



# St George's C. E. Primary School



# Suicide Intervention Policy

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**Approved by: SLT/Governors**

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## Vision Statement

Jesus said: 'Love each other as I have loved you'. John 15:12

Our school motto, 'EVERYONE matters, EVERYONE achieves' is at the heart of everything we do and believe.

At St George's Primary School, we aim to prepare the children in our care to become well-rounded members of society on their journey through school life and beyond. We strongly believe that children learn best and can achieve their potential when they are happy and content. We endeavour to provide a safe learning environment with a warm, welcoming atmosphere which creates a sense of belonging amongst the children, the staff, the families and the community. We embrace their individuality and diversity, always encouraging respect and acceptance of each other as equal human beings and celebrating our differences.

We have high expectations of the children and we work hard to support them to become the best that they can be. For our children to flourish, socially and academically, we aim to provide an outstanding education that is both challenging and inclusive. All children are encouraged to embrace the many opportunities and the support school provides, so that they become curious learners who are motivated and resilient with a 'Can do' attitude. Our aim is to provide the children of St George's with countless positive experiences, along with happy lifelong memories, from their time with us. We also have high expectations of attendance. We encourage families to be at school every day and to arrive on time in order to not miss any learning.

Through our supportive and inclusive Christian ethos, we are proud to foster our school values of kindness, respect, friendship, honesty, happiness, perseverance, forgiveness and responsibility, embedding these within everyday life at school. We believe that the emotional health and wellbeing of the whole school community is fundamental to the ongoing success of our school.

We aspire to make our school a place of excellence where we educate, nurture and value everyone; that ALL children will enjoy learning and achieve their potential in the 'St George's Way.'

'Let us always meet each other with a smile, for the smile is the beginning of love.' Mother Teresa.

# **St George's Primary School Suicide Intervention Policy**



## **1. Statement of Purpose**

The St George's C of E Primary School community is aware that:

1. Suicide is the **leading cause of death** in young people.
2. We play a vital role in helping to **prevent** young suicide.
3. 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 at St George's.

## **2. Underlying Principles**

The St George's school community is aware that:

1. **Improve connectedness**. A child or young person who is contemplating suicide may not feel able to access the support of those around them. This may be because of fear, perceived rejection, a sense of shame or embarrassment, or because they fear that they may need to share whatever is causing their thoughts of suicide. They may find this difficult to open up about.
2. It is important to provide **safe spaces and alternative opportunities** for school children to **share their story**. It is important to use language that protects and provides safety and to **cultivate an environment** where nothing is so secret that it can't be shared.
3. **Reduce access to means**. It is important to ensure that the physical environment of our school is as safe as possible. The removal of potential ligature points, restricting access to places which facilitate jumping. Making sure classroom items such as scissors/compasses/pencil sharpeners are monitored carefully when in use. Also the removal of harmful substances from public areas. All these are considerations of how **to reduce access** to potential means of suicide, this will form part of any health & safety risk assessment.
4. Our school will adopt the three underlying principles of **SEE-SAY-SIGNPOST** and select nominated staff members to undertake the **20 minute ZerOSuicide Online Training** module <http://zerosuicidealliance.com/>.  
Staff who have attended training: Kath Watts, Sarah Foxley, Jo Croft, Lauren Newbold, Kim Sohler, Clare Holt.



### 3. Our Beliefs about Suicide and its Antecedents

St George's Primary School acknowledges that:

1. Suicidal thoughts are **common**.
2. **We acknowledge** that thoughts of suicide are common among young people.
3. Suicide is **complex**.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. St George's 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.
7. We know that **unhelpful myths and misconceptions** surrounding suicide can inhibit young people in seeking and finding appropriate help when it is most needed.

### 4. Suicide Intervention is our Business too.

1. 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 or member of staff** who may have thoughts of suicide.
2. **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). School children experiencing suicidal thoughts are potentially at risk of acting on these thoughts.
3. Those who are already engaging in suicide behaviours are also clearly at risk of death or harm. Everyone at St George's wants to **work with our pupils and members of staff** who may be thinking about suicide or acting on their thoughts of suicide.
4. We want to support them, sometimes **working in partnership** with family, caregivers, and other professionals where this may enhance suicide safety.
5. **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 adults 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 “as is possible”**.



6. **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 school children and young people, and those who support them at this school, to do so safely.

7. 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.

8. This school recognises that **suicide bereavement has been described as “grief with the volume turned up.”** The effects on families, communities and society, as a whole, are devastating and tragic. This school will support in any way we can, and the link below will be signposted as appropriate.

[http://www.petesdragons.org.uk/Bereavement\\_Support\\_2369.aspx](http://www.petesdragons.org.uk/Bereavement_Support_2369.aspx)

## 5. Our Team and its Responsibilities

1. Our governors and leadership team at this school will be clear about how we will respond in the event of a suicide. Each member of our named Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) will have a **defined responsibility** within our plan including leadership (Kathryn Watts and Sarah Foxley), family liaison (Holly Evans, Abbigail Jervis and Jo Croft) and any communications with external agencies, including the media (Sally Sixsmith and the LA). This commitment and reporting for assistance from outside agencies, when needed, will go hand in hand with our main Child Protection & Safeguarding in School Policies.

2. We will have a clear picture of who has received general suicide awareness education and commit to this being refreshed periodically. This team will be drawn from across the whole school community, not just from one department.

3. 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.

## 6. Ongoing Support and Development of our Policy and Practice

Our Governors and Leadership Team at St George's will keep our practice up to date by maintaining contact with best practice and on-going training.