

Brighton Girls
Suicide Safety Policy
September 2021

1) Statement of Purpose

a) Brighton and Hove High School is aware that:

- i) suicide is the leading cause of death in young people;*
- ii) we play a vital role in helping to prevent young suicide.*

b) We want to make sure that children and young people at our school are as suicide-safe as possible and that our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, pupils themselves and other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be a suicide-safer school.

2) Our Beliefs about Suicide and its Antecedents

a) This school/college acknowledges that:

i) SUICIDAL THOUGHTS ARE COMMON

We acknowledge that thoughts of suicide are common among young people.

ii) SUICIDE IS COMPLEX

We believe that every suicide is a tragedy. There are a number of contributory factors surrounding a suicide and the reasons are often complex and individual to that person. However, we believe that there are lessons that may be learned from each death that may help prevent future deaths.

iii) STIGMA INHIBITS LEARNING – STIGMA CAN KILL

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.

iv) SUICIDE IS OUR BUSINESS, TOO

As a school community, we recognise that pupils may seek out someone whom they trust with their concerns and worries. We want to play our part in supporting any pupil who may have thoughts of suicide.

v) SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT

We know that pupils who are having thoughts of suicide may or may not also be behaving in a way that puts their life in danger (suicide behaviours). Schoolchildren 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 wants to work with our pupils who may be thinking about suicide, or acting on their thoughts of suicide. We want to support them, sometimes working in partnership with family, caregivers and other professionals where this may enhance suicide safety.

vi) SUICIDE IS A DIFFICULT THING TO TALK ABOUT

We know that a child or young person who is suicidal may find it very difficult to make their feelings known and speak openly about suicide. We will equip key Pastoral Staff with the skills to identify when a pupil may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. These adults will be trained to keep our young people suicide-safe.

vii) TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE DOES NOT CREATE OR WORSEN RISK

We will provide our pupils with opportunities to speak openly about their worries with people who are ready, willing and able to support them. We want to make it possible for schoolchildren and young people, and those who support them at this school, to do so safely. This will be in a way that leads to support and help where this is needed. We will do all we can to refrain from acting in a way that stops a pupil seeking the help they need when they are struggling with thoughts of suicide.

3) Our Team and its Responsibilities

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

b) We will have a clear picture of who has received general suicide awareness education and commit to this being refreshed periodically (at least every three years). We will identify a team of people who are trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST). This team will be drawn from across the whole school community, not just from one department.

c) We will have a clear policy about how staff should work together where thoughts of suicide or suicide behaviours are known among our young people. We will manage the sharing of information in a way that enhances safety.

4) Ongoing Support and Development of our Policy and Practice

a) Our Governors and Leadership Team will keep our practice up to date by maintaining contact with best practice and on-going training.

Date of Review: September 2021

Person Responsible: Deputy Head Pastoral