



Prevention and Postvention Protocol for Isle of Wight Schools and Colleges

How to support the School/College community in the case of a death by
(suspected) suicide and information which may help prevent suicides

Isle of Wight Public Health

www.iow.gov.uk

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Version Control

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Introduction

Suicides are tragic and deeply distressing. Suicides are also the leading cause of death in young people (males and females) with around 200 schoolchildren each year taking their life in the UK¹. When there is a death by (suspected²) suicide, there is likely to be a ripple effect; it is estimated that after a death by suicide, around 135 people are exposed to the suicide (Cerel et al 2018³). People bereaved by suicide can be up to 65% more likely to attempt suicide themselves⁴ and are particularly vulnerable. It is therefore important to prevent suicides and the impact of a suicide. Potential clusters of suicides should be identified at the earliest opportunity and an early intervention response and effective support for those affected, put in place. Implementation of this protocol is important in delivering this objective. Other aspects of this work include early identification and data sharing on suicide.

When a death by suicide (or suspected suicide) occurs of someone connected to a school/college (student, member of staff, parent for example), the ripple effect is likely to be even wider. In some parts of the country, this has translated into a cluster or contagion effect where several young people have taken their lives following the death of a friend. This clustering can relate to geography, gender, age grouping, ethnic grouping and social connections. Exposure to suicide may be a strong predictor of suicidality (Swanson & Colman, 2013⁵). Schools and communities should be aware of an increased risk for at least two years following a suicide event.

This protocol has been developed to help schools and colleges on the Isle of Wight identify and support students who may be suicidal and importantly to consider a wide range of associated issues, in the case of a death by (suspected) suicide. It both supports schools/colleges to prepare in case there ever is a (suspected) suicide, and also how to best respond when a suspected suicide has taken place. This protocol will also be developed to support workplaces and communities affected by suicide.

For further information about mental wellbeing work on the Isle of Wight, please email: publichealth@iow.gov.uk

The aim of this protocol is:

To reduce suicides on the Isle of Wight by better supporting those bereaved by suicide. This protocol is specifically for schools and the colleges on the Island.

¹ Office for National Statistics. Statistical Bulletin

² The word 'suspected' is used in the document as a suicide is not the confirmed cause of death until the Coroner's inquest is complete.

³ Cerel, J et al (2018) How many People are exposed to Suicide? Not Six

⁴ <http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/1/e009948>

⁵ Swanson S & Colman I, 2013 *CMAJ*. 2013 Jul 9; 185(10): 870–877

The objectives of this protocol are;

- To provide guidance on developing a plan when there has been a (suspected) suicide (postvention), in the case of a student (or former student) at the school/college (although this protocol also contains useful information in the case of a death of an adult).
- To provide guidance on developing a plan in advance of an event taking place.
- To enable agencies/organisations working to reduce suicides on the Isle of Wight the opportunity to reduce the possibility of any “clustering”.
- To provide details of support available following a suicide/suspected suicide.
- To enable agencies/organisations working to reduce suicides on the Isle of Wight the opportunity to learn from events leading to the suicide/suspected suicide.
- Help prevent suicides in schools or colleges.
- To signpost to relevant training and support services.

Background to this work

The Suicide Prevention Partnership on the Isle of Wight is a partnership of agencies and organisations with the aim of preventing suicides across the Island. The partnership has identified four key areas of work, in line with national guidance including working with vulnerable groups and those bereaved by suicide (or suspected suicide). The development of this protocol is part of the delivery of the Suicide Prevention plan for the Isle of Wight.

The protocol was originally developed by Hampshire County Council (Public Health) with the support of key agencies including Samaritans, CAMHS, Hampshire Constabulary, Southdowns College in Havant, Simon Says and Winchester University. Other Hampshire County Council colleagues contributed including Educational Psychology Service, Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service, Personal Development Learning and Communications Teams. Use of supporting documentation, such as the Papyrus “Building Suicide-Safer Schools and Colleges” guide for teachers and staff⁶ and Samaritans Step by Step⁷ was also been invaluable.

The document was subsequently adapted for the Isle of Wight (IW) by Isle of Wight Council (Public Health) with input from (IW) Children’s Safeguarding Team and IW CAMHS.

