



Statement of Purpose

The Royal Grammar School is aware that suicide is one of the leading causes of death in young people. When someone takes their own life, the effect on their family and friends is devastating. Many others involved in providing support and care will feel the impact. A suicide in a school community is also devastating and often a time of great sadness and confusion for staff, students and families and as a school, we have an ethical responsibility to take a proactive approach to prevent young suicide.

The purpose of this policy is to protect the health and well-being of all young people in the Royal Grammar School by having procedures in place to prevent, assess the risk of, intervene in, and respond to suicide. The Royal Grammar School recognises that physical, behavioural, and emotional health is an integral component of a student's educational outcomes. The Royal Grammar School therefore acknowledges its role in ensuring a school ethos and environment that is sensitive to individual and societal factors that place young people at greater risk of suicide and one which helps to foster positive youth development.

To this end, this policy should be read alongside other policies, which support the emotional and behavioural health of students more broadly. These policies include:

- *Child Protection Policy*
- *Behaviour Policy*
- *Anti-Bullying Policy*
- *Relationship and Sex Education Policy*
- *Counselling Policy*

Specifically, this policy is meant to be applied in accordance with the Government's suicide prevention strategy. ¹

Our Beliefs about Suicide and its Antecedents

The Royal Grammar School acknowledges that suicidal thoughts are common among young people and while each suicide is a tragedy, it is also complex with

¹ HM Government 2012: Suicide Prevention Strategy for England
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/suicide-prevention-strategy-for-england>

varying contributing factors that are individual to that person. Lessons can be learned from each death that may prevent future deaths via suicide.

We recognise that the stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be both a barrier to help seeking and a barrier to offering help. This school is committed 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. 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. Here at the Royal Grammar School, we recognise that students may seek out someone whom they trust with their concerns and worries. We want to play our part in supporting any student who may have thoughts of suicide.

We know that students who are having thoughts of suicide may or may not also be behaving in a way that puts their life in danger (suicide behaviours). School students experiencing suicidal thoughts are potentially at risk of acting on these thoughts. Those who are already engaging in suicide behaviours are also clearly at risk of death or harm. This school will work with our students who may be thinking about suicide or acting on their thoughts of suicide. Students who are self-harming are intentionally damaging or injuring their body. It is usually a way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. Self-harm is different to suicide behaviour as there is usually no wish to die. At the Royal Grammar School, we want to support students who are having thoughts of suicide, those who are engaging in suicide behaviours and those who are self-harming, sometimes working in partnership with family, caregivers and other professionals where this may enhance support for the student and suicide safety.

At the Royal Grammar School, we believe that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and everyone can play a role in preventing suicides. When a young person is in distress, we cannot know whom they might tell. It is therefore important that all staff are alert to different or worrying behaviours and report these to the DSLs as they would report any other welfare or safeguarding concern.

We know that a young person who is suicidal may find it very difficult to make their feelings known and speak openly about suicide. We will equip a team of staff, led by the Assistant Head for Student Development, with the skills, through training, to identify when a student may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. These members of staff will be trained to be alert and provide a safe response to any pupil struggling with thoughts of suicide. We will provide our students with opportunities to speak openly about their worries with staff who are ready, willing and able to support them. At the Royal Grammar School, we want to make it possible for our students, and those who support them, to do so safely. This will be in a way that leads to support and help where this is needed. We will take all appropriate measures to

ensure there is adequate support available to enable any student seeking help to know who to approach and talk to when they are struggling with thoughts of suicide.

Our Team and its Responsibilities

Our governors and Senior Leadership Team will be clear about how we will respond in the event of a suicide. Each member of our named response team (Table 1 - Appendix 1) will have a defined responsibility within our plan including leadership, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media.

At the Royal Grammar School, we have identified a team of people who are trained in suicide awareness and prevention training and commit to this being refreshed periodically. The team includes the Assistant Head for Student Development, the Student Development Assistant, Deputy DSLs, Matron and the school counsellors.

We have procedures in place (Appendix 2) for how staff should work together where thoughts of suicide or suicide behaviours are expressed by a student or reported by others. We will manage the sharing of information in a way that enhances safety.

Ongoing Support and Development of Policy and Practice

Our Governors and Senior Leadership Team will keep our practice up to date by maintaining awareness of best practice in accordance with e.g. government strategy. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

Appendix 1

Table 1 – Example table showing roles and responsibilities of a school suicide response team

<i>Team member</i>	<i>Role</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
<i>Headmaster</i>	<i>Team lead</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Communication with Senior Leadership team</i> - <i>Oversight for all actions of the response team</i> - <i>Assign all roles and responsibilities</i>
<i>AH Student Development</i>	<i>Operations (postvention support)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Identify vulnerable students</i> - <i>Coordinate crisis counselling</i> - <i>Coordinate other external support</i>

		<i>(Liaison with Educational Psychology Service, Education Safeguarding Advisory Service, Samaritans, CAMHS etc.)</i>
<i>Deputy Headmaster</i>	<i>School liaison</i>	<i>- Notifying students and - Staff</i>
<i>Deputy Headmaster</i>	<i>Family/community liaison</i>	<i>- Liaison with family - Police/coroner</i>
<i>Deputy Headmaster</i>	<i>Funeral</i>	<i>- Responsible for coordinating school representation</i>
<i>Headmaster</i>	<i>External Communications</i>	<i>- Parents - Media - Social media</i>

