



# STAWELL SECONDARY COLLEGE

## **Suicide and Non-Suicidal Self-Injury Policy** **Critical Incident Response Plan**

### **Rationale:**

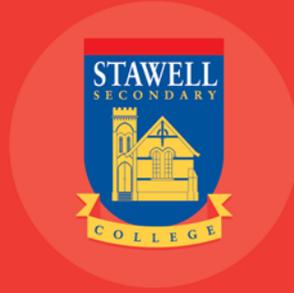
- This policy provides guidance for Stawell Secondary College in responding to student observation, allegation and disclosures indicating potential non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) and/or suicidal ideation.
- This policy applies to all staff and students at Stawell Secondary College. This policy does not prescribe intervention goals, strategies or specific counselling techniques or theories.
- This policy was initially developed in consultation with the Student Wellbeing and Engagement Team, Stawell Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN), Grampians Community Health, Headspace Melbourne and SSSO's and is endorsed by School Council.

### **Aims:**

- Stawell Secondary College to maintain good practice in the prevention of, and postvention response to, suicide and self-harm through the development, implementation and review of policies and procedures based on current evidence.
- To ensure that the physical and emotional wellbeing and safety of the student(s) and staff remains paramount in Stawell Secondary College's response to suicidal and self-harming behaviour
- To ensure that all the Stawell Secondary College staff receives a level of training and supervision appropriate to fulfil their role in responding to students at risk of self-harm and suicide.

### **Definitions:**

Active Supervision	Maintaining constant line of sight
Disclosure	The sharing or revealing of private information.
ICMHS	Infant and Child Mental Health Service
Non-Suicidal Self-Injury	The act of deliberately causing pain or hurting oneself – usually as a means of coping with difficult emotions, pressure or distress- without the intent to die (NSSI) Also referred to as self-harm or self-injury.
Postvention	Interventions to support and assist the bereaved after a suicide has occurred or been attempted.
Psychological Assessment	An assessment completed by a mental health professional or General Practitioner designed to provide insight into their cognitive functioning and overall mental health.
Risk Assessment	Evaluation designed to predict and measure a person's level of risk in terms of harming themselves.
Risk factors	Factors such as biological, physiological, social and cultural agents that are associated with suicide/suicide ideation and increase their probability.
Risk Management Plan	Document developed to manage current risks, foresee future risks and define responses.
Safety Plan	An intervention designed to reduce the immediate risk of suicidal behaviour. This may involve (but is not limited to) making the immediate



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	environment safe, reducing distress, identify coping strategies, and sign-posting supports.
School readiness	How ready a student is to attend school and succeed cognitively, socially and emotionally without being a risk to oneself or others.
Self-Harm	See NSSI definition
SSSO	Student Support Services Officers assist children and young people faced with learning barriers to achieve their educational and developmental potential. They provide strategies and specialised support at individual, group, school and network levels.
Suicidal behaviour	Includes the spectrum of activities related to suicide, including suicidal thinking and suicide attempts.
Suicidal Ideation	Behaviours of thoughts indicating attempting or contemplating suicide.
Suicide	The act of purposely ending one's life
Suicide attempt	A potentially self-injurious act intended to end one's life but which does not result in death
Suicide Prevention	Actions or initiatives to reduce the risk of suicide among populations or specific target groups.
YMHS	Youth Mental Health Service

## **Prevention:**

- At SSC it is everyone's responsibility to prevent suicide and self-harm.
- Anyone becoming aware of someone contemplating or attempting suicide, or self-harm, must take some form of action, even if it is as little as alerting another person or agency to the incident.
- In a critical incident situation you have the legislative power to prevent suicide as per the Crimes Act 1958.
  - **Section 463B Prevention of suicide**  
Every person is justified in using force as may reasonably be necessary to prevent the commission of suicide or of any act which he believes on reasonable ground would, if committed, amount to suicide.
- SSC is committed to providing positive social and emotional wellbeing for our students as preventative measures

## **Safety and Support Plan:**

- All incidents that involve suicide or self-harm must be treated as high risk, until assessed otherwise
- Staff who are alerted to self-harm or suicidal behaviours either by disclosure or allegation are to **immediately** notify a Leading Teacher/Wellbeing Coordinator/School Counsellor and **log the incident on SMT**. Where the above staff are unavailable, the staff member shall notify a Principal class member
- Staff must refer to the First Aid Policy where injury is present keeping in mind that, where appropriate, students who have superficial NSSI injuries should be asked to dress their own wounds.

