Longman's Hill CP School Suicide Prevention Policy

Suicide Prevention Policy	Longman's Hill CP School	
Document Status	Approved policy	
Date of next review	October 2028	Responsibility Full Governing Board
Date of Policy Creation	October 2025	Responsibility Chair of Governors
Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body	October 2025	
Method of Communication (e.g. Website, etc.)	Website on safeguarding page	

1. **Statement of purpose**
    a. Longman's Hill CP School is aware that suicide is the leading cause of death in young people and that we play a vital role in helping to prevent young suicide.
    b. Our school want to ensure that pupils and staff are as suicide-safe as possible and that our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, pupils and other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be a Suicide-Safer school.
2. **Our beliefs about suicide and contributory factors.**
   Longman's Hill CP school acknowledges that:
    a. **Suicidal thoughts are common**
    We acknowledge that thoughts of suicide are common, especially among young people.
    b. **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.
    c. **Stigma inhibits learning – stigma can kill**
    We recognise that the stigma surrounding suicide and mental illness can be both a barrier to seeking help and a barrier to offering help. Longman's Hill is dedicated to tackling suicide stigma. We will promote open, sensitive talk in our language and in our working relationships that does not stigmatise and perpetuate taboos.
    d. **Suicide prevention is everyone's business**
    We recognise that pupils and staff may seek out someone who they trust with their concerns and worries. We encourage our pupils to speak to trusted adults, whoever that may be in school, when they have a worry or concern to try and prevent escalation of negative thoughts and feelings.
    e. **Safety is very important**
    We will seek to support our pupils and staff, working in partnership with family, caregivers, external agencies and other professionals as appropriate to enhance suicide-safety and reduce the risk of suicide in pupils and staff.
    f. **Suicide is a difficult thing to talk about**
    We know that a pupil who is suicidal may find it very difficult to make their feelings known and speak openly about suicide. We will provide trained adults who are able to identify when a pupil may be struggling with thoughts of suicide.

    g. **Talking about suicide does not create or increase risk**
    We recognise that talking to someone about suicide does not put them at additional risk. One of the only ways to really know if a person is contemplating suicide it to ask. We

recognise that asking someone if they are feeling suicidal may seem difficult but it is important to ensure that you can take the right actions to reduce the risk of suicide. See Appendix 1 about helpful and unhelpful language to use.

h. **Those with personal experience have a unique role to play in the development and refinement of this Suicide-Safer Policy**
   We will endeavour to involve anyone from our community who has personal experience of suicide, either having struggled themselves or supported someone with thoughts of suicide.

3. How we help ensure an active person-centred suicide prevention and intervention policy

a. Longman's Hill CP School has a named individual who is responsible for the design, implementation and maintenance of this policy (Mrs J Elcock who is the Headteacher and DSL and has received appropriate training).
b. Longman's Hill CP School has staff trained that understand this policy and are trained in Suicide Intervention. Mrs Jan Elcock (DSL), Mrs Liz Rhodes (DDSL) and Mrs Zoie gash (Pastoral lead) have all completed training. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be the point of escalation for any concerns about a pupil or young person. We will keep confidential records of pupils at risk of suicide to ensure some continuity of care within the intervention model.
c. We will endeavour to ensure that all our staff are suicide aware.
d. We will ensure that all pupils are suicide aware. This means that we will ensure that as part of the planned Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) curriculum for Y6, there is age appropriate learning which equips our pupils to know how to spot signs, what to do and how to escalate any concerns to a member of school staff. We will use specially designed materials from Papyrus, a charity which supports the prevention of suicide in under 35s.
e. We will be clear about how we enhance the physical safety of our environment including the removal of potential ligature points, restricting access to places which facilitate jumping, and securely storing harmful substances.
f. We recognise that the need to protect someone's life must be balanced against the need to protect their confidentiality. We would therefore always ask members of staff for permission to share any serious concerns for their welfare with an emergency contact of their choice. Parents of pupils under 18 will always be contacted by the DSL, where the school have concerns about a pupil's welfare and safety. Should any pupil or member of staff who is known to have suffered from suicidal thoughts and is presently believed to be at risk, leave school unexpectedly for whatever reason, we will endeavour to inform their emergency contacts of their vulnerable state and the police as appropriate.
g. We recognise that anyone may experience periods of poor mental health while attending our school. We have mechanisms in place which allow staff that have regular interaction with pupils, to raise any concerns about individuals including suspected suicidal thoughts. Concerns must also be brought to the attention of the DSL or DDSL, who will record the concerns, so that patterns of concerning behaviour can be spotted and the necessary steps can be put in place to keep pupils safe, including meeting them face to face.
h. We recognise that whilst rare, young people can be particularly susceptible to suicide contagion where one such loss can lead to or be linked to further links deaths within a particular community or establishment. We acknowledge that early identification of such a situation or an emerging cluster requires vigilance and effective communication from all relevant partners. In such circumstances a coordinated, multi-agency response led by Public Health teams is essential and school will cooperate in any multi-agency activity.
i. If a child moves schools and there are concerns that they may be at risk of self-harm or suicide, Longman's Hill CP school will share their concerns with the child's new school to ensure that they can be supported. Information will be shared promptly and will be proportionate to the level of identified risk.
j. When we identify a pupil or member of staff is at risk of suicide and external services are engaged, such as a hospital A&E department or a crisis centre, we will follow explicit guidelines on the pathways that apply. Those guidelines will be provided by the external services, and will be reviewed regularly as the provision of such services change over time.

