

Protocol for Immediate Response to Self-Injury or Suspected Self-Injury

Teachers (and all other non-mental health staff)

- When interacting with a student whom you know or suspect is self-injuring, always maintain a sympathetic attitude.
- Ask simple questions in order to help determine whether the student has purposefully hurt himself or herself. Even if you are unsure whether the injury was self-injury or a possible suicide attempt, always refer the student to the school psychologist or counselor for further assessment.
- If there is a fresh wound or injury, refer the student directly to the school nurse and also immediately notify the school psychologist or school counselor of the situation.

School Nurse

- Give direct care to any wounds.
- Ensure that the school counselor or school psychologist follows up with the student.

School Psychologist or School Counselor

- Discuss the limits of confidentiality with the student.
- Utilize your suicide assessment to rule out possible suicidal intent. Follow suicide protocol if you determine that suicidal ideation or intent is present.
- Use an informal interview format to assess whether or not the student is intentionally self-injuring.
- Make a plan with the student to discuss the matter with his or her parent(s).

Note: Use your professional judgment to determine whether this may be a rare case where this is not safe for the student. If you determine it to be unsafe for the student, you may need to call Child Protective Services or use other methods of intervention available to you in your area.

- Contact the parent(s) and inform them of the situation. Ask them to come to the school as soon as possible to receive information regarding follow-up care and to sign a document stating that they have been informed that their student is self-injuring and should receive follow-up care.
- Provide the parent with the referral information your mental health team has collected and have the parent sign a form indicating that they have been notified of their student's self-injury and have received referral information.
- Follow up within 5-7 days. You may check in with both the student and parent(s) to ensure that they are accessing assistance.