⁶ Papyrus 2018 Building Suicide-Safer Schools and College: A guide for teachers and staff

⁷ http://www.samaritans.org/sites/default/files/kcfinder/files/HWWNIM_Feb17_Final_web.pdf

Putting a Postvention⁸ Plan in place at your school/college

Ideally, in a school or college setting, there will be a written plan/policy, developed in advance of a (suspected) suicide. This plan may be slightly different for each school or college, depending on the school structure, skills/support available but staff should have been appropriately trained and supported to undertake a postvention role – so that all feel ready and willing to help. Your plan or policy should include some nationally recognised steps, (slightly adapted for the Island). This should be based on the Papyrus “Building Suicide-Safer Schools and Colleges” guidance⁹ and the Samaritans’ Step by Step (Help When we Needed it Most) (2017) booklet.¹⁰

Please use the following steps as a guide, whether it has been possible to put a postvention plan in place or not:

Step One - Co-ordination (Immediate response when a (suspected) suicide occurs)

The Headteacher or Principal should convene a postvention, or crisis, team which will probably include the school counsellor, nurse, teachers of the student and other members of the senior management team. Ensure that the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) Team is aware of the death, in the case of a young person under 18 years. Samaritans can supply specially trained Postvention Advisors and a Step by Step postvention programme for the use of educational establishments. An early contact (within the first 24 hours) is recommended.” (Contact: 0808 168 2528 or email stepbystep@samaritans.org) Step by Step resources are available at: <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/stepstep/step-step-resources/>

The postvention team’s key task at this time is to decide who will do what.

Ensuring the team is aware of the support that is available to staff, students and family, is crucial. The Help is at Hand document may provide some useful information to help with this. Other documents, such as “When a child dies” will be made available to the parents by their key worker.

<http://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/support-guides/help-is-at-hand/>

⁸ Postvention “is the term given to activities and programmes that are intended to assist those who have been bereaved by suicide to cope with what has happened. Suicide prevention and postvention are closely related in that postvention can also prevent further deaths.” (p.3, New Zealand Ministry of Youth Development, ‘Guidance for community organisations involved in suicide postvention’, 2005) – taken from Help when we Needed it Most (Samaritans, 2017)

¹⁰ http://www.samaritans.org/sites/default/files/kcfinder/files/HWWNIM_Feb17_Final_web.pdf

Step Two - Establish the facts, follow the Child Death Review Process and make contact with the family (Immediate/Within 24 hours)

Establish the facts and follow the Child Death Review Process: A member of the postvention team should firstly check with the authorities to be sure of the facts surrounding the death. You may already have been contacted by a colleague leading the Joint Agency Review (JAR) process, often a Health or Police representative, which is triggered in all cases of an unexpected child death. The Child Death Review process (of which JAR is a part) outlined by the Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership (LCSP) is as follows:

<https://hipsprocedures.org.uk/skyyth/safeguarding-partnerships-and-organisational-responsibilities/child-death-reviews#s3879>

If the JAR process is triggered, it will arrange a JAR Phase 1 meeting and consideration will be given throughout as to the necessity for continuing to a JAR Phase 2 meeting and a final JAR Phase 3 meeting (Child Death Review Meeting). If at any time information becomes available that suggests the death was expected, then there is no requirement to continue the full JAR process. In the case of an unexpected death, the Child Death Review Meeting will form part of the final case discussion in the JAR 3 final meeting.

You will be asked by the CDOP Team to complete a statutory Child Death Reporting Form shortly after the death. This form is to be returned to the local CDOP Team so it can be shared with the National Child Mortality Database. This form may be available to you online but can also be downloaded [here](#).

Contact with the family: The nominated link worker (headteacher/school counsellor/nurse or Family Liaison Officer - for example) should make contact with the family as soon as possible. This will help to support the family and manage communications. Rumours can be inaccurate and deeply hurtful and unfair to the missing/deceased person and their family and friends.

Advice from those who have been in this position suggest that, if possible, it is useful if the link worker remains the same for the duration of the postvention period.

Information about the death should not be disclosed to students until the family has been consulted. If the family think the death is a suspected suicide but do not wish for this to be disclosed, explain that students are already talking about the death amongst themselves and state that having adults in the school who are able to talk to students about suicide and sudden deaths can help to keep people safe.

Ensure that the ongoing support of the school/college is offered to the family. Ensure, too, that the family does not receive any general administrative letters/texts (eg school trip information, parent consultation events).

Ensure that any schools or colleges where siblings attend are contacted at an early point so they can also use the protocol as appropriate.

