

SUICIDE SAFETY AND PREVENTION POLICY

This document which applies to the whole college inclusive of boarding is publicly available on the college website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the

Availability of the Policy

This policy applies to the whole College community, including boarding provision, and is publicly available on the College website. A copy may also be obtained on request from the College Office and can be provided in large print or other accessible formats where required.

Scope

This policy applies to all teaching and non-teaching staff, governors, boarding staff, volunteers, contractors, and supply staff. All adults working with or on behalf of the College share responsibility for understanding, following, and implementing this policy at all times, including outside normal College hours and during off-site activities.

All new staff and volunteers are required to confirm that they have read, understood, and will comply with this policy by signing the College Policies Register.

Legal Status

This policy complies with the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, and *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. It supports the College's statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

Monitoring and Review

The policy is continuously monitored by the Co-Principals and is reviewed formally on an annual basis. It is updated immediately if any deficiencies, safeguarding concerns, or risks are identified. All staff are informed of updates and provided with the revised policy electronically or in writing.

*Reviewed: January 2026
Next Review: January 2027*

Signed:

David Game

John Dalton

Founder & CEO

Principal

Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy, Boarding Handbook and Boarding Safeguarding Procedures, School Counselling Policy, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education Policy, Positive Behaviour Code, SEND Policy, and individual Student Care Plans where applicable.

Statement of Purpose

David Game College recognises that suicide is a leading cause of death among young people and that schools and colleges play a vital role in suicide prevention. Early intervention, safe responses, and open communication save lives. The College is committed to creating a suicide-safer environment in which students feel able to seek help, staff are confident to respond appropriately, and risk is managed swiftly, sensitively, and effectively.

Our Beliefs About Suicide

The College acknowledges that suicidal thoughts among young people are not uncommon and that suicide is complex and multifactorial. Stigma can prevent help-seeking and must be actively challenged. Talking about suicide does not increase risk. Student safety is always the priority, and suicide prevention is everyone's responsibility.

Risk Factors

Risk may be heightened where a young person has a diagnosed or emerging mental health condition; is experiencing depression, anxiety, trauma, or substance misuse; has previously self-harmed or attempted suicide; has expressed suicidal intent or plans; has experienced bereavement by suicide; or is facing significant life stressors such as relationship difficulties, identity issues, academic pressure, or family circumstances.

Immediate Response Procedures

The procedures in this section are mandatory practice for all staff.

If a child or young person discloses suicidal thoughts, intent, or plans, staff must act immediately and take the disclosure seriously. Staff should remain calm, listen carefully and without judgement, and reassure the student that they have done the right thing by speaking up. Staff must not promise confidentiality and should explain clearly and sensitively that the information must be shared in order to keep the student safe.

The student must not be left alone under any circumstances. Continuous supervision must be maintained, and if responsibility needs to be transferred, this must be done directly to another appropriate adult without any gap in supervision. Where it is safe to do so, staff should take reasonable steps to reduce access to potential means of harm, without placing themselves at risk.

Safeguarding support must be sought immediately by contacting the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL. Outside normal hours, including boarding time, the on-call safeguarding lead or senior member of staff must be contacted. The disclosure must be recorded factually and promptly on the College safeguarding recording system, including the student's own words where possible.

If a Member of Staff Is Alone and Is Not a Safeguarding or Mental Health Specialist

If any member of staff is alone with a student who states that they are feeling suicidal, have thoughts of suicide, or intend to harm themselves, this must be treated as an immediate safeguarding emergency.

The staff member must **remain with the student at all times** and must not leave them alone for any reason, including end-of-day routines, locking up, or College closure procedures. The student must continue to be supervised until responsibility is formally transferred to safeguarding leadership or emergency professionals.

The staff member must **immediately contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL by phone**. If safeguarding leadership is not immediately available, a member of the Senior Leadership Team must be contacted without delay.

If the disclosure occurs **close to the end of the College day**, staff must **not allow the student to leave site**, even if normal dismissal arrangements are underway, unless directed to do so by safeguarding leadership or emergency services. Normal dismissal and closure procedures are overridden.

Where there is **immediate danger to life**, or where safeguarding support cannot be accessed promptly, the staff member must **call emergency services (999)** while remaining with the student and following the advice given.

The concern must be recorded factually on the College safeguarding system as soon as it is safe to do so.

Role of the DSL and Senior Staff

The DSL or Deputy DSL will undertake an immediate risk assessment and determine whether emergency services or urgent mental health services are required. Parents or carers will be informed unless doing so would place the student at increased risk. A safety plan will be implemented, appropriate supervision arrangements put in place (including in boarding), and ongoing support coordinated with external agencies such as NHS services or local authority children's services.

Emergency Situations

Where there is immediate danger to life, staff must call 999 without delay, follow emergency services' advice, and continue to supervise the student until help arrives.

Information Sharing

Information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis to protect the student. Confidentiality will never override safeguarding responsibilities.

Support for Students

The College provides access to pastoral and counselling support, works in partnership with parents and external professionals, adapts academic or boarding arrangements where necessary, and ensures students are appropriately monitored and not isolated.

Staff Training and Development

All staff receive safeguarding training that includes mental health awareness and suicide prevention. Suicide awareness training is refreshed at least every three years, with a designated group of staff trained in suicide intervention skills. Boarding staff receive additional training relevant to residential care.

Suicide Prevention and Response in Boarding Provision

Boarding staff hold the same safeguarding responsibilities as teaching staff. Any expression of suicidal thoughts, intent, or behaviour by a boarding student is treated as a child protection concern and responded to immediately. At least one trained safeguarding lead is always available or on call when boarding students are in residence.

Where a boarding student discloses suicidal thoughts within the boarding house, staff must remain with the student at all times, ensure the immediate environment is safe, contact safeguarding leadership immediately, follow all instructions without delay, and record the concern promptly. Emergency procedures must be followed where risk is immediate.

If a boarding student leaves the boarding house without permission and communicates suicidal intent, the situation is treated as an emergency. The student is considered missing and at risk, senior staff and safeguarding leadership must be informed immediately, the Missing Student Procedure activated, and emergency services contacted without delay. All communications must be preserved, and contact maintained where advised by emergency services.

If a boarding student expresses suicidal intent while off-site or on approved leave, staff must respond immediately, inform safeguarding leadership, encourage the student to seek immediate help, and follow DSL instructions regarding escalation and parental contact.

Parental and External Agency Involvement

Parents or carers will be informed as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so. External agencies may include emergency services, NHS crisis or mental health teams, and local authority children's services.

Supervision and Aftercare in Boarding

Following any suicidal disclosure or incident involving a boarder, a bespoke safety plan is implemented. Enhanced supervision, including overnight checks, may be required, bedroom arrangements adjusted, and boarding privileges temporarily restricted in the student's best interests. Ongoing review is led by safeguarding and boarding leadership.

Staff Support and Debrief

The College recognises the emotional impact such incidents may have on staff. Support, guidance, and debriefing are offered following serious incidents.

Support After a Suicide

In the event of a suicide affecting the College community, the College will activate its critical incident response plan, support students, staff, and families, liaise with external agencies, and manage communications sensitively and responsibly