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BODY MAP – SELF-HARM

Common locations, methods of concealment, and what to look for

●●● Most common ●● Common ● Less visible

LOCATIONS

●●● MOST COMMON

FOREARMS (inner)

The most frequent location for cutting.
Typically horizontal lines on the inner wrist and forearm.

Look for: *Long sleeves, bracelets, wristbands, sweatbands, watches worn high*

●●● MOST COMMON

UPPER THIGHS (inner)

Increasingly common, especially among girls.
Chosen specifically because it is easy to hide.

Look for: *Refusing PE or swimming, changing in toilet cubicles, wearing long shorts*

●● COMMON

UPPER ARMS

Both inner and outer surfaces. Often deeper cuts than forearms. May suggest increased risk; requires attention.

Look for: *T-shirts avoided even in summer, layers of clothing, refusing to remove jumper*

●● COMMON

ABDOMEN & HIPS

Scratching, cutting, or burning. Virtually invisible in daily school life.

Look for: *Discomfort when sitting, reluctance to bend or stretch, baggy tops*

● LESS VISIBLE

SHOULDERS & BACK

Often self-inflicted bruising, scratching, or hitting.
Difficult for the pupil to reach, which may indicate severity.

Look for: *Wincing when leaning back in a chair, avoiding physical contact or PE*

● LESS VISIBLE

ANKLES & FEET

Cutting or burning. Rarely checked. Chosen because school shoes and socks cover them entirely.

Look for: *Reluctance to remove shoes, limping, wearing socks to bed on residentials*

METHODS

Cutting	Most common. Razor blades, compasses, broken glass, pencil sharpener blades.
Burning	Cigarettes, lighters, heated metal, friction burns from erasers.
Scratching	Nails, pins, staples. Often dismissed as accidental.
Hitting / bruising	Punching walls, slapping self, banging head. Less visible, easily misattributed.
Hair pulling	Trichotillomania. Bald patches, thinning eyebrows or eyelashes.

IF YOU SEE WOUNDS OR SCARS:

Three-No Rule: Do not shout. Do not show disgust. Do not judge.

Take the pupil aside → School nurse → Anchor phrase → DSL

For display in the school counsellor's office only. Not for distribution to pupils or parents.

Edutimo material produced with AI assistance, based on a webinar by Jolanta Kawaler; content reviewed and approved by the author before publication.