Samaritans can support schools and colleges to contact and support families. They can be contacted on 0808 168 2528 or email stepbystep@samaritans.org

Step Three – Media Contact (as soon as possible, due to social media “chatter”. Media will pick up on things very quickly)

A suicide of someone connected to a school/college can attract much media and social media attention. It is therefore important to designate a media spokesperson and prepare a media statement. Ensure that all staff are made aware that only the media spokesperson is authorised to speak to the media. Advise those that answer external telephone calls to the school that they should not engage in answering any questions but should:

- Make a note of the reporter’s contact details (including mobile and email address)
- Make a note of the questions asked
- Pass the information given, to the Headteacher/Principal as a matter of urgency

An approved prepared statement should be compiled, in order to control the way any response on behalf of the school is answered. The communication log at the end of this document may be useful (Annex 1 page 19).

The Isle of Wight Council can provide media support to schools in the event of an incident. Email media@iow.gov.uk or call the Corporate Communications Team on 01983 823793. The number is currently 9.30am to 5pm and directs to the email at other times. Email is watched out of hours by senior colleagues.

Alternatively, Samaritans’ media team can help support schools/colleges (and the family) in dealing with the media during a crisis (Contact: 07943 809162 or samaritans.org/media-centre). There are more specific details on handling the media in the Step by Step programme. Schools will also receive detailed advice and support from their assigned Postvention Adviser once initial contact has been made. Again, Schools/Educational Establishments are therefore encouraged to contact Step by Step at the earliest possible opportunity.

Samaritans’ advice is not to give out any details of the method by which the person died, or any “suicide note”, or to provide any “explanation” of the suspected suicide such as “was stressed about exam results” etc.

If the school has a Facebook page or twitter account we would strongly advise taking advice on what or whether to post, either by contacting media support or Samaritans media team on the numbers above.

Step Four - Contact other agencies who may have been in contact with the individual

In the case of a suspected suicide you will be asked to follow the Joint Agency Response (JAR) process which will help to ascertain facts about the death and;

- to establish, where possible, a cause or causes of death (in conjunction with the Coroner). Details about H.M. Coroners' Service on the Isle of Wight is available here:

Address:

Coroners Office
Seaclose Offices
Fairlee Road
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 2QS

Phone:

01983 823010

Opening Times:

Monday - Thursday 8.30am - 4.30pm
Friday - 8.30am - 4.00pm

- to identify any potential modifiable factors
- to provide ongoing support to the family
- to learn lessons and make recommendations in order to reduce the risks of future child deaths

You will be asked to meet and share information known to you about the child including the Child Death Reporting Form, with other key agencies/organisations who have a part to play in the Joint Agency Response for the child, such as health professionals, eg school nurses, CAMHS, social Workers, police, school counsellor, and so forth. This helps with information gathering to form part of any investigations and to establish any learning from this event in the time immediately after it – Were there any issues relating to this individual? Could anything have been done to prevent the incident? Are there key risks to other individuals? What could help mitigate against these risks? The purpose of this discussion is not to pass on blame, or to pass judgement on service provision, but rather to understand the event and learn and help prevent any future suicide events.

Part of the Joint Agency Response and the Child Death Review process is to make notes of these discussions to record any facts and remember any learning. It is always more difficult to recall exact timings/issues several months later. The JAR

meetings minutes will be shared with all representatives. It is however important that you act on any immediate/pressing issues and make notes of the actions to be taken. Support will be available from the JAR lead professional if required.

Step Five – Communicate with and take care of staff (Within one day)

As soon as possible, organise a meeting for all staff to attend. At this meeting, ensure that the facts about the death and next steps are clearly communicated. Ensure members of staff are made aware of how to identify and support both students and staff experiencing mental distress. Ensure that all staff are informed about where to find this information (see Prevention section on page 7). Ensure that you and your colleagues are looked after (consider asking Samaritans Postvention Team to support the school, and/or other professionals such as counsellors and therapists to talk about how you are feeling).

Step Six – Communicate with and take care of the students (Within one day)

As soon as possible after the staff communication event, break the news to the students. Samaritans' advice is that this is best done in small groups, or classes. It is better to be factual but to avoid detail about the act itself. Do not disclose details about the method used, whether there was a suicide note, or its contents. A briefing note for staff to use with the small groups/class can be useful to ensure consistency of message. Consider providing immediate counselling or emotional support to students (and staff) in a separate room. Samaritans' postvention team may be able to assist with this support. Contact CAMHS who may be able to provide support to students who are in the care of their service and who may be struggling.

