

SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

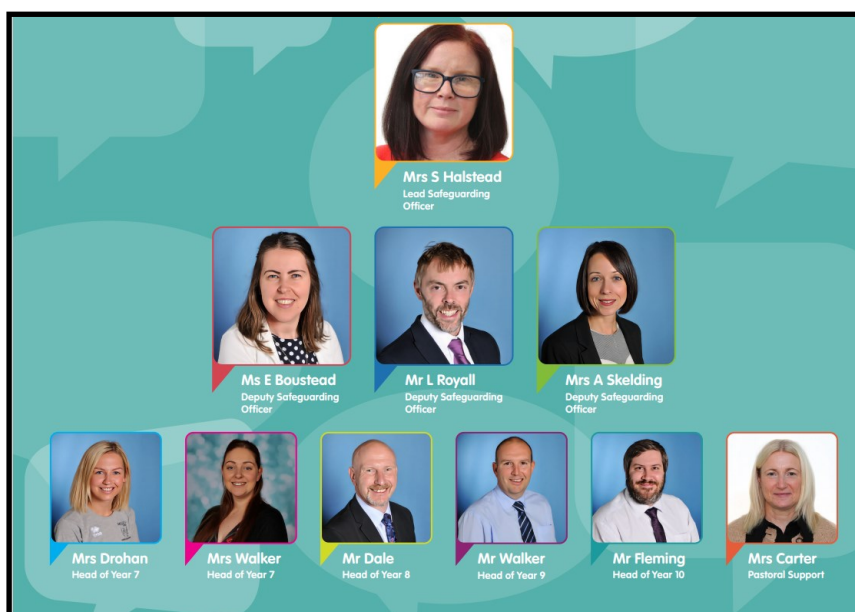
Our Promise at Madeley School

Madeley School recognises its legal duty under Education Act 2002 (section 157 in relation to independent schools and academies) and the 1989 Children Act and takes seriously its responsibilities to protect and safeguard the interests of all pupils.

The school recognises that effective child protection work requires sound procedures, good inter-agency co-operation and a workforce that is competent and confident in responding to child protection situations. Safeguarding incidents can happen anywhere and staff should be alert to any concerns being raised. All staff may raise safeguarding concerns directly with Children's Social Care Services (see making referrals section of this policy).

Welcome to our forth and final newsletter of the academic year. In this edition we would like to focus primarily on Self-Harm and also remind you of our safeguarding team here at Madeley School.

Our safeguarding team



If you have a concern about any student of Madeley High please phone the school reception and ask for

- Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer: Sara Halstead (sara.halstead@madeley.set.org)
- Deputy Safeguarding Leads: alexa.skelding@madeley.set.org / em-ma.boustead@madeley.set.org / lee.royal@madeley.set.org
- You can also speak to any of the safeguarding team highlighted above on the main school number.

Self-harm among young children in UK doubles in six years.

'The rate of self-harm among young children in the UK has doubled over the last six years, according to a new analysis'.

'There were several other notable findings, including a 68% rise in rates of self-harm among girls aged 13 to 16 since 2011'.

'It's almost impossible to say how many young people are self-harming. This is because very few teenagers tell anyone what's going on, so it's incredibly difficult to keep records or have an accurate idea of scale. It is thought that nearly a quarter of 14 year olds have self-harmed, but the actual figure could be much higher'.

What is Self-harm?

Self-harm is when a person hurts themselves as a way of dealing with very difficult feelings, painful memories or overwhelming situations and experiences. Some people have described self-harm as a way to:

- express something that is hard to put into words
- turn invisible thoughts or feelings into something visible
- change emotional pain into physical pain
- reduce overwhelming emotional feelings or thoughts
- have a sense of being in control
- escape traumatic memories
- have something in life that they can rely on
- punish themselves for their feelings and experiences
- stop feeling numb, disconnected or dissociated
- create a reason to physically care for themselves
- express suicidal feelings and thoughts without taking their own life.



After self-harming the person may feel a short-term sense of release, but the cause of the distress is unlikely to have gone away. Self-harm can also bring up very difficult emotions and could make the person feel worse.

Myths attached to self-harming

There are lots of myths attached to self-harm. This isn't surprising – myths and misunderstandings often arise when a problem like self-harm is poorly understood. Negative stereotypes can be powerful. They need to be challenged because they stop people talking about their issues and asking for help. These myths also mean that professionals, family and friends can misunderstand people who self-harm.

MYTH: 'Self-harm is 'attention-seeking''

One of the most common stereotypes is that self-harm is about 'attention seeking'. This is not the case. Many people who self-harm don't talk to anyone about what they are going through for a long time, and it can be very hard for them to find enough courage to ask for help.

MYTH: 'Self-harm is a goth thing'

Self-harm has been stereotyped to be seen as part of youth subcultures such as "goth" or "emo". While some research suggests a link, there is no conclusive evidence of this, with little or no evidence supporting the belief that self-harm is part of any particular young person's subculture.

MYTH: 'People who self-harm must enjoy it'

Some people believe that people who self-harm take pleasure in the pain or risk associated with the behaviour. There is no evidence that people who self-harm feel pain differently than anyone else. The harmful behaviour often causes people great pain. For some, being depressed has left them numb, and they want to feel anything to remind them they are alive, even if it hurts. Others have described this pain as punishment.

