

# Intervention Following a Suspected Child Suicide

Last Updated January 2026

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## 1. Introduction

The death of a child is a devastating loss, and the impact can be widespread. This document offers a detailed guide on the procedures following a child death by suspected suicide.

Following the sudden death of a child under the age of 18 years in England (regardless of the cause of death), there is a nationally agreed Child Death Overview Process. This document provides an overview of these procedures, as well as the additional measures put in place for when this death is a suspected suicide.

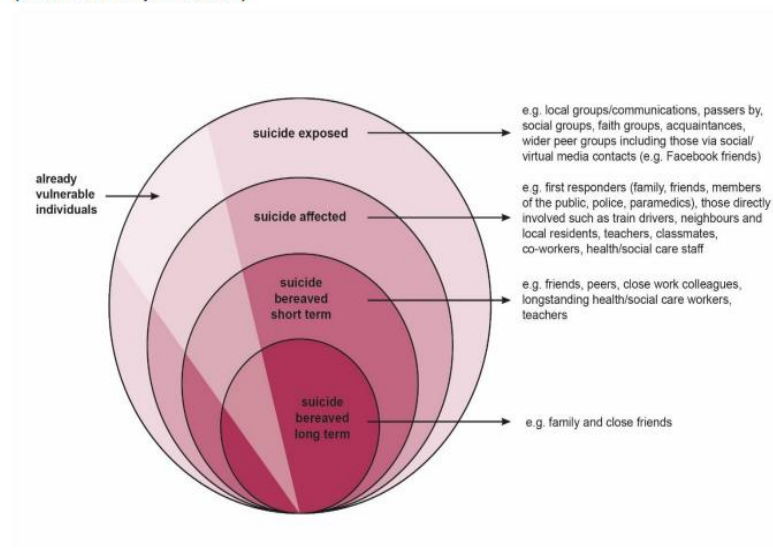
The document will inform professionals of the local notification process for a child death by suspected suicide, provide an overview of the meetings that will take place, and signpost to relevant support for schools and the wider community. Procedures in place following a child death by suspected suicide will:

- Provide support to close family and friends
- Provide support to school staff
- Help identify other vulnerable individuals who may form part of a suicide contagion

### 1a. Suicide Contagion

Suicide contagion is **the exposure to suicide or suicidal behaviours within one's family, one's peer group, or through media reports of suicide** and can result in an increase in suicide and suicidal behaviours. The procedures following a child death by suspected suicide are based on the Circles of Vulnerability Model which is a systematic approach to identifying vulnerable groups who are most at risk of suicide contagion.

**Figure 1: The range of individuals who may be affected by suicide<sup>28</sup> (modified with permission)**



## **2. Local Notification Process**

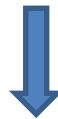
Any agency made aware of a suspected suicide should contact Barnsley Council's Public Health team via the following email address: [Suicide@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:Suicide@barnsley.gov.uk)

This notification should be in addition to the usual Child Death Overview Process in order to trigger a Suspected Suicide Contagion Response. An email should always be sent to the email address above, but where possible, it would be appropriate to support this with a phone call.



Contact should then be made between the School and BMBC Public Health (this applies to students over 18 in a school setting). The school should also be notified through the CDOP process if the student is under 18.

**Please note, early notification to the school is crucial in ensuring that they receive accurate information from a reliable source and can plan how best to support other students and staff.**



BMBC Public Health should then convene the first multi-agency contagion response meeting. Links should also be made with Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership and Barnsley CDOP.

*If a suspected suicide occurs outside of term time, Children's Social Care should be contacted to make relevant arrangements with school representatives who are available outside of normal school hours.*

### **3. Meeting overview**

There are 3 meetings following the death of a child by suicide.

- JAR meeting
- Multi-agency response group
- CDRM (this meeting is usually a few months after the death)

This document summarises the meetings below. **However, more information can be found in the Terms of Reference (attached in the appendices).**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>When?</b>	<b>Overview of purpose</b>	<b>Who attends?</b>
<b>1. Joint Agency Response (JAR) meeting - This is part of the Child Death Overview Process</b>	Within 48 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine information requires for the Child Death Overview Panel</li> <li>• Share information and plan investigations that aim to identify factors that may have contributed to the death</li> <li>• Provide information to the coroner and the inquest</li> <li>• Identify and address the possible needs of other children within the child’s household and all family members of relevant people</li> </ul>	<p>Chaired by the Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children.</p> <p>Attendees include professionals who have been involved with the child prior to their death. Professionals should come to the meeting prepared with information about any individual at risk. More information on this can be found in the Terms of Reference (Appendix -)</p>
<b>2. Contagion response group</b>	Within the first week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support people who may have been affected by the suspected suicide</li> <li>• Coordinate actions around preventing potential contagion</li> <li>• Identify specific individuals most likely to be impacted by the recent death and ensure that targeted support is available</li> </ul>	<p>Chaired by BMBC Public Health.</p> <p>Attendees include professionals who have been involved with the child prior to their death.</p> <p>Professionals should come to the meeting prepared with information</p>

			about any individual at risk. More information on this can be found in the Terms of Reference (Appendix -)
<b>3. CDRM (Child Death Review Meeting)</b>	In the months following the death	This is part of the Child Death Overview Process. This is the final multi-professional meeting where all matters relating to an individual child's death are discussed.	Attendees include professionals who have been involved with the child prior to their death.