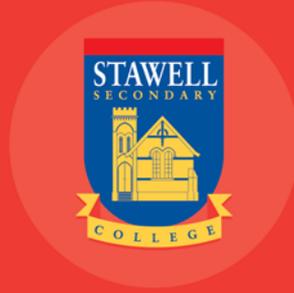


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- First-aid kits are located in the Sick Bay, Hall, Auto skills shed, Woodwork Room 26, Metal Room 25, Gym Office, Year 12 Centre Office, Science Lab preparatory room, Language Centre Staff Office, Panel Shop, and Staff Room/with Yard Duty staff.
- The student involved in the incident should be actively supervised until risk level is assessed.
- All staff should follow guidelines as per SAFEMinds Responding to Self-Harm flow chart (see Appendix 1) to inform their approach and to determine if the incident is of a self-harm nature or suicide risk and determine required actions.
- A Risk Assessment will be undertaken where required, designed to measure a student's risk of harm to themselves. Where the School Counsellor is unavailable, the Risk Assessment will be completed by another suitably qualified staff member (see Appendix 2 for current list of qualified staff members), using evidence based assessment and response practices.
- Where immediate danger to a child or young person is evident the emergency services and the Child Protection Intake Team are to be contacted immediately by Principal class staff, Leading teacher or School Counsellor.
- As required, the staff member undertaking the Risk Assessment will develop a Safety Plan with the student, based upon the risk level indicated (see Appendix 3 for Risk Indicator and Safety Planning)
- The Leading Teacher/Principal class staff/School Counsellor will notify a parent/ guardian of the risk of self-harm or suicide, unless contra-indicated by the mandatory reporting guidelines, or at the discretion of the Principal.
- As part of the Safety Plan the staff member will make referrals to appropriate services where required. (See Appendix 4- Community Referral Points)
- If a student has visible signs of NSSI they will be asked to cover the wounds and bandages (with long-sleeves, trousers) or remain at home until they have healed.
- A return to school plan or alternative support plan will be developed for students who have experienced a suicide or self-harm-related incident and will be reviewed regularly by House Leaders in consultation with Year Level Coordinators
- Stawell Secondary College is prepared for student disclosures of suicidal ideation or NSSI through a range of avenues, including disclosure to staff or to other students.
- All staff are supported to recognise the limits of individual roles and competencies and actively facilitate links to further levels of care where necessary.
- On induction new staff will familiarise themselves with this policy, and both the requirements and limitations of their role.
- Staff will be reminded of their responsibilities in regard to his policy at regular intervals, via internal staff professional development.

## **Postvention:**

- Postvention responses are implemented with the aim of supporting those bereaved by suicide in line with the Victorian Department of Education and Training "Guidelines to assist in responding to attempted suicide or suicide by a student' (see Appendix 5). A copy of these Guidelines is to be kept in the School Counsellor's office and provided to all teachers on-line and on induction.



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- Specific Postvention procedures will also be informed and guided by the BeYou Suicide Response Resources- Complete Tool Kit (see Appendix 6)
- Staff and students should ensure that they undertake processes of self-care, this could be, but is not restricted to, accessing the school counsellor or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Stawell Secondary College recognises that supporting students who are at risk of suicide and/or self-harm can be challenging and demanding.
- Stawell Secondary College is committed to monitoring and attending to the impact of student self-harm and/or suicide on students, staff and volunteers.
- Following an emergency incident staff, students and volunteers are encouraged to remain aware of their own emotional reactions and seek support from their Line Manager, School Counsellor, colleagues, the Employee Assistance Program or other appropriate avenues.
- Staff Wellbeing Coordinator will follow up with staff members who are affected by self-harm or suicide incidents to ensure support is provided when necessary.

## **Responsibilities:**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Delegation/Task</b>
Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communicate and facilitate staff education about the Policy.</li> <li>- Incident Support and Operations Centre notification (ISOC) and Mandatory report all incidents where required.</li> </ul>
Leading Teachers and Assistant Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete relevant training within the first year of the role.</li> <li>- Communicate and facilitate staff education and training around Suicide and NSSI in response to training.</li> <li>- Undertake risk assessments and develop Safety Plans with students where required</li> <li>- Communicate risk/incidents to parents/carers</li> <li>- Incident Support and Operations Centre notification and Mandatory report incidents where required</li> <li>- Recognise and manage limits of individual staff roles, knowledge and skills in responding to student NSSI or suicidal behaviours.</li> <li>- Complete Behaviour Management/Student Support Plans as required. Update and review as required</li> <li>- Make referrals to community agencies.</li> </ul>
Year Level & VCE/VCAL Coordinators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Complete training within the first year of the role (this may include SAFEMinds and/or BeYou)</li> <li>- Communicate and facilitate staff education and training around Suicide and NSSI in response to training.</li> </ul>
Home Group Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor and report on Behaviour Management Plans/Student Support Plans.</li> <li>- Provide ongoing support to students on a daily basis.</li> </ul>



