

PIERVIEW ACADEMY

SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

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1. Policy Purpose and Scope

Pierview Academy recognises its responsibility to help prevent suicide among children and young people. Suicide is a leading cause of death among young people in the UK, and many of these deaths are preventable with appropriate support, awareness, and early intervention. This policy outlines our whole-school approach to suicide prevention, aligning with Department for Education (DfE) expectations, statutory safeguarding duties, and current best practice guidance.

This policy applies to all staff, visitors, volunteers, governors, and members of the school community. It must be read alongside:

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026)**
- **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Statutory Guidance (2026)**
- **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Online Safety Policy**
- **Behaviour Policy**
- **Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy**
- **Counselling & Wellbeing Policy**

2. Our Commitment

Pierview Academy aims to be a **suicide-safer school** where:

- All learners feel connected, supported, and safe.
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- Staff are aware of suicide risk factors and are equipped with the knowledge and skills to act.
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- The physical and digital environment minimises access to means or material of harm.
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- The whole school community understands how to talk about suicide in a safe, non-stigmatising way.
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- We work in active partnership with families, healthcare professionals, and external agencies when risks are identified.

This commitment is informed by national best practices, including the Samaritans' *Step by Step* resources.

3. Core Principles

3.1 Suicide Is Multifaceted and Preventable

- Thoughts of suicide are not unusual among young people experiencing severe distress.
- Suicide risk arises from complex personal, social, and mental health factors.
- Early identification and prompt, supportive intervention reduce risk.

3.2 Reducing Stigma Saves Lives

- Language avoids stigma and myths (e.g., staff will never describe suicide as a "selfish act").
- Conversations about emotional distress are safe, empathetic, and professional.
- Learners are encouraged and enabled to seek help without fear of judgment.

3.3 Talking About Suicide Responsibly

Direct discussion of suicide methods or explicit details is strictly prohibited in group or classroom settings. If pupils raise suicide-related topics, staff will respond in a supportive, safeguarding-led manner and refer immediately to appropriate designated professionals.

3.4 Connectedness Reduces Risk

- Training staff in suicide risk recognition and response.
- Providing safe spaces and trusted adults for disclosure.
- Strengthening peer support and connectedness across the school community.
- Ensuring clear visibility of wellbeing support pathways.

3.5 Reducing Access to Means (Physical and Digital)

- **Physical Safety:** The physical site will be regularly audited to identify and eliminate potential access to physical means of self-harm or suicide attempts.
- **Digital Safety:** Robust filtering and monitoring systems are maintained to prevent access to content promoting self-harm, suicide, or harmful AI-generated material in line with KCSIE 2026 requirements.

4. Leadership, Roles, and Responsibilities

4.1 Leadership Commitment

The **Executive Board** and **Senior Leadership Team** are responsible for:

- Providing strategic oversight of suicide prevention practice across the academy.
- Ensuring required staff training is prioritized and completed annually.
- Maintaining up-to-date policy, filtering, and emergency procedures.
- Ensuring clear postvention plans are established should a tragedy occur.

4.2 Suicide Response Team

Designated staff form the Suicide Response Team with defined operational roles:

- **Headteacher:** Strategic oversight and primary family liaison.
- **Assistant Head(s):** Operational coordination and staff wellbeing support.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Safeguarding risk assessment, multi-agency referral, and reporting.

- **Deputy DSLs / Named Cover:** Dedicated cover procedures to ensure full DSL support is continuously active if the primary DSL is off-site or unavailable.
- **Class / Key Worker:** Ongoing pastoral support for the pupil.
- **Suicide-Trained Staff Member (e.g., ASIST / Suicide First Aid):** Specialist guidance and internal safety planning support.

5. Identification, Support, and Reporting

5.1 Early Identification & Annual Training

All staff receive **annual safeguarding refreshers** (with ongoing updates throughout the year) focused on:

- Recognising warning signs, behavioral changes, and indicators of suicide risk or self-harm.
- Responding empathetically to disclosures without promising confidentiality.
- Immediately escalating concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL via the school reporting system.

5.2 Suicide Safety Plans

Where a learner is identified as being at elevated risk, a tailored **Suicide Safety Plan** will be co-created in partnership with:

- The pupil
- Parents/carers
- DSL / Wellbeing Lead
- Relevant external health professionals (where appropriate)

The plan outlines specific warning signs, protective factors, coping strategies, clear emergency contact routes, and crisis pathways.

5.3 Confidentiality, Disclosure, and Parental Involvement

- Staff cannot promise confidentiality when a child's safety is at risk; all concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL.
- In line with KCSIE 2026 guidelines, the DSL will involve parents/carers promptly when a child presents with mental health or suicide risks, unless doing so directly increases the risk of significant harm to the child.
- If involving parents/carers presents a direct safeguarding threat to the pupil, the DSL will immediately seek advice from Children's Social Care or local emergency services.

6. Curriculum, Education, and Awareness

Pierview Academy supports pupil mental health and wellbeing through an RSHE and pastoral curriculum that:

- Builds emotional literacy, resilience, and adaptive help-seeking behavior.
- Ensures age-appropriate discussion of mental health, emotional distress, and self-care.
- Strictly avoids explicit descriptions, instructional details, or unsafe content regarding self-harm and suicide.
- Involves consultation with qualified mental health professionals and external experts prior to delivering sensitive thematic lessons.

7. External Support and Crisis Pathways

Pierview Academy works in active partnership with:

- NHS Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) and Mental Health Support Teams (MHST)
- Local Authority Safeguarding and Social Care teams
- Specialist crisis intervention charities

Crisis Helplines & Signposting

Service	Contact Details	Availability
Samaritans	Call: 116 123 Email: jo@samaritans.org	24/7 Free Helpline
Childline	Call: 0800 1111	24/7 Support for Children
Shout Crisis Text Line	Text SHOUT to 85258	24/7 Text Support
NHS Emergency Medical Services	Call: 999 or visit nearest A&E	Immediate Medical Emergency

8. Postvention: Responding to a Suicide in the School Community

If a suspected or confirmed suicide occurs, the school will activate its **Postvention Plan** to provide immediate, structured support:

- **Response Team Activation:** The Suicide Response Team will lead the immediate response in coordination with local authority public health teams.
- **Family Communication:** Sensitive, direct communication with the bereaved family will be prioritized.
- **Contagion Mitigation:** Postvention steps will follow Samaritans' *Step by Step* framework to manage communications safely, avoid romanticising the loss, and mitigate suicide contagion risks.
- **Immediate Support:** Multi-tiered counselling and emotional support will be deployed immediately for pupils, staff, and affected families.

9. Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy is reviewed **annually** by the Senior Leadership Team and approved by the Executive Board to ensure continuous alignment with statutory guidance (including KCSIE 2026), legislative changes, and evolving best practices.

Implementation and compliance are monitored through:

- Centralised annual training compliance records.
- Regular audits of safeguarding cases and safety plans.
- Site safety and digital filtering audit reviews.
- Feedback from pupils, families, staff, and external inspectors (e.g., Ofsted).

Related Policy Links

- *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- *Online Safety and Filtering Policy*
- *RSHE Curriculum Policy*
- *SEMH Policy*
- *Staff Code of Conduct*