Advise students to avoid contact with the media and ensure that you have given careful thought to rules and guidelines to assist students if/when communicating about the incident on social media sites.

It may be appropriate to send out a letter to parents/carers of all pupils/students, to inform them of the incident and to make them aware of possible risks, together with information about support available. The Samaritans' Step by Step service can advise and assist with this. The communication should contain:

- What has happened
- What support the school is putting in place
- What actions the school will take with regards to funerals and memorials
- Where to find further information about suicide and grief
- Where to access support for themselves
- What to do if they are worried about someone else

Step Seven – Funeral

Depending on the wishes of the family, the school/college may wish to send representative/s to attend the funeral service. Samaritans' recommendation is that parents or guardians accompany students who wish to attend and that those who don't attend have normal classes to go to. There should be no reason why there would be a greater attendance at a funeral service under these circumstances than for any other tragic death at the school.

Step Eight – Memorials

It is important to consult with the parents and (if appropriate) the wider family of the person who died to establish their wishes in this matter. The school/college will want to think carefully about memorials for the individual who has died; to strike an appropriate balance between supporting distressed individuals and fulfilling the central purpose of providing education and learning. Some establishments have used a miniature artificial tree (and labels with string) to be left in a suitable place, offering a chance for individuals to leave a thought/memory/prayer for that individual on the branches of the tree. It is important to set an appropriate time limit to the memorial (with the suggestion of up to two weeks) and to strive to treat all deaths in the same way.

In the longer term, memorials can be organised (tree/plant/plaque etc).

Sending a card to the parents/family one year after the incident can be a supportive gesture and one that may be well appreciated.

Step Nine – Evaluation and Follow-up

Consider gathering the thoughts of the postvention team, to evaluate the response, record key learning and adapt procedures accordingly.

Prevention of Suicide

This section covers the following areas;

1. Development of a Suicide Prevention Policy
2. Language around Suicide
3. Intervention – how to identify and what to do when someone is struggling
4. Suicide Prevention Training
5. Teaching Resilience in School

1. Development of a Suicide Prevention Policy or Plan

Both Samaritans and Papyrus recommend that schools and colleges develop a suicide safety policy or plan which is known by the whole community and which is focused on suicide prevention. Both organisations have published guidance which can help develop your policy, as follows;

- <https://papyrus-uk.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/toolkitfinal.pdf>
- <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/step-step/step-step-resources/responding-suspected-suicide-schools-and-colleges/>

2. Language around Suicide

It is recognised that language can help as well as harm. Papyrus talk about “using sensitive and appropriate language” to “help build awareness and understanding to increase empathy and support.” Their website contains useful resources which can be downloaded to help start conversations about suicide. However, the following table identifies unhelpful and helpful language which might be helpful to be aware of;

Unhelpful Language	Why it is Unhelpful	Language to use instead (using Papyrus guidance)
Successful suicide	If someone dies by suicide it cannot ever be a success.	Died by suicide Ended their life Took their own life Killed themselves
Commit suicide	Suicide hasn't been a crime since 1961. Using the word “commit” suggests that it is still a crime which perpetuates stigma or the sense that it's a sin.	Died by suicide Ended their life Took their own life Killed themselves

<p>You're not thinking of doing something stupid/silly are you?</p>	<p>This suggests that the person's thoughts of suicide are stupid or silly, and/or that the person is him/herself stupid or silly. If asked this question, people are most likely to deny their true feelings for fear of being viewed negatively.</p>	<p>Are you telling me you want to kill yourself/end your life/die/die by suicide? Sometimes, when people are feeling the way you are, they think about suicide. Is that what you're thinking about?</p> <p>It sounds like you're thinking about suicide; is that right?</p>
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3. Intervention - how to identify if, and what to do when, someone is suicidal

Staff may feel worried about over-responding, but in truth, it is much better to over-respond than under-respond in the case of a potential suicide.

