



Empowering
Independence

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are writing to advise you that during Week 5, Term 4, the school counsellors Chelsea and Xian will be running an information session for Year 7 students about self-harm behaviours, also known as Non-Suicidal Self Injury (NSSI).

This letter will provide you with information about the topic, as well as what to do if you are concerned your child or one of their peers is engaging in this behaviour.

Recently, we have become aware of instances of self-harm among some of our Year 7 students. Self-harm can manifest in various ways, including cutting, burning, or other forms of intentional self-injury. It often serves as a coping mechanism for underlying emotional distress or mental health issues. One of our concerns relates to the distress experienced by the friends or peers of a student who is observed to be self-harming or displays evidence of previous self-harm. Peers of students who self-harm have reported that they feel responsible to help or support their friend but often do not know what to do.

Additionally, some students feel like they cannot inform a parent or other trusted adult of this behaviour, as they form a belief that this increases the risk, or they are asked by the student not to. We want all students to be aware of the risk of self-harming behaviours and what to do if they are experiencing distress or know of a peer who is engaging in this behaviour.

Our school takes the well-being of our students very seriously, and we are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all. These issues are addressed in the following ways;

- **Supportive Resources:** We have counsellors and support staff available who are trained to help students navigate emotional difficulties and provide appropriate support. If you have concerns relating to the mental health or well-being of your student, please speak to your child's House Coordinator who can also help to facilitate a referral for them to see the school counsellors. You can find more information about school counselling here: [Counsellor's corner](#).
- **Educational Initiatives:** We are implementing educational programs such as this information session, to raise awareness among students about mental health, coping strategies, and the importance of seeking help.
- **Parental Involvement:** We encourage open communication between parents and the school. Your involvement is crucial in identifying signs of distress and ensuring that students receive the necessary support.

It's important to note that self-harm is often a private struggle, and affected students may be hesitant to seek help. Therefore, your awareness and understanding of this issue is important when recognising when a student may be struggling. If you notice any concerning behaviours or changes in your child's emotional well-being, please reach out to us for help. The school counsellors can provide support and external referrals as required.

Important note: If you would like to opt your child out of the upcoming information session for Year 7 students, please notify Rohan Langford, Head of Wellbeing (rohan.langford@merici.act.edu.au) by the **end of Week 4 (Friday 8 November)**.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your House Coordinator.

Yours sincerely,
Chelsea and Xian, Merici School Counsellors.

