



Suicide Prevention Policy

**60 Bell Road
Sittingbourne
ME10 4**

1) Introduction

ALP Sittingbourne acknowledges that we have a role to play in preventing suicides. Suicides are the leading killer of young people and it is widely accepted that many young suicides are preventable.

The schools policy has been formed inline with recommendations from the PAPYRUS charity, who specialise in prevention of young suicide. This policy should be read alongside the document "Building Suicide-Safer Schools and Colleges - A Guide for Teachers and Staff" - <https://papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/toolkitfinal.pdf>

There are two broad concepts which underpin ALP Sittingbourne's suicide prevention policy. Evidence shows that suicide risk is reduced when we improve connectedness and reduce access to means:

a) 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. It is important to provide safe spaces and alternative opportunities for young people to share their story. It's 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'

b) Reduce Access to Means

It is important to ensure that the physical environment of ALP Sittingbourne is as safe as possible. The removal of potential ligature points, restricting access to places which facilitate jumping, and removal of harmful substances from public areas, are all examples of how the school reduce access to potential means of suicide.

2) Policy Statement

ALP Sittingbourne 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.

We want to make sure that learners at our school are as suicide safe as possible and that our Executive Board, parents and carers, teaching staff, support staff, learners themselves and other key stakeholders are aware of our commitment to be a suicide-safer school.

3) Our Beliefs about Suicide and its Antecedents:

ALP Sittingbourne 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. ALP Sittingbourne 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 learners may seek out someone whom they trust with their concerns and worries. We want to play our part in supporting any learner who may have thoughts of suicide.

v) **SAFETY IS VERY IMPORTANT** We know that learners 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. Those who are already engaging in suicide behaviours are also clearly at risk of death or harm. This school wants to work with our learners 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 adults with the skills to identify when a learner may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. These adults will be trained to keep our young people suicide-safe. Examples of equipping our adults include access to level 2 courses and online training around mental health and suicide and guest speakers in assembly or staff training to talk and educate about suicide.

vii) **TALKING ABOUT SUICIDE DOES NOT CREATE OR WORSEN RISK** We will provide our learners 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 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 learner seeking the help they need when they are struggling with thoughts of suicide.

4) Our SMT Responsibilities

i) Our Executive Board 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.

ALP Sittingbourne's response team includes:

- The School's Head Teacher
- The School's Assistant Head Teacher(s)
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The key worker of the particular young person
- Those trained in Suicide prevention

ii) 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 person who is trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST).

iii) We will have a clear procedure 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.

iv) Will develop 'safepans' to reduce the risk of suicide and increase the safety of the young person. This is a key document linked to any learner with suicidal thoughts. It identifies risks and the interventions needed to minimise these

5) Ongoing Support and Development of Our Policy and Practice

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

PAPYRUS HOPELineUK

HOPELineUK is a service run by PAPYRUS. Their 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