Papyrus guidance on spotting the signs of suicidal thoughts is as follows;

“It’s not always easy to know if someone is suicidal. After all, we cannot read other people’s minds to truly understand how they are feeling in any given moment. Sometimes though, there may be signs that a young person is feeling suicidal; some signs are more obvious than others and some can be quite subtle. After all, some young people may not have the skills, confidence or language to describe how they feel. Therefore, we might need to pay a little more attention than usual. Alternatively, some young people may be more comfortable directly expressing their thoughts of suicide which will allow us to explore them further.

So, what might the signs be? People thinking about suicide often invite us to ask directly if suicide has become an option for them.

There is no exhaustive list of ‘invitations’ but changes in behaviour (loss of interest/withdrawal, giving away possessions), physical indicators (weight loss, lack of interest in appearance), expressing thoughts or feelings (Hopeless, sad, guilty, worthless) and the words/language being used (“I can’t take it anymore”, “Everyone would be better off without me”) could all be indicators that someone is experiencing thoughts of suicide.

Recent research has indicated that asking a young person if they are experiencing thoughts of suicide can actually reduce the risk of them ending their life. Asking and determining if that person is feeling suicidal gives you the opportunity to explore those feelings further and support them to stay safe.

The most important thing to do to ascertain if someone is struggling with thoughts of suicide is to **ASK!**”

Generally speaking, someone in distress may exhibit direct and/or indirect warning signs of suicidal thoughts. It's important for staff to learn how to identify these warning signs as they may indicate intention for suicidal behaviour. It's also important to understand that those with a mental illness or who have had a prior suicide attempt and/or been bereaved by suicide themselves are at greater risk of suicide.

There are some excellent resources to support you to identify and work with someone who is, or who may be, feeling suicidal. These are available here;

- 1) Papyrus website: Worried about someone - <https://papyrus-uk.org/worried-about-someone/>
- 2) MIND website: Supporting someone who feels suicidal - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helping-someone-else/supporting-someone-who-feels-suicidal/#.XOP7KNIUndM>
- 3) Samaritans website: Worried about someone - https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/worried-about-someone-else/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIpeiQm9us4gIVyYbVCh1XZQLZEAYASAAEgKfEvD_BwE
- 4) Rethink website: How to support someone - <https://www.rethink.org/carers-family-friends/what-you-need-to-know/suicidal-thoughts-how-to-support-someone>

4. Suicide Prevention Training

Although some suicide prevention training is available (see below), no formal training is strictly necessary to provide crucial early support for someone.

However, nationally-recognised online training (how to have a conversation with someone who may be suicidal) is available free of charge from

<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/> and

<http://www.nwyhelearning.nhs.uk/elearning/HEE/SuicidePrevention/>

Isle of Wight Samaritans provide suicide awareness and prevention training for staff and co-workers. For further details contact outreach@iow-samaritans.org

5. Teaching Resilience/Mental Health & Wellbeing in Schools

Below are some links to useful resources that might be helpful in terms of teaching resilience and developing emotional awareness and listening skills;

Samaritans DEAL (Developing Emotional Awareness and Listening) is a free resource for teachers and other educational professionals designed to help develop resilience in young people. DEAL includes lesson plans, activities, hand-outs, DEAL digital resources, teachers' notes and staff training materials can all be accessed and

downloaded at any time from Samaritans website.

- PSHE Association Teaching about Mental Health Guidance 2019 Update <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/sites/default/files/u26918/Teaching%20about%20mental%20health%20guidance%20March%202019%20update.pdf>
- Heads Together <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/teaching-resources/>

For further information about resources available to support teaching resilience/mental health and wellbeing in schools, please email: publichealth@iow.gov.uk

