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Safeguarding children together

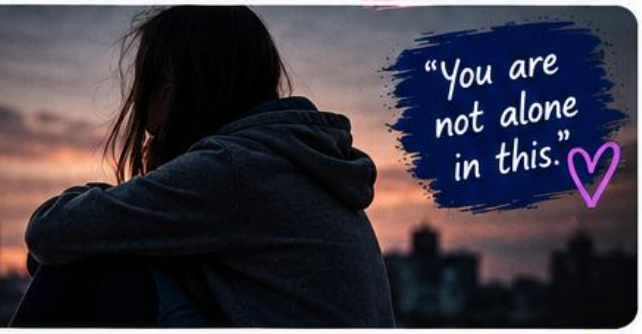
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Parent & Carer Newsletter

INFORMATION • ADVICE • SUPPORT

November 2026

A Parent and Carer Guide to SELF-HARM



It can be distressing to find out that your child is self-harming. This guide explains what self-harm is, why it might happen, how to respond and where to get help.

What is self-harm?

Self-harm means deliberately hurting yourself as a way of coping with difficult feelings, overwhelming thoughts or life situations. It can take many forms, including:

- Cutting, scratching or burning
- Hitting or bruising yourself
- Interfering with wound healing
- Taking more medication than prescribed
- Other forms of self-injury

For many young people, self-harm is a way of trying to manage intense emotions, not a desire to end their life.

Why might a young person self-harm?

There is rarely one single reason. It can be linked to:

- Feeling overwhelmed, anxious or low
- Problems at school, at home or with friends
- Trauma or past experiences
- Very high expectations (from themselves or others)
- Feeling a lack of control
- Difficulties with relationships or identity
- Neurodivergence (e.g. autism or ADHD)
- Bereavement, loss or significant change

Self-harm is often a sign that someone is struggling and needs support, not attention.

Common misconceptions

- ✗ Self-harm is not a cry for attention.
- ✗ Self-harm is not just a 'teenage phase'.
- ✗ Self-harm is not always linked to suicide.
- ✗ Self-harm is not about weakness.
- ✗ Self-harm is not something a young person can simply 'stop' without support.

Signs to look out for

A young person may not always tell you, but you might notice:

- Unexplained cuts, burns or bruises
- Wearing long sleeves or layers, even in warm weather
- Avoiding activities like PE or swimming
- Changes in mood, sleep or eating
- Withdrawn or isolated behaviour
- Increased anxiety, irritability or low mood
- Loss of interest in usual activities

They've told you – what now?

1. **Stay calm** – try to stay open and avoid strong reactions.
2. **Listen** – give them time to talk and take them seriously.
3. **Thank them** – it can be hard for a young person to share this.
4. **Don't panic or promise to keep it a secret** – explain you may need to get support to keep them safe.
5. **Focus on safety** – remove immediate risks if needed and seek professional advice.
6. **Get support** – speak to school, your GP or use one of the services listed on this page.

What not to say

- ✗ "It's just a phase."
- ✗ "You're doing this for attention."
- ✗ "Stop it."
- ✗ "Other people have it worse."
- ✗ "Why can't you just be happy?"
- ✗ "I'm so disappointed in you."

These responses can make a young person feel more ashamed and less likely to talk. Try to be supportive, patient and understanding.

When is it an emergency?

Seek urgent help if your child:

- Has seriously injured themselves
- Is at immediate risk of further harm
- Is talking about suicide or feels unable to stay safe
- Has taken an overdose
- You are worried about their immediate safety

Call 999 if there is an immediate danger to life.

Where to get help and support

You don't have to deal with this alone. There are lots of services that can help.

At School

Speak to your child's Form Tutor, Head of Year or a member of the Safeguarding Team.

- We can work with you and your child to put the right support in place.

Your GP

Your GP can offer medical advice, check for underlying health issues and refer to specialist mental health support if needed.

NHS 111

For urgent mental health advice when it is not a 999 emergency.

Call **111**
Visit **www.nhs.uk**

Childline

Free, confidential support for young people (and advice for parents and carers).

Call **0800 1111**
Visit **www.childline.org.uk**

YoungMinds

Information and advice for parents and carers about self-harm and young people's mental health.

Visit **www.youngminds.org.uk**

Lancashire Mind

Support for children, young people and adults with mental health needs in Lancashire.

Visit **www.lancashiremind.org.uk**

Compass Bloom

Free, confidential mental health support for young people in Lancashire.

Visit **www.compass-uk.org/services/compass-bloom**

NHS

Find local mental health services for children and young people.

Visit **www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults**

Listen. Support. Stay connected. | Small conversations can make a big difference. | Early support can help prevent things from getting more difficult.

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Supporting a Young Person Who Self-Harms



Practical ways to help at home, at school and in the community. You don't have to have all the answers – what matters most is that your young person knows they are not alone.

How you can help

1. **Keep talking** – let them know you are there, even if they don't want to talk right now.
2. **Listen without judgement** – try to understand their feelings, even if you don't agree.
3. **Be patient** – change takes time and there may be ups and downs.
4. **Encourage healthy coping strategies** – like exercise, creative activities, time with friends or journalling.
5. **Work together** – involve them in decisions about support and what might help.