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All Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compliance with Student Suicide and Non-Suicidal Self-Harm Policy.</li> <li>- Seek supervision/ debriefing as required.</li> <li>- Undertake relevant and adequate training that is provided.</li> <li>- Take appropriate actions and notify appropriate staff members to ensure the safety of students when presenting signs of self-harm or suicide ideation.</li> <li>- Log all incidents immediately on XUNO.</li> </ul>
School Counsellor/ Psychologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Compliance with Student Suicide and Non-Suicidal Self-Harm Policy.</li> <li>- Undertake student risk assessments with the knowledge of suicide risk factors.</li> <li>- Responds to student NSSI harm or suicidal behaviour in line with good practice.</li> <li>- Develop and review student Safety Plans.</li> <li>- Refer to external agencies as appropriate.</li> <li>- Provide counselling support as required.</li> <li>- Liaise with families/carers as required</li> </ul>
School First Aid Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide first aid to injuries as appropriate.</li> </ul>
SSSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide assistance, advice and recommendations.</li> </ul>

## **Implementation:**

- This policy is part of all Stawell Secondary College staff, student and volunteer orientation processes. Staff, students and volunteers are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.
- This policy should be referenced in relevant Stawell Secondary College policies, procedures and other supporting documents to ensure that it is familiar to all staff and actively used.
- The right of confidentiality is not absolute and is balanced against duty of care. Stawell Secondary College has a legal and professional responsibility to disclose information where not reporting might cause harm to another person.
- Students are advised of the limits of confidentiality during intake, assessment and if a self-harm, and/or suicide situation arises. Reasonable steps are taken to obtain student agreement for information to be disclosed to a third party.
- Confidential information is disclosed to those in a position to assist in the safety and management of students and staff involved. The information is restricted to that which elicits assistance.
- Privacy legislation requirements are considered in the disclosure of confidential information.
- Stawell Secondary College recognises that a student or staff suicide may impact on other students, staff, volunteers and members of the wider community.
- Staff and volunteers receive a level of training in recognising and responding to NSSI and/or suicide appropriate to their role.
- The Student Suicide and Non-Suicidal Self-Harm Policy will be communicated to all staff via the Principal and trained staff members via professional development sessions.



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## **Evaluation:**

After major incidents a debrief will occur with the affected parties to review how the Student Suicide and Self-Harm policy was followed. Feedback will be given to the Policy Sub-Committee for review.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle in August, every year. The review will be led by the Wellbeing Team and referred to the Policy Sub-Committee and School Council for ratification.

Last reviewed: August 2020  
Date of next review: August 2021

## **Update history:**

First issued	August 2016
Date of update	Summary of change(s)
August 2020	Altered list of staff who are trained to undertake risk assessment/management.

## **Appendix:**

1. SAFEMinds Responding to Self-Harm
2. Current list of staff members trained to undertake Risk Assessments as at August 2020
3. Risk Indicator and Safety Planning
4. Community Referral points
5. Victorian Department of Education 'Guidelines to assist in responding to attempted suicide or suicide by a student'
6. BeYou Suicide Response Resources: Complete Toolkit

## **References:**

Mills, K., Deady, M., Proudfoot, H., Sannibale, C., Teesson, M., Mattick, R., and Burns, L. (2009) *Guidelines on the management of co-occurring mental health conditions in alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment settings*. National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, University of New South Wales, Sydney

NSW Health 2005. *Framework for Suicide Risk Assessment and Management for NSW Health Staff*. NSW Health, Sydney.

Queensland Government 2008. *Principles for developing organisational policies and protocols for responding to clients at risk of suicide and self-harm*. Department of Communities, Brisbane.

Ross, J., Darke, S., Kelly, E., and Hetherington, K. (2010) *Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention Strategies: Current Practices in Australian Residential Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Services*. National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre, Sydney.



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Crimes Act 1958, Version No. 262, No. 6231 of 1958, Version incorporation amendments as at 1 June 2016.