Useful Contacts

Urgent/Crisis Situation

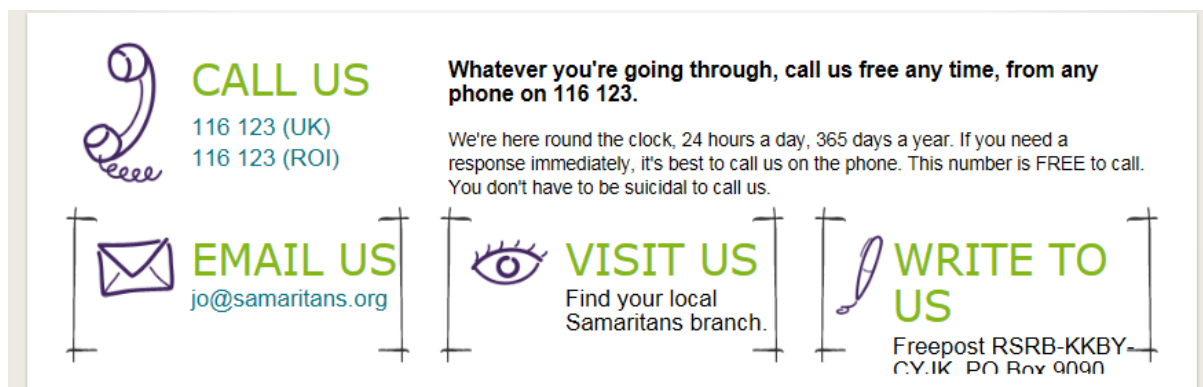
1. Help is at Hand

Help is at Hand provides people affected by suicide with both emotional and practical support. The guide is designed to be given out by bereavement support organisations and by those who are likely to be first on the scene after a suspected suicide, including police and ambulance staff. It will also be widely promoted online through partnerships with coroners, funeral directors, police, doctors and bereavement counselling and support organisations.

<http://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/support-guides/help-is-at-hand/>

2. Samaritans www.samaritans.org.uk

Confidential listening ear available 24/7 365 days a year, via phone, text, email or face to face, for all ages. You don't have to be suicidal to make contact.



The graphic displays four contact methods for Samaritans: 'CALL US' with phone numbers 116 123 (UK) and 116 123 (ROI); 'EMAIL US' with the address jo@samaritans.org; 'VISIT US' with the instruction to find a local branch; and 'WRITE TO US' with a freepost address: RSRB-KKBY, CY11K, PO Box 9000. A central text block states: 'Whatever you're going through, call us free any time, from any phone on 116 123. We're here round the clock, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you need a response immediately, it's best to call us on the phone. This number is FREE to call. You don't have to be suicidal to call us.'

3. MIND

This link provides information about how to support someone in a mental health crisis;

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/crisis-services/#.XdgbkPn7Qr8>

4. YoungMinds Crisis Messenger

Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis

- If you need urgent help text YM to 85258
- All texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors

- Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus.

5. POPYRUS www.papyrus-uk.org

National charity for the prevention of young suicides. HOPELineUK is a specialist telephone service staffed by trained professionals who give non-judgemental support, practical advice and information to;

- Children, teenagers and young people up to the age of 35 who are worried about how they are feeling
- Anyone who is concerned about a young person

Call: 0800 068 41 41

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

SMS: 07786 209697

6.CALM (Campaign Against Living Miserably) www.thecalmzone.net

- Offers support to young men in the UK who are down or in a crisis.
- Helpline: 0800 58 58 58 (Daily 17:00-midnight)
- [Webchat](#)

Longer-Term/Follow-up Support

7. School Nursing Service

The School Nursing service works in partnership with children, young people and their families to ensure that pupil's health needs are supported within their school and their community. Our 0-19 public health nursing duty desk supports young people and families on the Isle of Wight. The number is 01983 821388 and staffed by a health visitor and school nurse. In addition, schools practitioners can make a referral to the school nursing team if they have a health concern about a young person.

8. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) are made up of specialist teams offering assessment and treatment to children and young people up to age 18 who have emotional, behavioural or mental health problems.

Address:

Community CAMHS
7 Pyle Street
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 1JW

Opening times:

Monday – Thursday 08:30 – 17:00

Friday 08:30 – 16:30

Telephone: 01983 523602 (answer phone out of hours)

E mail: ccamhs@iow.nhs.uk

9. PAPYRUS www.papyrus-uk.org

National charity for the prevention of young suicides

Call: 0800 068 41 41

www.papyrus-uk.org

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

SMS: 07786 209697

10. MindOut Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans & Queer Mental Health Service

- Offers support, information and advocacy, including suicide prevention support, to LGBTQ communities
- 01273 234839
- info@mindout.org.uk

11. Childline www.childline.org.uk

- If you're under 19 you can confidentially call, email, or chat online about any problem big or small
Freephone 24h helpline: 0800 1111
- [Sign up for a childline account](#) on the website to be able to message a counsellor anytime without using your email address
- Chat 1:1 with an [online advisor](#)

12. The Mix www.themix.org.uk

- If you're under 25 you can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on their webchat. You can also use their phone counselling service, or get more information on support services you might need.
- Freephone: 0808 808 4994 (13:00-23:00 daily)

13. Bereavement (by Suicide)

IOW Samaritans offer support by phone to people bereaved by suicide whose details are passed to them by Hampshire Constabulary. It may be possible to extend this service to referrals from other agencies.

