

Suicide Prevention Policy

Rationale

• Suicide is a **leading cause of death** among young people across Europe. The prevalence appears to vary between countries, but suicidal thoughts and attempts appear to be common mental health problems among young people (Madge et al., 2008).

• Strategies for school-based prevention, intervention and post-intervention of suicidal behaviour are needed, because young people spend a considerable amount of their time at school. Suicide prevention demands a **multi-agency approach** and all information should be shared across agencies.

Prevention strategies

These should include:

- Targeting **PUPILS** (and vulnerable pupils in particular)
 - via knowledge from pre-admission meetings and information from parents/carers, mainstream schools, CAMHS and other health professionals and social care
 - by monitoring their health.
- Targeting **TEACHERS and SCHOOL STAFF**
 - e.g. by training,
 - by supporting teachers with their own mental and physical health
 - by providing a safe and healthy workplace.
- Targeting the whole **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**, e.g.
 - by continually monitoring & improving the school culture (e.g. involving students and parents)
 - by having on-going communication with CAMHS and other mental health services, by improving the school culture (e.g. involving students and parents).
 - by making the school environment as safe as possible whilst still recognising that it is a non-forensic environment and pupils have to be encouraged to use equipment responsibly

Maple Medical PRU has a 'Healthy Learning, Healthy Lives' chartermark and the promotion of mental health is included in this work. Although little research is done on the effectiveness of general mental health promotion on the outcome of suicide, we may assume a healthy school policy may contribute to the prevention of suicide as it is aimed at improving factors such as resilience, coping skills, social inclusion, and a safe school environment, which could function as protective factors for suicidal behaviour.

Maple Medical PRU promotes the mental health of its pupils by working:

1. to increase emotional resilience and reduce vulnerability to mental health problems through the development of personal skills, self-esteem, coping strategies, problem solving skills, and self-help, which lead to an increased capacity to cope with life transitions and stress. All the staff at Maple

Medical PRU are trained in a range of mental health issues including two Learning Mentors who work individually with pupils to help them gain resilience, skills and coping strategies.

2. to provide better information, awareness and education about mental health and illness. Maple Medical PRU uses morning meetings, invites specialist speakers in, has displays on the walls to raise awareness of mental health issues and campaigns and highlights specific events such as World Mental Health Day.

3. to increase social inclusion and cohesion. The school climate at Maple Medical PRU is supportive, warm and safe and all staff work to reduce the stigma and discrimination sometimes experienced by pupils. Maple Medical PRU signposts pupils to appropriate outside agencies including self-help networks.

4. to provide better (and more) health and social care services. Maple signposts outside agencies who provide mental health services to pupils and parents and contacts/works with social care as necessary.

5. to provide better social protection and social support, especially for persons at risk or affected with mental disorders, particularly those in socially disadvantaged groups. Two Maple staff have specialist training in suicide prevention including how to identify and deal with students at risk.

Practical strategies

Maple Medical PRU follow their Safeguarding procedures if/when pupils self-harm. In cases of severe self-harm/attempted suicide Maple staff will:

1. If there is immediate danger to the life or health of the pupil staff will ring 999. A member of staff will accompany the pupil to the nearest hospital. Parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible and asked to attend the hospital to take over from the staff member. If a specialist mental health professional or social worker is already involved with the pupil, they will be contacted and updated by Maple staff/parents or carers.
2. If a pupil discloses self-harm to Maple staff which has occurred outside of the school day then 1. above will apply if there is immediate danger to the life or health of the pupil.
3. The incident will be recorded by Maple staff.
4. Post-incident discussion with agencies and with parents/carers and pupil will focus on practical strategies to prevent a reoccurrence including what professional support the pupil is receiving, re-iteration of support available within Maple if the pupil is feeling suicidal, monitoring procedures by Maple staff and sign-posting to online, local and national resources which may be useful e.g Respect Doncaster, Young Minds.

Date of Policy - October 2018

Date of Review – October 2020

Signed

Head teacher.....

Chair of Management Committee.....