



Suicide Prevention Policy

Diversity, Equality & Inclusivity Statement:

The commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusivity is at the heart of our values at Austin Friars. Equality means creating an environment where pupils have the chance to achieve their full potential, free from barriers, prejudice, and discrimination. Inclusion is about recognising that each pupil is unique and that their needs can be met in different ways. Diversity means recognising, respecting, and celebrating the added value that differences bring. Our unwavering dedication to our school values – Truth, Love and Unity - is how we fulfil our mission at Austin Friars. It is through our commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusivity that our pupils are empowered to be authentic and succeed.

Austin Friars is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This school is aware that suicide is the leading cause of death in young people and that all staff at Austin Friars play a vital role in helping to prevent suicide.

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

SUICIDAL THOUGHTS ARE COMMON

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

Suicide is complex

Every suicide is a tragedy. There are several contributory factors surrounding a suicide and the reasons are often complex and individual to that person.

Stigma inhibits learning – stigma can kill

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 this 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.

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.

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 pupils who may be thinking about suicide or acting on their thoughts of suicide. We want to support them, working in partnership with their family and other professionals.

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. Teaching staff will be trained with the skills to identify when a pupil may be struggling with thoughts of suicide (as part of the safeguarding updates).

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 our 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. The staff most likely to be involved with this are the Heads of School (all DDSLs (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead)), Deputy Head (DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead)), first Responder, School Chaplain, and the School's Mental Health Nurse. However, a pupil could prefer to liaise with their form tutor or another member of staff.

ONGOING SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUR POLICY AND PRACTICE

Our Trustees and SMT (Senior Management Team), our Mental Health Nurse and our First Responder will keep our practice up to date by maintaining contact with best practice and on-going training.

Deputy Head

September 2025

Appendix

Helpful and unhelpful language when talking about suicide with schoolchildren

We recognise that language helps as well as harms. Using sensitive and appropriate language can help build awareness and understanding to increase empathy and support.

Helpful Language when talking about suicide or attempted suicide:

Ended their life
Killed themselves
Died by suicide
Took their own life
Attempted to take their own life
Attempted suicide
Engaged in suicidal behaviours

Unhelpful Language when talking about suicide or attempted suicide:

Talking about suicide in terms of success is not helpful. If a schoolchild dies by suicide, it cannot ever be a success. We do not talk about any other death in terms of success: we would never talk about a 'successful heart attack.'

Suicide has not been a crime since 1961. Using the word 'commit' suggests that it is still a crime (we 'commit' crimes), which perpetuates stigma or the sense that it is a 'sin.' Stigma shuts people up – schoolchildren will be less likely to talk about their suicidal feelings if they feel judged.

Commit suicide
Successful suicide
You are not thinking of doing something stupid/silly are you?
Unsuccessful or failed suicide
It is not that serious
Attention seeking
It was just a cry for help

These phrases are; judgemental, reduce the chance of a student talking to you, make people feel even more like a failure and are dismissive at best!



Professional Advice and Support

PAPYRUS HOPELineUK

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

- to children and young people under the age of 35 having thoughts of suicide
- to anyone who is concerned about a child or young person.

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

Text: **07786 209 697**

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Opening hours: Monday-Friday 10am – 10pm

Weekends 2pm – 10pm

Bank Holidays 2pm – 5pm

PAPYRUS has several resources, including a Suicide-Safety Plan, distraction techniques and coping strategies, on the resources page of their website:

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/help-advice/resources>

<https://papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/toolkitfinal.pdf>

National Suicide Prevention Alliance

(NSPA). 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. See <http://www.nspa.org.uk>

This alliance comprises of many organisations which offer specialist help and advice.

Support After Suicide Partnership

The Support After Suicide Partnership is a network of organisations, including PAPYRUS, that support people who have been bereaved or affected by suicide:

<http://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/>



Members of Cumbria Suicide Prevention Leadership group

Supplied through 'A Refreshed MULTI-Agency Suicide Prevention Strategy for Cumbria'

<https://www.cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/ssh.asp>

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