

## Learner Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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1	Julie Atkins	22.03.2025	All	New Policy

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## 1. Policy statement

Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to her or his community." (World Health Organisation)

- 1.1 The College aims to promote positive mental health for every member of the College community by using a whole College approach, underpinned by specialised and targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable learners.
- 1.2 By providing a supportive and healthy environment the College aims to enrich the experiences of all learners, promoting a culture of mental wellbeing and emotional resilience where it is easy to seek help and where learners have the motivation and skills to support their peers.
- 1.3 In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, the College aims to recognise and respond to mental ill health. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health policies and procedures, the College can promote a safe and stable environment for learners affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

1.4 Good mental health is defined as:

Feel relatively confident in yourself and having positive self-esteem.

Feeling and expressing a range of emotions.

Building and maintaining good relationships with others.

Feeling engaged with the world around you.

Living and working productively.

Coping with the stresses of daily life

Adapting and managing in times of change and uncertainty (adapted from Mind UK) [Home - Mind](#)

## 2. Scope

This policy is intended to:

- 2.1 Provide guidance to college staff on our college's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across all communities in the college.
- 2.2 Inform learners and parents about the support that they can expect from the college in respect of supporting mental health and wellbeing.

Read this policy in conjunction with:

- Student Positive Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Fitness to Study Policy

## 3. Policy aims

- Support and develop wellbeing and emotional resilience in staff and learners.
- Create a culture of wellbeing and inclusion.

- Foster a positive atmosphere in college, where learner feel able to discuss and reflect on their own experiences with mental health openly.
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues.
- Allow students to participate in forming our approach to mental health by promoting student voice.
- Give students the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by taking responsibility for themselves and others.
- Spread awareness of the varieties of ways mental health issues can manifest.
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues.
- Provide support to staff working with students with mental health issues.
- Provide support and access to resources to students experiencing mental ill health alongside their peers, their families and the staff who work with them

## 4. Legal basis

This policy was written with regard to specific legal responsibilities towards students whose mental health condition falls within the definition of disability under the law, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

## 5. Staff Roles and responsibilities

All staff have a responsibility to promote the emotional resilience, wellbeing and positive mental health of learners.

If any members of staff are concerned about a learner's mental health or wellbeing, they should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Student Services Manager (DDSL), Senior Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer, Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer.

Certain members of staff have additional experience to lead on mental health and wellbeing in college. These members of staff include:

- Principal
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Student Services Manager (DDSL)
- Senior Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer (DDSL)
- Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officers
- Special educational needs Co-Ordinator (SENCO)
- Counselling Service

Any member of staff who is concerned about mental health or wellbeing if a learner should speak to a member of the Safeguarding Team. If there is a concern that the learner is in danger of immediate harm, then safeguarding & child protection procedures should be followed. If the learner presents a medical emergency,

then the procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the First Aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to Children Social care or other external services where appropriate, this will be led and managed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DLS) or staff within the Safeguarding Team.

## **6. Teaching around Mental Health**

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by learners to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of the tutorial programme for learners.

The specific content of tutorials is determined by the specific needs of the cohort but there will always be an emphasis on embedding learners to develop their skills and coping strategies. To also have the confidence to seek help, as needed for themselves or others.

The college holds Health & Wellbeing events which are supported by local organisations. Stalls with information and guidance is available for staff and students together with various activities to promote health & wellbeing.

The college follows appropriate guidelines to ensure that mental health and emotional wellbeing issues are taught in a safe and sensitive manner.

## **7. Warning signs**

College staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a learner is experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues. These warning signs should always be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Safeguarding team. Some warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in mood or energy level
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns.
- Changes in attitude in lessons or academic attainment
- Changes in level of personal hygiene
- Feelings of isolation from friends or family or socially withdrawn
- Poor attendance or punctuality
- Expressing feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, worthlessness or feeling like a failure
- Abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Weight loss or gain
- Secretive behaviour
- Covering parts of the body that they would not have previously.
- Refusing to participate in an activity or being secretive when changing clothes.
- Physical pain or nausea with no obvious cause
- Physical injuries that appear to be self-inflicted

- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

It is important to note that any changes in the usual behaviour or presentation of a learner may indicate poor mental health and this should be considered as a possible explanation.

## 8. Managing disclosures

If a student makes a disclosure about themselves or a peer to a member of staff, staff should remain calm, non-judgmental, and reassuring.

Staff will focus on the student's emotional and physical safety, rather than trying to find out why they are feeling that way or offering advice.

Staff will always follow the college's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL/Deputy Safeguarding Lead/Student Services Manager/Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing/Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officers..

- Staff should listen rather than advise, with full consideration of the learner's emotional and physical safety
- A learner may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, so staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.
- All disclosures must be recorded on CPOMS as a factual true account of the disclosure.

When making a record of a disclosure, staff should include:

- The full name of the member of staff who is making the record.
- The full name of the student(s) involved.
- The date, time, and location of the disclosure
- The context in which the disclosure was made.
- Any questions asked or support offered by the member of staff.

## 9. Confidentiality

Staff should not promise a student that they will keep a disclosure secret, instead they will be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

A disclosure cannot be kept secret because:

- Being the sole person responsible for a student's mental health could have a negative impact on the member of staff's own mental health and wellbeing.
- The support put in place for the student will be dependent on the member of staff at college.
- Other staff members can share ideas on how to best support the student in question.

