

SELF-INJURY REFERRAL PROCESS



BALDWIN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

The following steps outline the self-injury referral process for the Baldwin County Public School System:

(If, however, the student's self-injury is reportedly correlated to suicidal ideation, intent, or a plan, please refer to the Suicide Prevention Referral Process.)

1. Once it has been identified that the student has been self-injuring, the **school counselor** or **school social worker** will be notified immediately. (If neither the school counselor nor the school social worker is available, an **administrator** will be notified immediately.)

NOTE: It is not permissible for the school counselor, the school social worker, or the administrator to be notified of a student's self-injury via e-mail or text. This information must be shared in person.

2. The school counselor or school social worker will talk/conference with the student who is self-injuring.
 - a. It is critical that the first response of the school counselor or the school social worker to the student's self-injury disclosure is to be empathetic, calm, kind, and non-judgmental.
 - b. It is also important that the school counselor or the school social worker be honest with the student about the school protocol requiring that parents (or guardians) be notified when a student has caused harm to him/herself.
 - c. Statements such as these should be shared with the student in an effort to help put him/her at ease: "I'm concerned about you and want to be sure that you have the support you need." or "I've seen these scars on your arms, and I think you might be hurting."
 - d. With a compassionate demeanor, ask clarifying questions to gain additional insight from the student that will assist in documentation of the self-injury report: "When was the last time you ___ (insert type of self-injury)?" "In what situations do you most often self-injure?" "Is there a particular environment in which you are more likely to self-injure?" "What types of objects or method do you use to self-injure?" "Are those secured?" "On a scale of 0-10, how likely are you to self-injure today? (0 being not at all and 10 being certain)"
3. The school counselor or school social worker will also communicate with the school nurse so that she can give direct care to any wounds or injuries, if needed.
 - a. If the student refuses to be examined by the school nurse, be sure to document that the school counselor or the school social worker advised that the cuts, wounds, or injuries be examined by the nurse; however, the student denied the opportunity to be seen by the school nurse.

4. The school counselor or school social worker will make contact with the student's parent/guardian via telephone to inform them the student has been self-injuring.
 - a. If the school counselor or school social worker is unable to reach the student's parent/guardian via telephone, call the designated emergency contacts that have been provided by the student's parent/guardian.
 - b. If the school counselor or school social worker is unable to reach either the parent/guardian, or the designated emergency contacts, she may contact the school's resource officer, the local police department, or the Sheriff's department to assist in locating the student's parent/guardian.

Note: If the student's parent/guardian is the reason for the self-injuring behavior, and it is, consequently, deemed inappropriate to call the parent/guardian, then the school counselor or the school social worker will need to call one of the other designated emergency contacts that have been provided for the student.

5. After talking with the students' parents, the school counselor or school social worker will either e-mail additional resources about self-injury to the students' parent/guardian, or the students' parent/guardian will be asked to come to the school so that this information can be shared and discussed with them in person.

In addition to sharing the resources about self-injury with the students' parent/guardian, the handout detailing the mental health resources available in Baldwin County will be shared.

Parents will not only be encouraged to seek professional mental health services for their child, but they will also be encouraged to have their child evaluated/assessed by a medical doctor as a result of the self-injury.

It **will not**, however, be a requirement for parents to check students out of school once they have been notified of their child's self-injury.

6. After talking with the student and his parent/guardian, the school counselor or school social worker will complete the Self-Injury Intervention Form, which should be forwarded to the Intervention Supervisor via the courier. **(TO ENSURE CONFIDENTIALITY, DO NOT FAX THE SELF-INJURY INTERVENTION FORM.)** The school counselor or school social worker should make a copy for himself/herself, which should be retained for his/her personal files. The principal's signature should also be included on this Self-Injury Intervention Form before being forwarded to the Intervention Supervisor.
7. The school principal should be apprised of all steps taken to ensure the emotional well-being and safety of the student who has been self-injuring.

NOTE: In its simplest form, self-injury is defined as any attempt to inflict pain on oneself. This may include cutting, scratching, bruising, hitting, banging, carving, or scraping. Not all students who self-injure have intentions of dying by suicide. Instead, the student may self-injure in order to get relief from intense emotions. For others, self-injury may create feelings when the student feels numb inside. This is commonly referred to as non-suicidal self-injury.