



HOLYPORT COLLEGE

Title	Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Strategy
Person responsible for policy formulation, implementation, maintenance and evaluation	Mental Health Lead
Persons consulted	Assistant Head Teacher – Curriculum Support GWC
Status	Review Policy
Approved Date	2nd March 2023
Date of future review	March 2025 or as required

REVISION STATUS TABLE

Revision No	Effective Date	Summary of Revision	Reviewed		Approved/Noted	
			By	Date	By	Date
v1.0	12March 2020	New Policy	GWC	05.11.2020	FGB	03.12.2020
V1.1	2 March 2023	Review Policy	GWC	2 March 23	GWC	02.03.23

This policy considers the following:

- Mental health and wellbeing provision in school – October 2018
- Mental health and behaviour in schools – November 2018
- Mental health and wellbeing resources for teachers and teaching staff – June 21
- Promoting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing-PHE and DfE- Sept 21
- Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance – February 2023
- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance – Feb 23

Introduction

Mental health is a state of well-being 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 make a contribution to her or his community. (World Health Organization).

At Holyport College, we aim to promote positive mental health for every student. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three children will be suffering from a diagnosable mental health issue. By developing and implementing practical, relevant

and effective mental health policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our medical policy in cases where a student's mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue and the SEND policy where a student has an identified special educational need.

The policy aims to:

- Promote positive mental health in all students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common mental health issues
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Provide support to staff working with young people with mental health issues
- Provide support to students suffering mental ill health and their peers and parents or carers

Lead members of staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote the mental health of students, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Rachel Harding – Deputy SENCo and Senior Mental Health Lead
- Nina Mathura – Curriculum Support Officer – Sixth Form
- Claire Druce – Curriculum Support Officer - Winton

The Safeguarding Team often become involved in supporting students who are facing specific challenges with their mental health and may refer students to their GP (in the case of boarders), to Early Help or to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The team consists of:

- Walter Boyle – Founding Head Master and Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding
- Rachel Harding – Deputy SENCo and Mental Health Lead
- Alex Jeffery – Assistant Head Teacher – Curriculum Support

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum.

Mental health is a topic often covered in College assemblies.

Teaching about mental health and wellbeing

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our Personal Development curriculum, led by Rachel Harding.

The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others. We teach mental health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner which helps rather than harms.

Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with Rachel Harding, our Deputy SENCo.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

Managing disclosures

A student may choose to disclose concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

Staff should listen rather than advise and our first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

If the member of staff receiving a disclosure is not a member of the welfare or safeguarding team, they should refer the student to a member of the relevant team. In cases of self-harm or suicidal thoughts, this must be done with a minimum of delay to allow team members to put in place a safety plan before the end of the College day, where this is necessary. The team member will decide how to manage the disclosure and this may lead to a referral to an external agency or one of the College's own support systems. This could include:

- The form tutor
- Continued engagement with a member of the welfare team
- The concern being passed to a member of the safeguarding team
- The College Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), the College counsellor or art or drama therapist may become involved. (Please note, there is a waiting list for these internal services and they do not aim to replace the work of the NHS. Furthermore, at any given time, the College may not be using one or more of the above and may well be using a different service.)
- The Education Mental Health Practitioner assigned to the College

Confidentiality

We can't promise confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, then we should discuss with the student:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We should never share information about a student without first telling them. Ideally, we would receive their consent, though there are certain situations when information must always be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent. This generally means students up to the age of 16 who are at risk of harm.

Working with parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents, we need to be sensitive in our approach. It can be shocking and upsetting for parents to learn of their child's issues and many may respond with anger, fear or upset during the first conversation. We should be accepting of this (within reason) and give the parent time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information and give them leaflets to take away where possible as they will often find it hard to take much in whilst coming to terms with the news that is being shared. Sharing sources of further support aimed specifically at parents can also be helpful too, e.g. parent helplines and forums.

Students may choose to tell their parents themselves. If this is the case, the student should be given 24 hours to share this information before the school contacts parents. We should always give students the option of us informing parents for them or with them. However, where allowing a student to inform parents themselves may pose a risk to a student, staff must inform the parent/carer directly.

Working with all parents

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we may:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our school newsletter, Dixit
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to go about this, if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents can support positive mental health in their children through information evenings or workshops
- Keep parents informed about the mental health topics their children are learning about in Personal Development and share ideas for extending and exploring this learning at home

Supporting peers

When a student is experiencing mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, it is possible that friends may learn unhealthy coping mechanisms from each other. In order to keep peers safe, we will consider on a case by case basis which friends may need additional support. Support will be provided either in one to one or group settings and will be guided by conversations with the student who is suffering and their parents with whom we will discuss.

Additionally, we will want to highlight with peers:

- Where and how to access support for themselves
- Safe sources of further information about their friend's condition
- Healthy ways of coping with the difficult emotions they may be feeling

Training

As a minimum, all staff will receive regular training about recognising and responding to mental health issues as part of their regular child protection training to enable them to keep students safe.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in-depth knowledge will be considered as part of our performance management process and additional CPD will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate owing to developing situations with one or more students.

Where the need to do so becomes evident, we will hold training sessions for all staff to promote learning or understanding about specific issues related to mental health.

Managing mental health concerns in school and boarding

Management of mental health issues, including eating disorders and self-harm, poses specific challenges to a boarding school. Each case is assessed on a case by case basis. Sometimes, we have to consider if a student is well enough to stay in school or in boarding. The student may pose a risk to themselves or others or may require a greater degree of supervision than can be reasonably accommodated in a boarding setting. This may mean that a boarder will temporarily need to stay at home until the level of risk can be safely managed. Often, phased returns work best.

Working with other agencies

The College is proud of its track record in supporting students with mental health issues. However, it cannot be expected to meet the needs of all students with a mental health issue and nor can it replicate or replace the work of the NHS, CAMHS or Children's Social Care. The College has extensive links with these agencies which support us both proactively and reactively.