Cruse have a local branch on the Island. They offer general bereavement care including bereavement by suicide. For details of Cruse on the Island contact Shirley Peters, Chairman: shirleypeters1@msn.com

14. Sad events and critical incidents in early years settings, schools and colleges

Educational psychologists (EPs) from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology (HIEP) provide support and guidance to schools and colleges in response to critical incidents (Appendix 1). A critical incident may also be described as a sad event or a school emergency and typically involves an incident which is sudden, outside of the 'everyday' or typical experience, unpredictable and brings distress to the school or college community.

Examples of critical incidents can include:

- death of staff member, pupil or member of the school community
- serious accident involving pupils or staff members
- a major fire in a school / setting
- an event witnessed outside of the school (such as a serious assault or accident)

Please contact: Rebecca.Murphy@hants.gov.uk

Sad events and critical incidents in early years settings, schools and colleges in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight

Introduction

Educational psychologists (EPs) from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Educational Psychology (HIEP) provide support and guidance to schools and colleges in response to critical incidents. A critical incident may also be described as a sad event or a school emergency and typically involves an incident which is sudden, outside of the 'everyday' or typical experience, unpredictable and brings distress to the school or college community.

Examples of critical incidents can include:

- death of staff member, pupil or member of the school community
- serious accident involving pupils or staff members
- a major fire in a school / setting
- an event witnessed outside of the school (such as a serious assault or accident)

Psychologists have established that the main aim of any response to a sad event or critical incident should be to reinforce existing, natural support networks; this is the case for children, young people and adults.

Therefore, the overall aim of the response of psychologists in HIEP is to provide swift and evidence-based psychological support tailored to the needs of the individual setting / community. This may be guidance on how to respond to emotional needs of children, young people and adults following an unexpected death or how to prepare for an expected event, such as terminal illness. While no circumstances are the same, there are underlying similarities in the reactions to expect and helpful steps to take.

It is important to note that we offer a response to all early years settings, schools and colleges across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. It does not matter if a school or college has a service level agreement (SLA) with us because this work is supported by Hampshire County Council.

How are educational psychologists usually notified of a sad event or critical incident?

- A member of school staff, usually a senior leader, gets in touch with their SLA EP or a senior EP in their local area team.
- A school improvement manager sometimes contacts us on behalf of a headteacher.
- We hear about a sad event or critical incident from Hampshire's Safeguarding Unit.
- Child death notifications.

What to expect from a HIEP educational psychologist?

- In whatever way we hear about a sad event or critical incident, as soon as possible, an EP will be in touch with the headteacher, principal or another senior leader.
- The purpose will be to ask about what happened, what steps have been taken so far and what action might be helpful by an EP.
- If there is a role for an EP, we will make an internal decision about which EP takes on that role.
- We avoid duplicating readily available advice and guidance and so can provide details about helpful websites and organisations that offer information and guidance on a range of sad events and critical incidents, and typical emotional and behavioural reactions.
- We can visit for face to face support; we will agree with you about who to involve and the practical arrangements. We can meet with individuals, with groups or both.
- A meeting will involve clarifying the facts about an event, providing information about the behaviours and feelings that can follow a sad event or critical incident, and agreeing future action.
- The meeting may be helpful to think through the developmental and psychological needs of children and young people, and the emotional needs of adults.
- It may be an opportunity to discuss support and management strategies for children and young people.
- The meeting may discuss how best to respond to the needs of a school's wider community.
- We can provide general staff professional development on loss and bereavement.
- We accept that different people react to a sad event or critical incident in different ways and that some reactions may be delayed. This means we will always be available to be contacted at any time in the future.

Supporting in the event of a suicide

When somebody dies by suicide, the impact on the wider community can be significant. A suicide death is a critical incident and HIEP can offer support; it is important to be mindful of particular differences to consider so please do let us know if it is suspected that a death may be a suicide.

Contact

If you are seeking support or would like further information about how HIEP can support your setting, please contact your local office, as below:

- West – Dr Anna Nolan, 01962 876 239
- North – Dan Taylor, 01252 814 835
- East – Julia Powell, 01252 814 729
- South and Isle of Wight – Dr Rebecca Murphy, 023 9244 1496

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