Staff should always share disclosures with at least one appropriate colleague. This will usually be the DSL/Deputy/Student Services Manager/Senior Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.

Before sharing information disclosed by a student with a third party, the member of staff will discuss it with the student and explain:

- Who they will share the information with
- What information they will share
- Why they need to share that information.

Staff will attempt to receive consent from the student to share their information, but the safety of the student comes first.

Parents will be informed unless there is a child protection concern. In this case the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable adults' policy will be followed.

### **9.1 Process for managing confidentiality around disclosures.**

1. Student makes a disclosure.
2. Member of staff offers support.
3. Member of staff explains the issues around confidentiality and rationale for sharing a disclosure with DSL/Deputy/Student Services Manager/Senior Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer.
4. Member of staff will attempt to get the student's consent to share – if no consent is given, explain to the student who you will share the information with and explain why you need to do this.
5. Member of staff will record the disclosure and share the information with the chosen elected member of staff.
6. The DSL/Deputy/Student Services Manager/Senior Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer will inform the parent/carers (if appropriate)
7. Any other relevant members of staff or external professionals will be informed on a need-to-know basis.

## **10. Supporting Learners**

### **10.1 Baseline support for all learners**

As part of the college's commitment to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all learners, the college offers support to all students by:

- Signposting all students to sources for online support and apps.
- Having open discussions about mental health during lessons and tutorials
- Offering pastoral support through safeguarding & Wellbeing officers.
- Providing peer support through Wellbeing Champions
- Working with the Educational mental health practitioners (EMHP)
- Providing workshops around mental health and wellbeing

### **10.2 Assessing what further support is needed.**

If a student is identified as having a mental health need, the DSL/Deputy Safeguarding Lead/Senior Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to make an assessment and provide tailored support by means of implement a risk assessment.

- Assessing what the student's mental health needs are
- Creating a risk assessment to provide support for both the student and staff.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

### 10.3 Internal mental health interventions

Where appropriate, a student will be offered support that is tailored to their needs as part of the graduated approach detailed above. The support offered at college includes:

- Regular contact with a Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer
- Signposting to workshop groups and Craven health & wellbeing team
- Referrals into the counselling service or EMHP
- Reduced programme of study if appropriate

### Signposting

- The college ensures that staff and learners are aware of sources of support within College and in the local community.
- The college displays relevant sources of support in communal areas such as libraries, classrooms, café, toilets and TV screens.
- By highlighting sources of support, the College increases the chance of learners seeking help by ensuring they know what help is available and how to access it

### 10.4 Making external referrals.

If a student's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the college provides, the college will make, or encourage parents to make, a referral for external support.

A student could be referred to:

- GP or pediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. [Samaritans](#), [Mind](#), [Young Minds](#), [Kooth](#))
- Local counselling services

## 11. Supporting and collaborating with parents and carers

We will work with parents and carers to support student's mental health by:

- Asking parents/carers to inform us of any mental health needs their child is experiencing, so we can offer the right support.
- Informing parents/carers of mental health concerns that we have about their child where the child consents and is not a safety risk to the child.
- Engaging with parents/carers to understand their mental health and wellbeing issues, as well as that of their child, and support them accordingly to make sure there is holistic support for them and their child.
- Highlighting sources of information and support about mental health and wellbeing

- Liaising with parents/carers to discuss strategies that can help promote positive mental health in their child.
- Providing guidance to parents/carers on navigating and accessing relevant local mental health services or other sources of support (e.g. parent forums)
- Keeping parents/carers informed about the mental health topics their child is learning about in tutorial and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home.

When informing parents about any mental health concerns we have about their child, we will endeavor to do this face to face.

These meetings can be difficult, so the college will ensure that parents are given time to reflect on what has been discussed, and that lines of communication are kept open at the end of the meeting.

A record of what was discussed, and action plans agreed upon in the meeting will be recorded and added to the student's confidential record on CPOMS.

If appropriate the college may implement the Fitness to Study policy process.

## **12. Supporting peers**

Watching a friend experience poor mental health can be extremely challenging for students. Students may also be at risk of learning and developing unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other.

We will offer support to all students impacted by mental health directly and indirectly. We will review the support offered on a case-by-case basis. Support might include:

- Strategies they can use to support their friends.
- Things they should avoid doing/saying.
- Warning signs to look out for
- Signposting to sources of external support

## **14. Whole school approach to promoting mental health awareness**

### **14.1 Mental health is taught in Tutorials.**

- Develop healthy coping strategies.
- Challenge misconceptions around mental health
- Understand their own emotional state.
- Keep themselves safe.

### **14.2 Creating a positive atmosphere around mental health.**

Staff will create an open culture around mental health by:

- Discussing mental health with students in order to break down stigma.
- Encouraging students to disclose when they think their mental health is deteriorating.



## **15. Training**

All staff will be offered training:

- Mental Health in Education is part of the training package available for all staff
- Have a good understanding of what students' mental health needs are.
- Know how to recognise warning signs of mental ill health.
- Know a clear process to follow if they identify a student in need of help.
- Deputy Safeguarding Lead/Safeguarding and Wellbeing Lead/ Safeguarding officers are Mental Health First Aiders and Suicide Assist trained.

## **16. Support for staff**

We recognize that supporting a student experiencing poor mental health can be distressing for staff. To combat this, we will:

Treat mental health concerns seriously

Safeguarding officers have regular supervision sessions.

Support staff who may be experiencing poor mental health themselves

## Appendix 1

### Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



