifying triggers, listing coping strategies, and providing 24/7 crisis numbers (e.g., Shout 85258, Papyrus HOPELINE247).
4. Make an immediate referral to CAMHS or the local Mental Health Crisis Team.

## **6. Postvention: Responding to a Suicide**

In the event of a death by suicide within the school community, the **Crisis Response Plan** (Appendix 1) will be triggered. Key priorities include:

- Confirming facts before communicating.
- Identifying "at-risk" peers (close friends, those with existing mental health issues) for immediate support.
- Distributing a factual, brief statement to parents to prevent rumors.
- Following best-practice guidelines to avoid "glamorising" the death while allowing for healthy grieving.

## **7. Staff Wellbeing**

Supporting a suicidal student is emotionally taxing. The school provides:

- Mandatory clinical debriefing for staff involved in high-risk incidents.
- Access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or school counseling services.

## 8. Staff Links to other policies

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Relationship and Sex Education Policy
- Counselling Policy
- Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

## Appendix 1: Immediate Crisis Contact List

- **Local CAMHS SPA:** 01865 901951
- **Local Police/A&E:** 999
- **Papyrus (HOPELINE247):** Call 0800 068 4141 or Text 07860 039967
- **Shout:** Text 'SHOUT' to 85258
- **Samaritans:** 116 123