Keeping them safe

- Try to remove or reduce access to items that could be used for self-harm.
- Talk about how to stay safe when they are feeling overwhelmed.
- Agree a plan together for what to do if they feel the urge to self-harm.
- Know who to contact for support (see page 3 for a list of services).
- Attend appointments and support them to engage with professional help.

At school we can help

- Your child can speak to their Form Tutor, Head of Year or a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- We will listen, take concerns seriously and work with you and your child to put the right support in place.
- We can help with reasonable adjustments if needed.
- We can signpost to in-school and external support services.
- Keeping your child safe and supported is a shared responsibility – please let us know if you are worried.

Supporting their wellbeing

- **Encourage a balanced routine** – regular sleep, healthy eating and physical activity can help manage emotions.
- **Help them stay connected** – time with trusted friends and family can reduce feelings of isolation.
- **Notice and celebrate the positives** – even small achievements can boost self-esteem.
- **Be aware of online influences** – some content can be triggering. Talk about what they see online.
- **Look after your own wellbeing** – it can be emotionally demanding, and it's important you have support too.

Coping strategies they might find helpful

- **Physical activity** (e.g. walking, sports, yoga)
- **Music** – listening or playing
- **Creative activities** (e.g. drawing, writing, crafts)
- **Spending time with trusted friends or family**
- **Journalling or expressing feelings**
- **Relaxation techniques** (e.g. breathing exercises, mindfulness, meditation)
- **Positive online content** (e.g. hobbies, learning, support communities)
- **Time with pets**
- **Good sleep habits**
- **Talking to a trusted adult**

Remember...

- Self-harm is often a sign that someone is struggling, not a cause for punishment.
- It is not a choice or a way to get attention.
- With the right support, many young people reduce or stop self-harming.
- Your support, understanding and encouragement can make a real difference.
- You are not alone – help and advice are available.



Looking after yourself

Supporting a young person who self-harms can be emotionally challenging. It's important to look after your own mental health too.

- Talk to someone you trust.
- Access support for yourself (see page 3).
- Take time to rest and do things that help you feel calm.
- Remember, it's okay to ask for help.

Useful reminder

Recovery is possible.
With the right support, many young people learn healthier ways to cope and go on to lead positive, fulfilling lives.

You are not alone.
There are people who care and want to help.

Support is a sign of strength.
It can make a real difference.

Keep the conversation going.
Listening can change lives.

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Where to get help and support



There are lots of people and services that can help.
You don't have to deal with this alone.
Support is available for your child and for you as a parent or carer.

Support at Fulwood Academy

- Speak to your child's Form Tutor, Head of Year or a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- We will listen, take your concerns seriously and work with you and your child to put the right support in place.
- We can signpost to in-school and external support services.

NHS 111

For urgent mental health advice when it is not a 999 emergency.

Call **111**

Visit **www.nhs.uk**

In an emergency call 999

If there is an immediate danger to life, a serious injury or a risk of suicide.

Childline

Free, confidential support for young people (and advice for parents and carers).

Call **0800 1111** (24/7)

Visit **www.childline.org.uk**

Lancashire Mind

Support for children, young people and adults with mental health needs in Lancashire.

Call **0300 323 3377** (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm)

Visit **www.lancashiremind.org.uk**

Compass Bloom

Free, confidential mental health support for young people in Lancashire.

Call **0300 303 0111** (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm)

Visit **www.compass-uk.org/services/compass-bloom**

YoungMinds

Information and advice for parents and carers about self-harm and young people's mental health.

Visit **www.youngminds.org.uk**

NSPCC

Advice, support and tips to keep children and young people safe.

Call **0808 800 5000** (24/7)

Visit **www.nspcc.org.uk**

Samaritans

Call **116 123** (24/7) for a safe place to talk.

Visit **www.samaritans.org**

Keeping safe day to day

- **Check in regularly** – simple conversations can make a big difference.
- **Know their friends** – who they spend time with and where they are going.
- **Encourage open communication** – let them know you are there to listen.
- **Be aware of online influences** – some content can be triggering.
- **Support healthy routines** – sleep, eating and exercise can all help.
- **Trust your instincts** – if something doesn't feel right, seek advice and support.

Look after yourself too

Supporting a young person who self-harms can be emotionally challenging.
It's important to look after your own wellbeing so you can continue to be there for them.

- Talk to someone you trust.
- Access support for yourself.
- Take time to rest and do things that help you feel calm.
- Remember, you're doing your best. You are not alone.

Useful local and national services

Lancashire Family Hubs
Information, advice and activities for families.
Call **0300 123 6701** (Mon–Fri, 8am–6pm)
Visit **www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/family-hubs**

Lancashire County Council – Children and Family Wellbeing Service
Call **0300 123 6706** (Mon–Fri, 8am–6pm)
Visit **www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/children-and-family-wellbeing-service**

Kooth (Saluna)
Free, safe and confidential online mental health support.
Visit **www.kooth.com/saluna**

Victim Support
Support if you've been affected by crime.
Call **0808 168 9111** (Free, 24/7)
Visit **www.victimsupport.org.uk**

Listen. Support. Stay connected.
Small conversations can make a big difference.

You are not alone.
There is always someone who cares.

Help is available.
Reach out. Support can make things better.