



Self Harm and Welfare Policy

Approved by:	Laurence Field - CEO Ruth Green - Chair of Trustees	Date: October 2025
Last reviewed on:		
Next review due by:	October 2026	
Policy drafted by:	Gayle McCombe – Head of Pastoral Care & DSL Nicki Cohen – Safeguarding and Wellbeing Trustee	

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Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL)

Gateways are committed to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for all students. Safeguarding concerns are overseen by:

- **DSL & Head of Pastoral Care:** Gayle McCombe
- **Deputy DSLs:** Caroline O'Coy, Laurence Field, Samantha Blendis

All safeguarding decisions and actions are led by the DSL or a Deputy DSL in accordance with statutory guidance and internal protocols.

Self-Harm Protocol

Gateways recognises that self-harm can manifest in various forms and requires sensitive, individualised support. This includes but is not limited to:

- Cutting or scratching
- Risky or reckless behaviour
- Swallowing harmful substances or objects

Admission and Monitoring:

- Admission to Gateways for students who self-harm is assessed on an **individual basis**, considering their needs, risks, and support structures. A safety care plan will be put into place and review it regularly, in accordance with their needs and input from families and any other relevant mental health professional, which must be adhered to. If this is not followed, an emergency meeting will be called for all parties to attend. Further action will be discussed and actioned as appropriate.
- There is **no fixed time scale** for a student to be “self-harm free.” Progress is monitored holistically, with emphasis on emotional wellbeing and safety, however, at the time of interview, any history of self-harm must be disclosed and parents / carers / the student must inform Gateways if any self-harm takes place or begins during their time at Gateways which will enable us to ensure theirs and others safety.
- A regular “**check in**” with the student will be arranged with the Head of Pastoral Care to ensure the student is being monitored and they feel they are receiving the right support. Check ins will be based on the individual student’s needs.

Promotion or discussion of self-harm

Students must not engage in discussions, displays, or any form of behaviour that promotes or “advertises” self-harm to others. If such behaviour is identified, a meeting will be convened without delay involving the student, their parents/carers and Gateways staff. The matter will be addressed in line with safeguarding procedures, and appropriate actions will be implemented.

Response Procedure:

- If a wound is **superficial**, it may be treated on-site by a **qualified first aider**.
- If the injury is **serious or potentially life-threatening**, the parent / carer will be called and the **DSL and first aider** will jointly decide whether to:
 - Call **999**
 - Arrange immediate transport to hospital

Return to Gateways Following an Incident

Following any incident of self-harm, Gateways will meet with the student and their parents/carers to discuss the student's return. In cases where a student has seen a GP or been hospitalised because of self-harm, or Gateways feel it necessary for the student to see a medical professional (this will be addressed with parents / carers), Gateways will require written confirmation from a medical professional confirming that the student is medically fit to return to Gateways. Once confirmation has been received, a care plan will be devised with input from all parties. When the care plan has been agreed by all, the student will then be able to return to Gateways. This process will apply after each incident of self-harm. If Gateways deem it necessary, a further referral will be made to external agencies. After a severe incident, Gateways will call a TAC meeting (Team Around the Child), to discuss the student's safety and the safety of all students and staff at Gateways.

Parental Contact:

- In **all instances**, the **DSL will contact the student's parent/carers** to inform them of the incident and next steps.
- CPOMs will be updated.

Random Search Procedure

To ensure the safety of all students and staff, Gateways reserves the right to conduct **random searches** when there is reasonable belief or information suggesting a student may be in possession of an item that could cause harm to themselves or others.

Search Guidelines:

- Searches will be conducted by **two members of staff**, either from the **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** or **Educational Leadership Team (ELT)**.
- Searches will be carried out respectfully and in line with DfE guidance on searching, screening, and confiscation.
- Any items found that pose a risk will be confiscated and appropriate safeguarding actions taken
- Parents / Carers will be contacted by the person / persons carrying out the search to explain why / who and outcome.
- This will be logged on CPOMs