



FAITHFULNESS IN SERVICE

BISHOP DRUITT COLLEGE

COFFS HARBOUR

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SELF-INJURY POLICY

Purpose

In keeping with the College's Vision and Values, this policy aims to address the issue of self-injury:

- How to deal with students who self-injure and how to offer support in the short and long-term
- To provide support depending upon the individual needs of the student.
- To help all students improve their self-esteem and emotional literacy
- How to support staff members who come into contact with people who self-injure
- How to prevent self-injury from spreading within the school
- To have clear guidelines for staff – who needs to be informed, when do parents and outside agencies need contacting?
- Education about self-injury for students and staff

What is self-injury?

Self-injury is any deliberate, non-suicidal behaviour that inflicts physical harm on someone's own body and is aimed at relieving emotional distress. It can include cutting, scratching, burning, banging and bruising, overdosing (without suicidal intent) and deliberate bone breaking/spraining.

Risk factors associated with self-injury

- Mental health disorders including depression and eating disorders
- Drug/alcohol abuse, and other risk-taking behaviour
- Recent trauma e.g. death of relative, parental divorce
- Negative thought patterns, and low self-esteem
- Bullying
- Abuse – sexual, physical and emotional
- Sudden changes in behaviour and academic performance

Suicide

While self-injury and suicide are separate, those who self-injure are in emotional distress, and those who end their lives are also in emotional distress. It is vital that all emotional distress is taken seriously to minimise the chances of self-injury, and suicide. All talk of suicide and warning signs must be taken extremely seriously.

Who/what was consulted?

This can include information such as this document and the key people who are usually consulted during policy creation e.g. staff, pupils, parents, counsellors.

Relationship to other policies

Link to Child Protection, social and health education, health and safety, and behaviour policies.



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Roles and responsibilities of staff

The Director of Pastoral Care K-12 will:

- Appoint coordinators to be responsible for self-injury matters, and liaise with them.
- Ensure that the coordinators receive appropriate training about self-injury
- Ensure that self-injury policy is followed by all members of staff

All staff and teachers are expected to:

- Listen to students in emotional distress calmly and in a non-judgemental way.
- Report self-injury to the designated coordinator(s) for self-injury. Be clear of the timescale in which this is expected.
- Not make promises (e.g. assuring confidentiality) that cannot be kept. Reassure students that in order to seek health and happiness people need to know about their problems so that they can help.
- Guide students towards seeking health and happiness
- Promoting problem-solving techniques and non-harmful ways to deal with emotional distress
- Enable students to find places for help and support
- Provide accurate information about self-injury
- Widen their own knowledge about self-injury and mental health disorders
- Be aware of health and safety issues such as first-aid and clearing up if a self-injury incident take place at school
- Be aware of their legal responsibilities – when they can help, and when they cannot

The Coordinator(s) will:

- Keep records of self-injury incidents and concerns on the College student database, Denbigh
- Liaise with school counsellors about help available for people who self-injure
- Keep up-to-date with information about self-injury
- Liaise with the Director of Pastoral Care
- Know when to seek help to deal with their own feelings and distress.

The School Counsellor(s) will:

- Contact parent(s) at the appropriate time(s). Involve the student in this process. Inform the parent(s) about appropriate help and support for their child that is available. Monitor the student's progress following an incident
- Know when people other than parents (e.g. social workers, educational psychologists) need to be informed



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Students will be expected to:

- Not display open wounds/injuries. These must be dressed appropriately
- Talk to the appropriate staff member if they are in emotional distress
- Alert a teacher if they suspect a fellow student of being suicidal or at serious risk of harm to themselves, and know when confidentiality must be broken

Parents will be encouraged to:

- Endorse the school's approach to self-injury education and pastoral care
- Work in partnership with the school

Arrangements for monitoring and evaluation:

- Feedback from parents and students as to how a self-injury incident/case has been dealt with
 - Regular feedback from staff
-

Date established: 29 July 2012

Date for full implementation: 31 July 2012

Date for Review - 31 July 2015

Signed: _____

Date: _____