#### **4. Supporting Schools with the Process**

One of the first steps should be to ensure that the school and other schools in the local area, where relevant, are provided with support. It is recommended that the school identify 2 or more individuals to lead the response with partners, one of whom knows the child. (e.g., Headteacher, Head of Year, Safeguarding Lead).

##### **4a. Support services**

A meeting will be convened at the earliest opportunity to look at relevant support options however if support is needed before this time the following organisations: **Add opening times and weekend operating hours etc.**

EDT – contact details for social care. Out of hours 01226 787789 Monday – Sunday

Normal hours 9-5 Monday Friday 01226 772423

- 1) [Amparo](#) provides emotional and practical support for anybody who has felt the impact of suicide. Amparo can work with employers, schools and other institutions to help manage the impact when a suicide occurs in the community. For instance, they can advise on the following:
  - What grieving children feel and how they might behave
  - Offer advice to schools on how to support students after a death in the family or in the community

**Tel: 0330 088 9255**

**Email: [amparo.service@listening-ear.co.uk](mailto:amparo.service@listening-ear.co.uk)**

- 2) [Samaritans – Step by Step service](#) provides practical support to help schools prepare for and recover from a suspected suicide. Samaritans can:
  - Provide information and support to help the school community come to terms with what has happened and prevent stigma and isolation in the school community
  - Support school communities to reduce the risk of further suicide
  - Reach out to high-risk people and communities to reduce further risk of suicide

**Tel: 0808 168 2528 (UK)**

- 3) [Compass Children Young People and Families Bereavement Service](#)

The service is for children, young people and their families who are grieving for a family member or friend. We also support parents/carers who are bereaved by the loss of a child.

**Tel: 01904 666371**

**Email : [info.barnsleymhst@compass-uk.org](mailto:info.barnsleymhst@compass-uk.org)**

Further organisations to contact for support:

4) [CAMHS Single Point of Contact:](#)

**Contact:** 01226 107377 (to request support) or 01226 644829 (for all other queries)

**Hours:** Monday to Thursday, 9am- 5pm

Friday, 9am to 4pm

CAMHS stands for child and adolescent mental health services. We are the NHS service that offers support and treatment for children and young people, aged up to 18 years old, who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health and wellbeing.

We also support parents, carers and families of these children and young people.

In Barnsley, CAMHS is made up of several teams who specialise in different areas and work together to support children, young people, and families during their journey with CAMHS.

Our teams are made up of lots of different healthcare professionals who have experience of working specifically with children and young people. This includes nurses, social workers, psychologists, doctors, therapists, and support workers.

5) [Compass Mental Health Support Team \(MHST\)](#)

**Contact:** 01904 666371

The MHST is a prevention and early intervention mental health and emotional wellbeing service for children and young people. The MHST provides direct and indirect mental health and wellbeing support to all secondary schools in Barnsley and is in a unique position to contribute to the support of a school community following the death of a student by suicide. The MHST school Link Practitioner will be available to:

- Provide initial advice, support and guidance to the school staff and community on mental health support and services
- Work with the school to determine a supportive response to the school community, this may include drop- in sessions for students, safe spaces for discussion and reflection, support for staff teams
- Act as a link and facilitator to other specialist services for those who require additional and/or specialist support for example Bereavement Counselling
- Arrange specialist advice and guidance from the Specialist counsellor to support school staff in their response
- Arrange and take a lead on individual referral for any young person who requires direct mental health or risk support as a result of the suicide

- Participation in a Whole School Approach to the post suicide intervention and ongoing support to the school community

#### 6) [Barnsley Educational, Child, and Community Psychology Service](#)

Barnsley Educational, Child, and Community Psychology Service provide information and advice to senior leaders and school/setting staff and consultation support. The aim is to empower the people supporting children and young people, build capacity in their staff teams and ensure support has the most impact.

For more information please contact:

Joanna Patterson (Principal Educational Psychologist) [joanepatterson@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:joanepatterson@barnsley.gov.uk) or

Dr Naomi Robinson (Principal Educational Psychologist) [naomirobinson@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:naomirobinson@barnsley.gov.uk)

#### **4b. Attending meetings**

It is essential to the response for representatives from the school attend the above meetings. Partners will need to collect information about the individual and any others at risk.

#### **4c. Letter to Parents/ Carers**

Don't have to send a letter out – resource there if you want it. **Recommendation about clear communication with parents & community. Seek consent from parents and any links with media.**

A sample letter to parents/carers of pupils from the school can be found in **Appendix 3**. If you wish to write your own letter, it is recommended that you include the following: - check with Sammy re letter, can they send us a copy of it

- Emphasise that distress and anxiety are 'normal' bereavement responses
- Ensure that sources of support are clearly signposted
- Highlight that the school will be meeting with other agencies to try and ensure they are doing everything possible to safeguard children in the school and community.

#### **4d. Initial Media Enquiries**

If the school get any media enquiries regarding the incident, please contact [communications@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:communications@barnsley.gov.uk)

## Appendices

- **Appendix 1 – Joint Agency Response Meeting (JAR), Terms of Reference**



JAR Terms of  
Reference.doc

- **Appendix 2 – Contagion Response, Terms of Reference**



Contagion  
Response Terms of I

- **Appendix 3- Template Excel spreadsheet for tracking individuals at risk**



Suspected Suicide  
Contagion Plan - tra

- **Appendix 4 – Checklist for Public Health staff**



Contagion plan  
checklist for Public H