

# Hertfordshire Suicide Aware Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Charter

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This document is for professionals in education settings to support their strategies around suicide prevention and bereavement. This information should be shared with all staff, ideally as part of their induction and ongoing training.

**For children and young people, it is important to have a three-pronged approach through prevention, intervention and postvention support.**

**Promotion of good mental health and wellbeing in a supportive, safe, and positive environment. Early intervention that will support early recovery, enabling self-help tools, access to effective interventions and referral processes.**

**Postvention support is vital for children, young people, and staff to ensure that they receive bereavement support which is timely and effective to meet their needs and reduce their risk of suicide later.**

**In the event of a suicide or attempted suicide within our school or college community we will:**

## **Prevention**

1. Recognise that a suicide or attempted suicide within the community could potentially increase risk of ill mental health and subsequent attempts and commit to raising awareness of potential risk factors within the peer group/school and community.
2. Seek opportunities to provide key messages around keeping well, asking for help, looking after each other.
3. Recognise that language used should be carefully considered when talking about suicide and where uncertain – School/ college staff to be educated around language that is helpful and supportive, and support parents/ carers with this.
4. Appropriately communicate with parents/ carers, providing support and signposting to the wider parent network to enable them to support their children.
5. Engage with a whole school approach to mental health, wellbeing and resilience, which supports pupils, staff and the wider school community.
6. Identify additional staff champions across the school to receive further training in how to increase suicide awareness.
7. Provide ongoing support and safe spaces for colleagues and pupils.

## Intervention

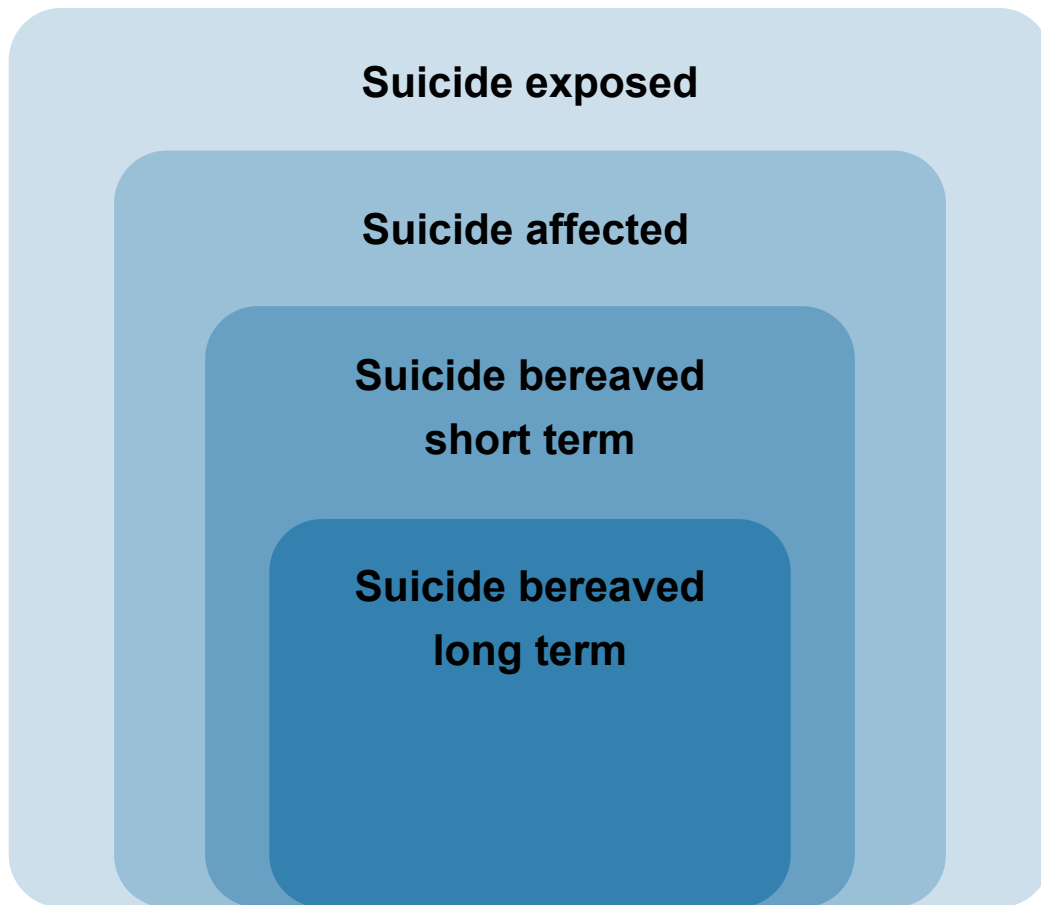
8. Commit to safe, open and honest dialogue about suicide and attempted suicide where relevant.
9. Recognise that anyone can be affected by suicide or attempted suicide and appropriate support will be provided for anybody that needs it, with clear information on how to access.
10. Suicide and attempted suicide can have a large and lasting impact on peers, whether through supporting friends or hearing about it. Additional support / signposting should be offered to peers of those that have attempted suicide.