Appendix 2

Potential school procedures to support students who are at risk of suicidal behaviours and / or death by suicide:

When we become aware of students who are at risk of suicidal behaviours and /or death by suicide we consider implementing the following actions, as appropriate for the situation:

- *Ensure no one is in immediate danger.*
- *Administer first aid.*
- *Call emergency services for medical advice, ambulance/police support if necessary.*
- *Support witnesses making sure someone stays with them until parents / carers can support them.*
- *Work with the student at risk to consider and provide a safe place / person in the school.*
- *Contact the parent/carer in as supportive a manner as possible if a disclosure etc has been made in school.*
- *Maintain ongoing contact with the student and parent/carer.*
- *Advise the student and parent/carer on support from the family GP and other agencies.*
- *Make /support referrals to outside agencies e.g. CAMHS.*

- *Contact First Response if suicidal behaviours are part of a wider picture of concerns.*
- *Work with the student to prepare a safety plan for school and home, including communicating the safety plan with parents/carers.*
- *Keep a watching brief of the student.*
- *Monitor attendance carefully and act immediately on any unexplained absence from school.*
- *Monitor attendance to lessons in school and respond swiftly if student is not where expected.*
- *Inform staff, on a need to know basis, of potential emotional and safety concerns, including how this may impact work and safety in terms of attendance in lessons etc.*
- *Log the information confidentially on CPOMS.*
- *Add the student's name to a confidential list of Vulnerable Students.*
- *There is a weekly meeting of key Student Development Team members to discuss the students on the Vulnerable Students List to note any updates, support, outside agency involvement etc.*
- *Consider contacting parents, GPs or other agencies if a student is seeing a school counsellor and there are concerns for safety prior to a holiday when we are not in school and are unable to hold any risk.*
- *With the approval of the student and parents/carers consider the appropriacy of contacting the school Examination Officer in case special consideration may be appropriate for external exams.*

Appendix 3

Useful Contacts – National organisations providing professional advice and support

SUICIDE PREVENTION:

PAPYRUS HOPELineUK

HOPELineUK is a service run by PAPYRUS with professional advisors trained in suicide intervention skills. HOPELineUK offers support and advice to:

- *Children and young people under the age of 35 having thoughts of suicide;*
- *Anyone who is concerned about a child or young person.*

Telephone: 0800 068 41 41 (this does not show up on the telephone bill)

Text: 07786 209 697

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

National Suicide Prevention Alliance

The NSPA is an alliance of public, private, voluntary and community organisations in England who care about suicide prevention and are willing to take action to reduce suicide and support those affected by suicide. Search the NSPA directory of

support services in your area or more organisations which can help in relation to suicide and its prevention via <http://www.nspa.org.uk/directories/>

POST INTERVENTION SUPPORT:

Support after Suicide Partnership

The Support after Suicide Partnership is a network of organisations that support people who have been bereaved or affected by suicide. For any information on support and guidance please follow the link: <http://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/>

Samaritans (UK)

A confidential listening ear is available via phone, text, email or face to face, for all ages. The service is available, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Contact via telephone for an immediate response. You don't have to be suicidal to call

Telephone: 116 123 (UK, free to call)

Email: jo@samaritans.org

For further details and support visit www.samaritans.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

Telephone: 0844 477 9400 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)

Website for further details: www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Winston's Wish

Support for children and young people following the death of a parent or sibling

Website: <https://www.winstonswish.org/>

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SoBS)

This is a network of national peer support groups for adults over 18 years

Website: <https://uksobs.org/>

Useful Contacts – Support agencies local to Buckinghamshire

TRAINING AND IDENTIFICATION:

Education Safeguarding Advisory Service (ESAS)

This is a service for schools to assist with effective delivery on all aspects of their safeguarding responsibilities.

<https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/service.page?id=eEWWvGK7V1Y>

Y-MHFA training for School Staff

Youth Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is the help given to a young person experiencing a mental health issue before professional help is obtained.
<https://mhfaengland.org/individuals/youth/2-day/>

INTERVENTION – Prevention

Buckinghamshire First Response

<https://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org/kb5/buckinghamshire/fsd/service.page?id=ohzME0tA-qA>

Buckinghamshire Mind Peer-mentoring Programme

Buckinghamshire Minds Peer Support in Schools Service is implemented to help young people start the conversation about mental health, raise awareness reduce stigma and normalise talking about mental health.

Telephone: 01494 463364

Website: <https://www.bucksmind.org.uk/>

Bucks CAMHS - Referral for Support/Intervention

Bucks CAMHS are specialist mental health services for children and young people provided by the NHS. Schools can contact CAMHS directly via their 'single point of access' telephone number. Other professionals working with young people can also contact the Buckinghamshire CAMHS 'single point of access' to find out what help is available.

Single point of access: 01865 901951

Buckinghamshire Educational Psychology Service (BEPS)

The service works with schools to promote inclusion, psychological well-being and raise standards for children and young people aged 0 to 19 years, across the full range of abilities. They also offer a consultation service to Buckinghamshire Maintained schools, academies and specialist settings, for example, where learning and/or development is giving significant cause for concern despite early intervention.

Telephone: 01296 383219 (Aylesbury office)

Telephone: 01494 732187 (Wycombe office)

Useful links /resources: <https://www.buckscc.gov.uk/services/education/educational-psychology/>