
 HOLYPORT COLLEGE	Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Strategy	
	Effective Date: 12 March 2020	Version No: v1.2

Title	Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Strategy
Person responsible for policy formulation, implementation, maintenance and evaluation	Assistant Head Safeguarding and Inclusion (DSL)
Persons consulted	Mental Health Lead GWC
Status	Review Policy
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REVISION STATUS TABLE

Revision No	Effective Date	Summary of Revision	Reviewed		Approved/Noted	
			By	Date	By	Date
v1.0	12 March 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
V1.2	20 November 2025	Review Policy	GWC	20 November 2025	GWC	20.11.25

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1. Our Aims

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.


This policy focuses on student's mental health and wellbeing. It aims to:

- Set out the College's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all pupils across the College.
- Provide guidance to staff on their role in supporting pupils' mental health and wellbeing, including how they can foster and maintain an inclusive culture in which pupils feel able to talk about and reflect on their experiences of mental health.
- Support staff to identify and respond to early warning signs of mental health issues
- Inform students and their parents/carers about the support they can expect from the College in respect of student's mental health and wellbeing, and provide them with access to resources.

In addition to promoting positive mental health, we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. 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:

- SEND Policy
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child protection and safeguarding policy

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2. Legislation and Guidance


This policy was written with regard to:

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Data Protection Act 2018
- Articles 3 and 23 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- DfE publication *Transforming children and young people's mental health provision (2022; implementation updates 2024-25)*
- DfE blog guidance *A Whole-school Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing (2024)*
- DfE guidance *Mental Health Issues Affecting a Pupil's Attendance – Guidance for Schools (2023)*
- DfE non-statutory guidance *Mental health and wellbeing provision in school* (October 2018)
- DfE non-statutory guidance *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
- Other statutory guidance including Keeping Children Safe in Education, the SEND Code of Practice, Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022/24)

3. Roles and Responsibilities


All staff are responsible for promoting positive mental health and wellbeing across the College and for understanding risk factors. If any members of staff are concerned about a pupil's mental health or wellbeing they inform the DSL and/or the mental health lead.

Certain members of staff have extra duties to lead on mental health and wellbeing at the College. These members of staff include:

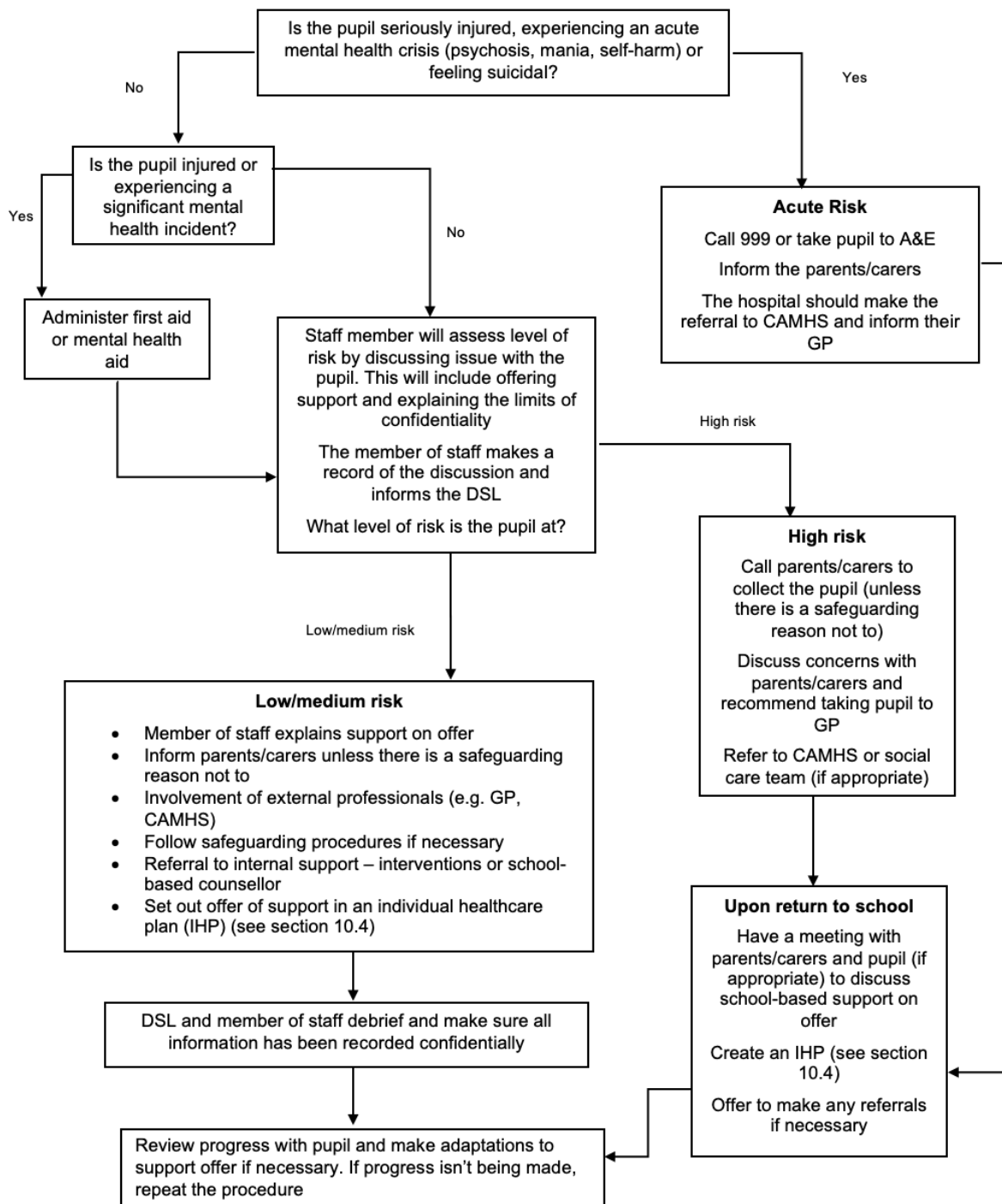
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- Assistant Headteacher Safeguarding and Inclusion – Alex Jeffery
- Director of Inclusive Education (SENCO) – Rachel Harding
- Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads – Rachel Harding, Claire Druce and Iris Vilasanchez Pita
- Curriculum Support Officer Winton – Claire Druce
- Curriculum Support Officer 6th Form – Nina Mathura

