RESPONDING TO SELF HARM

The SAFEMinds Responding to Self Harm in Schools Flowchart provides a step by step process to guide schools when responding to incidents of self harm and the ongoing support of the child or young person and the broader school community. The Flowchart links to other resources within the NIP it in the bud! Toolkit to guide decision making about support and referral for students expressing emotional distress through self harm. It is recommended that this resource be incorporated into your school’s existing student wellbeing policies and emergency management protocols. For further advice regarding management of self harm in schools refer to guidance available within your state or sector (Victorian Government schools - education.vic.gov.au).
**RESPONDING TO SELF HARM IN SCHOOLS**

### NOTICE

Stay calm

- Keep child or young person safe
- If child or young person is in class, take them to a safe place
- Ask them to hand over what they have used to self harm

### INQUIRE

Inquire sensitively and competently

- Ask student wellbeing or leadership colleague to check safety of classmates
- Respect confidentiality of child or young person concerned
- Contact parents/carers if others are at risk and ensure support is provided for them

**Suicide risk assessment to be completed by a trained person**

- Ask the child or young person if they are OK
- Inquire regarding circumstances/trigger/frequency of self harm
- Identify if this is a once off or repetitive self harm

- Assess current emotional distress and potential underlying problems (i.e. complete a SAFEMinds Safety Map)

- Ask child or young person if they have used social media to communicate their self harm. If so, request that they remove any relevant photos or messages.

- Develop a Safety Plan with the child or young person and their parent/carer (e.g., distract and delay techniques, brief interventions, referral)

### PLAN

Collaborate, Prepare, Act

- Discuss next steps with the child or young person and their parent/carer
- Contact parents/carers if others are concerned

**Suicide risk assessment to be completed by a trained person**

- Child or young person is linked in with mental health professional
- Student wellbeing or leadership colleague to liaise with mental health professionals

- Monitor and prepare with student for their return to school, including how to cover wounds/scars and what to say to peers

**Student returns to school**

**If they still need to refer on?**

**Yes**

- Record planning and action on SAFEMinds Safety Management Plan
- Review progress regularly

**No**

- Ensure staff involved in response have opportunity for debrief, support and consultation when needed

### Self Harm Incident occurs at school

**IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY:** Call an ambulance (000), if the student:

- Has taken an overdose or consumed poison
- Is confused, disoriented or unconscious
- Has bleeding that is rapid or pulsing

You may need to call the police if a student is violent or so distressed that they are unmanageable in the school environment.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- Suicide risk assessments should only be undertaken by a trained professional (e.g., mental health professional or school staff trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid or STORM)
- No suicide risk means no suicidal thoughts nor plans

**SAMPLE SAFETY PLAN:**

- When I feel stressed I will contact...
- When I feel the urge to self harm I will...
- If that doesn’t help, I will...

- My supports are...

**SAFETY MAP**

- SAFEMinds Notice TIP SHEET
- SAFEMinds Notice Map
- SAFEMinds Safety Map
- SAFEMinds System of Care Map
- SAFEMinds SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN
- SAFEMinds SAFE AND HEALTHY MINDS BRIEF INTERVENTION KIT

**FAILSAFES**

- When a student self harm they:
  - Are safe
  - Are accessed to support
  - Are taken seriously

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Respect confidentiality of child or young person concerned
- Notify leadership/carers if others are concerned

**Student wellbeing**

- Ask student wellbeing or leadership colleague to check on student for their return to school
- Inquire regarding circumstances/trigger/frequency of self harm
- Identify if this is a once off or repetitive self harm

**NOTICE INQUIRE PLAN**

- YES
- NO

**DO YOU STILL NEED TO REFER ON?**

**YES**

- Record planning and action on SAFEMinds Safety Management Plan
- Review progress regularly

**NO**

- Ensure staff involved in response have opportunity for debrief, support and consultation when needed

**Check SAFEMinds System of Care Map and Referral Matrix for appropriate support and service and refer on**

**REFERRAL**

- SAFEMinds Notice TIP SHEET
- SAFEMinds Notice Map
- SAFEMinds Safety Map
- SAFEMinds System of Care Map
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**NOTICE INQUIRE PLAN**

- YES
- NO

**DO YOU STILL NEED TO REFER ON?**

**YES**

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- Review progress regularly

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