

SELF HARM AND HEALTH HARMING BEHAVIOURS

What is self-harm?

Who self-harms?

How we can respond and support

Useful organisations

This is a difficult subject. In putting together this leaflet I have used Guidance produced for Staffordshire Educational Psychology Service by **Dr Vanessa Willis** and a team of professionals. If you would like more information or further support with this topic, please contact your school.

Sophie Norrington

Kettlebrook Short Stay School
office@kettlebrook.staffs.sch.uk
01827 312840

Burton PRU
office@burtonpru.staffs.sch.uk
Tel : 01283 247986

Stepping Forward Together - Caring, Sharing & Aspiring



Self-harm refers to the **deliberate** harming of one's own body tissue. Self-harm can take on many forms, most commonly including:-

- Cutting
- Banging, scratching or burning
- Hair-pulling
- Swallowing objects

What is self-harm?

Self-poisoning is a form of self-harm which involves the deliberate ingesting of harmful substances with the intention of causing harm to one's own body.

Self-harming behaviours emerge in adolescence (around the age of 12) and is most observed in those aged between 11 and 25.

Who self-harms?

There is **no one risk factor** which predicts if an individual is going to self-harm. There are factors which can increase an individual's risk such as being bullied, poor body image, feeling isolated, having poor friend or family relationships or exam pressure.

So - everyone is different and must be treated as such.



Self-harm will cause distress to all those who care for the young person and so getting support from us in school and other services will help.

Below are some practical ideas.

Assess the risk - but in a caring and non-reactive way.

We do this we need to think about the following:-

- Take time to find out reasons behind the self-harm.
- Information about when it began
- Does the young person know *why* it began
- What the methods of self-harm
- How often do they self-harm?
- Is the child aware of how to look after their wounds and ways to avoid infection
- Who else is aware of the behaviour
- Who does the young person see as support in school and beyond.



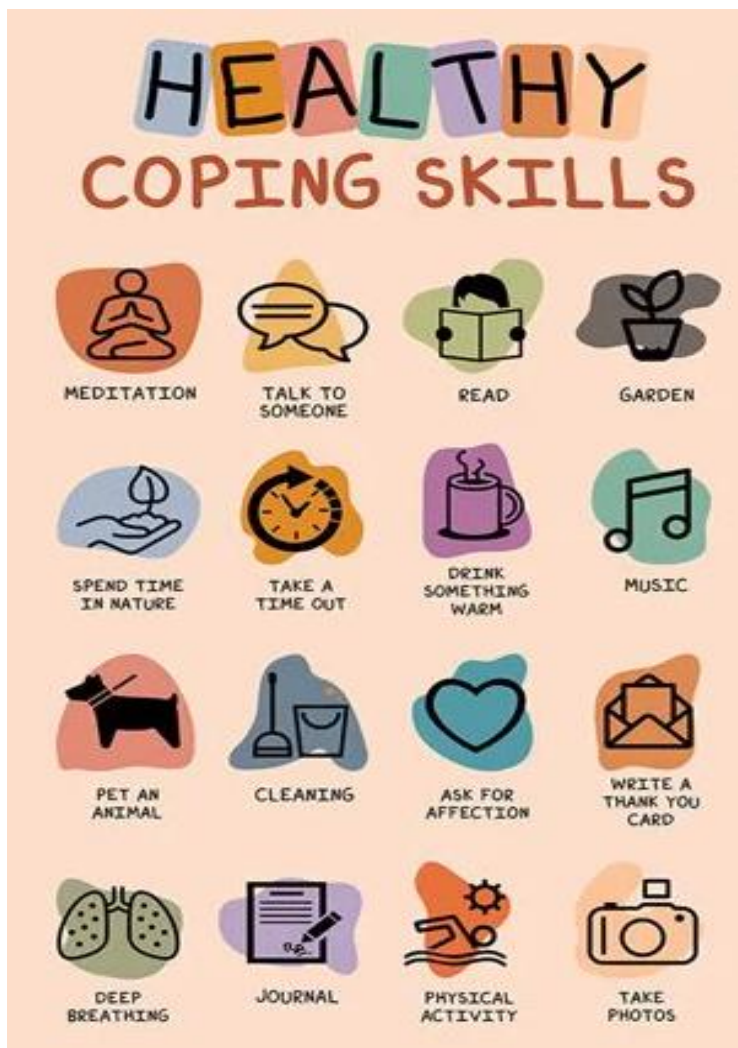
As a school we will always make a parent aware that a child is self-harming and we will support you alongside your child. We can also help you refer for additional support.

Devise a Safety Plan

Work together with the young person to help them manage the emotions they experiencing. This plan will need to change and adapt as we go.

Time should be taken to find some strategies the child feels they can use to help calm them or ride the emotions being felt.

Calming STRATEGIES



We all need to understand that some issues cannot be solved but we can all always learn how to manage them as best as we can.

How we
can
support

We all want what is best and try to help and support but sometimes in our distress or anxiety to help we might find that we're making things worse.

The following ideas have come from professionals to help staff and parents do the best we can for the child.

Things to do	Things to try to avoid
Try and stay calm . If they tell you that they have just self-harmed ask if they want to talk about it and try and find out if they need medical help.	Do not get angry or shout at them. Try not to look shocked (even if you feel any of these things as this may make them feel guilty).
Be positive . Try and focus on their strengths.	Don't be negative - self harm does not change everything about them.
Ask them if they'd like to talk about it - what has led to the episode of self harm?	Don't get upset if they don't want to talk. Also, do not assume every episode is for the same reason.
Ask them if there is anything you can do to help.	Don't assume what they need or want. Don't take any action without discussing it with them and being sure they are comfortable with it.
Show that you care and can see the person beyond the self-harm.	Don't change your view of them as a person. They are the same person.
Offer ideas for distractions, talking about things not related to self-harm and allow them time alone.	Don't blame them for making you worry or talk about how it is impacting on you.
Get help with your own feelings and emotions. It is distressing. Knowing more about self-harm will help.	Do not blame yourself or take it personally. Don't jump to conclusions.

SEE A DOCTOR AND ALSO LOOK INTO FURTHER SUPPORT - ORGANISATIONS INCLUDE:-