Rachel Harding is the College Student Mental Health Lead.

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4. Procedure to follow in a case of acute mental health crisis



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5. 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 to the College safeguarding team.

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

6. 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?'.

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Staff will always follow the College's safeguarding policy and pass on all concerns to the DSL or DDSLs/Mental Health Lead. All disclosures are recorded and stored on the College confidential safeguarding system My Concern.

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.

7. Confidentiality

Staff cannot promise 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 in place for the student will be dependent on the member of staff being in school
- 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. If information needs to be shared with other members of staff or external professionals, it will be done on a need-to-know basis.


If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on to a third party, the member of staff will discuss with the student and explain:

- Who we are going to share information with
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

We won't 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. The safety of the student comes first.

8. Supporting Students

8.1 Baseline support for all students

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

- Ensuring that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community.
- Displaying relevant sources of support in communal areas and on the College website, as well as highlighting sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum.
- Raising awareness of mental health during assemblies, tutor time and mental health awareness week.
- Providing students with avenue to provide feedback on any elements of the College that is negatively impacting their mental health.
- Appointing a mental health lead with a strategic oversight of our whole College approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Offering pastoral support through House Masters.
- Ensuring 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. The specific content of lessons is determined by the specific needs of the cohort, 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.


8.2 Assessing what further support is needed

If a student is identified as having a mental health need, the safeguarding team and those staff listed in section 3 will take a graduated and case-by-case approach to assessing the support the College can provide, further to the baseline support detailed above in section 8.1.

The College will offer support in cycles of:

- Assessing what the student's mental health needs are
- Creating a plan to provide support
- Taking the action set out in the plan
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the support offered

8.3 Internal mental health interventions

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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 the College includes:

- Continued engagement with a member of the Curriculum Support team
- Mindfulness sessions as part of our co-curricular offering
- Interventions run by Curriculum Support Officers i.e. Year 8 girls STARS group
- The concern being passed to a member of the safeguarding team
- Triage to the College Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA), College counsellor or, in exceptional cases, 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 NHS Education Mental Health Practitioner assigned to the College

8.4 External referrals


If a student's needs cannot be met by the internal offer the College provides, the College will make, or encourage parents/carers to make, a referral for external support. A student could be referred to:

- Their GP or paediatrician
- CAMHS
- Mental health charities (e.g. Samaritans, Mind, Young Minds, Kooth)
- Local counselling services

9. 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

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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.

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

10. 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

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11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier should statutory guidance change