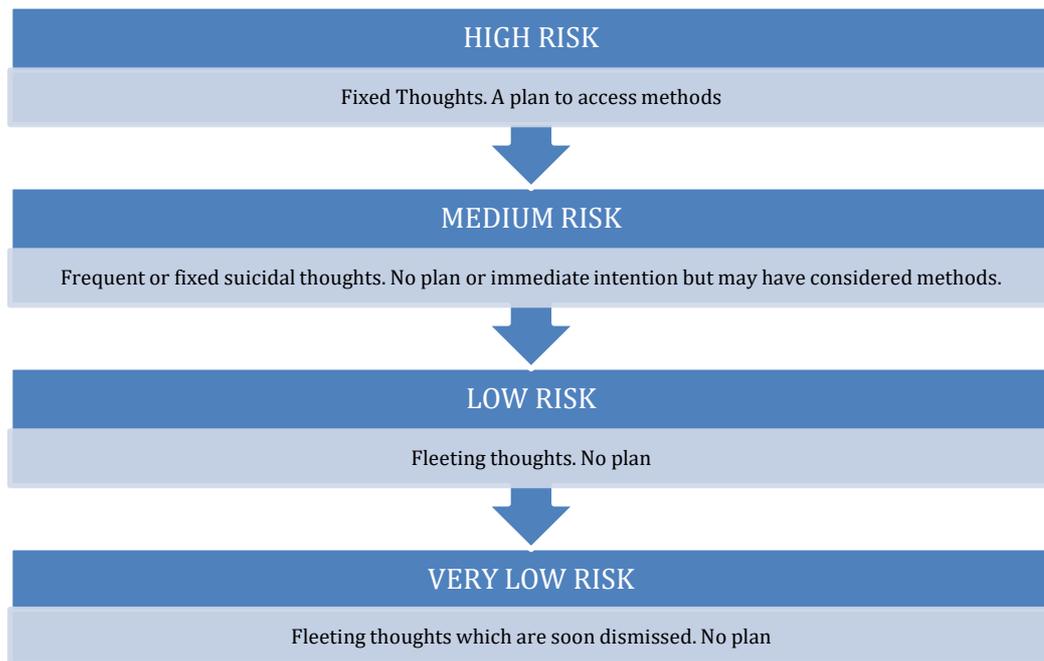
<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/suicide-prevention-and-response>

[Appendix 1](#): SafeMinds Responding to self-harm

[Appendix 2](#): Current list of staff members trained to undertake risk assessment (August 2020)

- Jacinta Smith (Wellbeing- Social Worker/Counsellor )
- Wendy Phillips (Wellbeing Coordinator)
- Heidi Lang (Leading Teacher- Senior School – on leave)

[Appendix 3](#): Risk Indicator and Safety Planning





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## High Risk

**Removal/restriction of methods**

**Immediate implementation of a safety plan – refer to JSM, WPH, HLA, Assistant Principals, Principal or other trained staff (see appendix 1)**

**Further support if required – Ambulance, Police, CAMHS/ICMHS**

**Contact with Parents/Carers**

**Do not leave student alone**

## Medium Risk

**Removal/restriction of methods**

**Implement a safety plan – JSM, WPH, HLA, Assistant Principal, Principal or other trained staff (see appendix 1)**

**Recommendation to attend GP and/or contact CAMHS/ICMHS**

**Referral to other external services**

**Contact with Parents/Carers**

***Follow up – Within 72 hours***

## Low Risk

**Discuss or implement a safety plan JSM, WPH, Assistant Principals, Principal or other trained staff**

**Discuss coping strategies**

**Contact with Parents/Carers**

***Follow up – 1 week***

## Very Low Risk

**Contact with Parents/Carers**

**Offer extra support if student/family requests (could be referral to JSM or external service)**

**Discuss coping strategies**

***Follow up – if student requests***



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## [Appendix 4: Community Referral Points](#)

Support Services	
<b>Infant Child Mental Health Services (ICMHS) 0-14yrs</b>	5320 3030
<b>Youth Mental Health Services (YMHS) 15-24yrs</b>	1300 247 647
<b>Grampians Community Health (intake)</b>	(03) 5358 7400
<b>The Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre (formerly CASA)</b>	1800 806 292 or local 5381 1211
<b>Headspace</b>	1800 650 890 or local 5381 1543
<b>eheadsapce (over 16)</b>	<a href="http://www.eheadsapce.org.au">www.eheadsapce.org.au</a>
<b>Beyond Blue</b>	1300 22 46 36
<b>Lifeline</b>	13 11 14
<b>Kids Helpline</b>	1800 55 1800
<b>Nurse on call</b>	1800 60 60 24
<b>Suicide call back Service</b>	1300 659 467

[Appendix 5](#) Victorian Department of Education 'Guidelines to assist in responding to attempted suicide or suicide by a student'  
<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/health/suicideguidelines.pdf>

[Appendix 6](#) BeYou Suicide Response Resources: Complete Toolkit  
<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/suicide-prevention-and-response/suicide-response>