What can friends and family do to help?

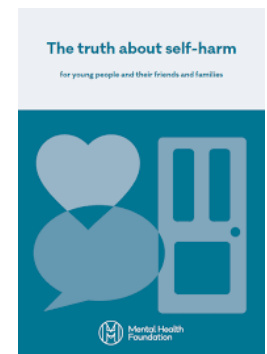
Whether someone tells you directly, or you suspect that someone is hurting themselves, it can be difficult to know what to say and how best to approach the situation.

You might feel shocked, angry, helpless, responsible or any number of other difficult emotions.

- Try not to panic or overreact. The way you respond to your friend or family member will have an impact on how much they open up to you and other people about their self-harm in the future.
- Remember that self-harm is usually someone's way of managing very hard feelings or experiences, and that in the majority of cases it is different to suicidal feelings.

There are lots of things you can do to make a difference to someone you know who self-harms. Your attitude and how you relate to them is one of the key things that can help them feel supported. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Try to be non-judgemental.
- Let the person know that you are there for them.
- Relate to them as a whole person, not just their self-harm.
- Try to have empathy and understanding about what they are doing.
- Let them be in control of their decisions.
- Offer to help them find support (see Useful contacts below).
- Remind them of their positive qualities and things they do well.
- Try to have honest communication, where you take responsibility for any fears you have.



What doesn't help?

Sometimes, even with the best will in the world, attempts to support someone can backfire. Here are some potential pitfalls to watch out for:

- Trying to force change.
- Acting or communicating in a way that threatens to take control away from your loved one.
- Either ignoring their injuries or overly focusing on them.
- Labelling self-harm as 'attention seeking'.

Although it often isn't, self-harm can sometimes be a person's way of asking for attention. If so, it is important to remember that there is nothing wrong with wanting attention, and that deep distress can get in the way of someone's ability to be direct about what they need.

Distractions

The main way people help themselves when they want to self-harm is through distraction.

Different distractions work for different people, and the same distraction won't necessarily work for them every time. For example, distracting themselves from anger feels very different to distracting themselves from fear, so it's important that they have a few different strategies to choose from.

There are some excellent tips on the mind.org.uk website on distracting the urge to self-harm:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/self-harm/helping-yourself-now/>

Further resources:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/self-harm>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/self-harm/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/my-feelings/self-harm/>

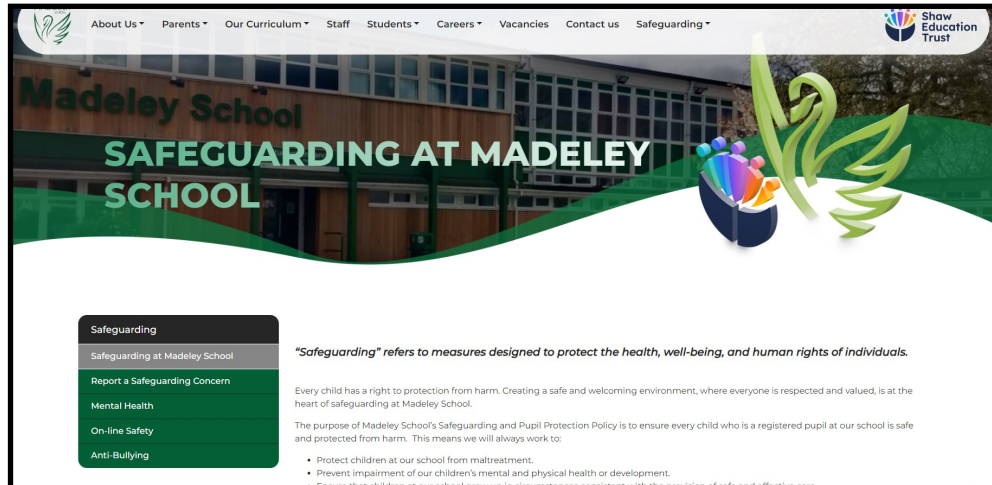
<https://www.selfharm.co.uk/>



Safeguarding updates

Madeley School Website—Safeguarding

We have been working hard at updating our school website and the safeguarding pages are now fully complete. Please take some time to take a look at the range of resources we have for students and their families to access. There are lots of links to support organisations and resources for a number of issues which may affect your family.



Mental Health News

We have great news to share with you. We recently applied to be part of Wave 12 Mental Health Support Teams in schools and have been lucky enough to be selected. More information to come on this early in the new academic year.

Further support for your child's wellbeing

If you have a child who is struggling with their wellbeing and needs to talk to someone when away from school, please use the contacts below:

North Staffordshire urgent mental health helpline: call [0800 0 328 728](tel:0800 0 328 728) option 1 (covers Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs Moorlands).

Advice for children & their families, from early help support through to safeguarding call Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support Service on [0300 111 8007](tel:0300 111 8007)

For mental health support:

Visyon Call [01260 290000](tel:01260 290000), out of hours support The Staffordshire Crisis Team on [0300 123 0907](tel:0300 123 0907)

Samaritans www.samaritans.org

Young Minds www.youngminds.org.uk

For help with any sort of worry, big or small:

NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk

Childline www.childline.org.uk

