

School Suicide Intervention Policy

1. Statement of Purpose

MADELEY NURSERY 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 in those connected to school.
3. We want to make sure that children, students, volunteers, parents /carers and other young people at our school are as suicide **“safe as possible”** and that our governors, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, and other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be suicide-safer at Madeley Nursery School

2. Underlying Principles

Madeley Nursery School community is aware that:

1. **Improve connectedness**. A child, parent / carer, student / volunteer, 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 the school's young people 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 Madeley Nursery School is as safe as possible, either by the removal of potential ligature points and restricting access to places which facilitate jumping. Making sure classroom items such as scissors/compasses/pencil sharpeners (please be aware that pencil sharpeners have in some cases been reported as having been tampered with and blades accessed and shared for self-harm) are monitored when in use and safely secured when not in use. We remove harmful substances from public areas and store them in secure locations away from public areas and in line with COSHH regulations. 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/college 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/>

3. Our Beliefs about Suicide and its Antecedents

Madeley Nursery 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 seeking help and a barrier to offering help.
6. 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.
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 Nursery School community, we recognise that young people may seek out someone whom they trust with their concerns and worries. **We want to play our part in supporting any young person in our school community** who may have thoughts of suicide.
2. **Safety is very important**-We know that young people who are having thoughts of suicide may or may not also be behaving in a way that puts their life in danger (suicide behaviours). Young people 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. Madeley Nursery School wants to **work with young people in our community** 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 someone may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. These adults will be trained to keep our school community as **suicide-safe “as is possible”**.
6. **Talking about suicide does not create or worsen risk.** We will provide young people in the school community 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 young people, and those who support them at Madeley Nursery School to talk about suicide safely.
7. This discussion will be undertaken 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. Madeley Nursery 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. Madeley Nursery 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

5. Our Team and its Responsibilities

1. Our governors and leadership team Madeley Nursery School will be clear about how we will respond in the event of a suicide. Each member of our named Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL's) will have a **defined responsibility** within our plan including leadership, family liaison and any communications with external agencies, including the media. This commitment and request for assistance from outside agencies, when needed, will go hand in hand with our main Child Protection & Safeguarding in School Policies.
2. Madeley Nursery staff / leadership team will have a clear picture of who has received general suicide awareness education and commit to this staff team, trained in suicide awareness being refreshed periodically. This team will be drawn from across the whole school community, not just from one department.
3. Madeley Nursery School have a clear supervision policy detailing how staff should work together, where thoughts of suicide or suicide behaviours are known among young people in our community. 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 Madeley Nursery School will maintain best-practice procedures through on-going training, focusing on current recommendations as these are updated.

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