4. **How we help ensure a sensitive and safe and sensitive postvention provision**
    a. Longman's Hill CP School will have trained staff whose role it is to respond in the event of a suicide. Each member of our trained staff will have a defined responsibility within our plan including leadership, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media. De-brief support will be available to that member of staff, to support them and their own mental wellbeing in a time of crisis. This will be provided through the papyrus 'De-brief' offer to schools, which is a free online resource.
    b. Longman's Hill CP School will be clear about how we deal with an inquest after someone has died by suicide in our school. We will support the authorities in their work but will be mindful of the distress an inquest causes to the bereaved people. We will also be mindful of the impact supporting an inquest can have on staff.
    c. We will record and monitor deaths by suicide and the impact on the community. This will include on-going monitoring of pupil deaths including suicides, suspected suicides and, if possible, self-harm. Monitoring of self-harm might be done through the collection of information from pupil support services and pupil health services.
5. **In the event of a suicide, we will also:**
    - Record and monitor the uptake of bereavement support services by pupils after a suicide
    - Survey pupils regarding how supported they feel
    - Assess the impact of interventions on staff
    - Review lessons learned and any suggested changes to procedures and provision of well-being services
    - Monitor multiple events, such as two suicides in a relatively short period of time (e.g. one term) which may or may not be connected and could indicate a possible suicide cluster, including investigating possible connections between individuals, their circumstances and their suicidal behaviour.
6. **Ongoing support and development of our policy and practice**
    a. Our Leadership Team will ensure that ongoing reviews take place that processes are updated in line with best practice and that on-going training is undertaken when necessary.
    b. Where possible we will include or consult with members of our community who have personal experience of suicidal ideation, either their own or as a concerned other, in the design, development and continuous refinement of this policy.
7. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

    a. The designated governor who has responsibility for safeguarding will monitor the systems regularly and following any incident of self-harm.

    b. Policy reviewed on: September 2025

Review will be due October 2026

By: Full Governing Board

Further support and information can be accessed at https://papyrus-uk.org/help-advice-resources/

Appendix 1

HELPFUL AND UNHELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

UNHELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

Commit suicide
In England and Wales, suicide hasn't 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 – pupils will be less likely to talk about their thoughts of suicide if they feel judged.

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

HELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE

You could say:

Ended their life
Killed themselves
Took their own life
Died by suicide
Suicided

UNHELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

Unsuccessful or failed suicide
Young people who have attempted suicide often tell us, "I couldn't even do that right." Any attempt at suicide is serious. Young people should not feel further burdened by whether their attempt was a 'failure', as this may reinforce feelings of failure in other areas of their life.

It's not that serious
All suicide attempts must be taken seriously as there is a serious risk to life. An attempt tells us that they are in so much pain they no longer want to live.

Attention seeking
This phrase assumes that a pupil's behaviour is not serious, and that they are being dramatic to gain attention from others. However, suicidal thoughts are serious. Young people who attempt suicide need attention, support, understanding and help.

It was just a cry for help
This dismissive phrase belittles someone's need for help. They do indeed need you to help: they are in pain and their life is in danger. They may feel they are not being taken seriously, which can be dangerous.

HELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN TALKING ABOUT ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

You could say:

Attempted suicide
Attempted to take their life
Engaged in suicide behaviours
Acted on thoughts of suicide

UNHELPFUL LANGUAGE WHEN ASKING ABOUT SUICIDE

You're not thinking of doing something stupid/silly are you?

This judgemental language suggests that the person's thoughts of suicide are stupid or silly, and furthermore, that the pupil is stupid or silly. When faced with this question, most will deny their thoughts of suicide, for fear of being viewed negatively. This is dangerous. You become someone it is not safe to talk to about suicide.

SEEKING PROFESSIONAL ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Emotional distress, trauma and/or mental health issues often contribute to thoughts of suicide. It may be helpful to reach out for advice or support from organisations which specialise in specific issues. If your school or college has a Suicide-Safer Policy it should also have prepared a directory of such services and organisations. Our 'Helpers in the Community' template (see Appendix B) is a good starter. The Suicide Intervention Team will want to populate this and share it across the school community.

PREVENTING CONTAGION/MULTIPLE DEATHS/CLUSTERS

Unfortunately, people who have lost someone to suicide are at an increased risk of suicide themselves. Therefore, suicide prevention also involves identifying individual pupils who may be at increased risk following a suicide. See the section on 'Postvention' for how to identify those pupils and how to support them.