

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

●● 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

● 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

●●● 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

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

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 residential

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 → School counsellor & parents SAME DAY

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