## Postvention

11. Engage with the (funded) crisis services provided by the Educational Psychology Service (ISL) and Safe Space Counselling.
12. Language use should be carefully considered when talking about suicide. Staff should ensure to use language that dispels the stigma of suicide (e.g. 'died by suicide' instead of 'committed') and gently and appropriately encourage pupils to do the same, much like staff would challenge discriminatory language.
13. Consideration about how to appropriately communicate with parents/cares following a suicide is needed. Support and signposting should be offered to the wider parent/carer network to enable them to support their children/young people.  
[The Hertfordshire readiness pack](#) has template communications that can be adapted to support this.
14. In the event of a suicide or attempted suicide within our school community we will deliver support when needed to everyone that needs it, for as long as it is needed. Ensure that support (both formal and informal) will be available whenever it is needed and be clear what the support could be.
15. Support (not necessarily counselling, but kindness and connections with parents/carers, staff and peers) should be available whenever it is needed.
16. Understand that the parents and siblings of the individual will require compassion, honesty, and appropriate time to process the event. Signposting to the following resources will take place in recognition of the range of needs of parents/ carers and siblings. .
  - [Finding the words \(Finding The Words – Support After Suicide\)](#)
  - [Help is at Hand \(Help is at hand – Support After Suicide\)](#)

- 17.** People seemingly unconnected to the person that has died may be affected by their death.  
Offer all staff and those associated with the school support if needed (admin staff, lunchtime staff perhaps even parents who have been triggered).
- 18.** Suicide and attempted suicide can have a large and lasting impact on peers, whether through supporting friends or hearing about it. Additional support / signposting should be offered to peers of those that have attempted suicide.
- 19.** Recognise that grief may be immediate and/or delayed, every individual will respond differently.  
The key messages around ways of maintaining connection with a positive supportive network either in the school community or outside of it. Mental health should be reinforced regularly through the whole school approach.
- 20.** Understand that grief after suicide is complex and a range of emotions may be experienced by parents/carers, pupils and staff.
- 21.** Acknowledge that anger and sadness are valid responses that we should be aware of. Highly aroused emotions can lead to unwanted behaviours towards self or others in the community and would need to be supported and contained within a safe environment at home or school to allow those affected the opportunity to feel and explore emotions within a safe environment.
- 22.** Discussions of suicide should not be glamorised or glorified. Accounts should be factual with appropriate information (i.e., not including method or place of suicide) in order to minimise exposure.
- 23.** speaking about suicide in general terms rather than following a suicide incident then care should be taken in resources and/or speakers used (Quality Assurance guidance for external visitors provided by Healthy Young Minds in Herts).
- 24.** Consider how to honour and remember pupil, staff or other adults in future events, in a way that is respectful but not triggering e.g., end of year celebrations.
- 25.** Conduct a thorough review of the individual's engagement with school to explore possible contributors to poor emotional wellbeing and implement changes where needed.
- 26.** Put a plan in place to develop or review the school's suicide aware strategy.

## The range of individuals who may be affected by suicide



### **Suicide exposed**

Local groups, communities, passers by, social groups, faith groups, acquaintances, wider peer groups including those via social/virtual media contacts (e.g. Facebook friends)

### **Suicide affected**

First responders (family, friends, members of the public, police, paramedics), those directly involved such as train drivers, neighbours and local residents, teachers, classmates, co-workers, health/social care staff

### **Suicide bereaved short term**

Friends, peers, close work colleagues, longstanding health/social care workers, teachers

### **Suicide bereaved long term**

Family, close friends

## CHUMS Suicide Bereavement Service

The CHUMS Suicide Bereavement Service provides emotional and practical support to those affected by a suicide or suspected suicide death.

We support adults and children, residing in Hertfordshire and West Essex. We offer individual sessions and group support as well as providing information and liaison with other professionals to help individuals and families navigate the complex issues which they may face at this difficult time.

See our website for more details or contact the service via email or telephone. **01279 212170**

- **hsbs@chums.uk.com**

- **<https://chums.uk.com/hertfordshire-and-west-essex-suicide-bereavement-service/>**





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