

R U N S H A W C O L L E G E

POLICY TITLE:	Student Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy				
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1 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)

1.1 At college, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for every member of our staff and student body. We pursue this aim using both universal, whole college approaches and specialised, targeted approaches aimed at vulnerable students.

1.2 We are committed to proactively supporting and promoting emotional/mental health and wellbeing. We strive to:

- Create an open and inclusive college ethos which includes respect for those with mental ill health
- Promote equality of opportunity and challenge mental health stigma through all college activities
- Provide appropriate mental health training for staff
- Encourage and collect student views on mental health and wellbeing by working with the Student Union and through student surveys
- Provide targeted individual mental health support where appropriate or alternatively signpost to external support services
- Establish effective links with local health and voluntary sector mental health groups
- Promote the benefit that physical activity and sport has on mental wellbeing

To bolster and demonstrate this, we have signed the Association of College's Mental Health Charter and are committed to meet its core themes:

The four core themes in the new AoC MH Charter: Leadership and Ethos, Support for Students, Workplace Wellbeing and Evidence and Impact. From this charter, the statements that relate particularly to students are:

- There is dedicated internal resource to support students' mental health and wellbeing.
- There is clear evidence that mental health and wellbeing is embedded within the college's curriculum.
- A model of effective support has been designed, demonstrating a triage support system that responds to students' needs and emerging themes and issues.
- Extra-curricular and enrichment activities are delivered with the objective of supporting all students to take proactive steps to be both physically and mentally healthy, such as promoting the benefits of the 'NHS Five Ways to Wellbeing' or other models

- 1.3 In addition to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing we aim to recognise and respond to mental ill health. In an average classroom, three students will be experiencing a diagnosable mental health concern. By developing and implementing practical, relevant and effective mental health and wellbeing policies and procedures we can promote a safe and stable environment for students affected both directly and indirectly by mental ill health.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This document describes the college's approach to promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for students. This policy is intended as guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors. There is a separate Wellbeing at Work policy relating specifically to staff.
- 2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with other related policies as listed below
- This policy applies to all learners of the College
- 2.3 For apprentices, action will be taken in liaison with the relevant employer wherever possible.

3 PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to –:

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

4 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

4.1 Lead Members of Staff

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

- Additional Learning Support Staff
- Counselling Team
- HR team
- First Aiders
- Head of Studies
- Head of School
- Mental Health Champions
- Progress Mentors
- Safeguarding Team
- Teaching Staff
- Wellbeing & Mental Health Facilitator

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should speak to their line manager. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm, then the college child protection/safeguarding procedures must be followed with an immediate referral to the safeguarding team. If the student presents a medical emergency then

the normal procedures for medical emergencies must be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

Where a referral to external agencies, including the GP, CAMHS, Early Intervention, Home Treatment, START and Social Services is appropriate, this will be led and managed by the safeguarding team.

4.2 Students

Student who have concerns about their mental health and wellbeing can make a self-referral directly to the Counselling Team and the Wellbeing & Mental Health Facilitator

4.3 Support for students with high-risk mental health concerns

Where appropriate, college will draw up a Student Safety Plan for students causing concern, or who receive a diagnosis pertaining to their mental health and wellbeing. This should be drawn up in discussion with the student, parents/carers and relevant college staff and health professionals as appropriate. This can include:

- Details of the concern for the student
- Special requirements and precautions
- How the student can keep themselves safe and any other protective factors.
- Medication and any side effects
- What to do and who to contact in an emergency
- The role the college can play in supporting the student
- How externals are supporting the student

4.4 Awareness and Promotion 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 pastoral curriculum.

The content of lessons is determined by the specific needs of the cohort of students 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 will follow best practice guidelines to ensure that we teach mental and physical health and emotional wellbeing issues in a safe and sensitive manner that helps rather than harms.

4.5 Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within college and in the local community. We will also raise awareness of the 24/7 356 day service available to our students via our partnership with Health Assured, Student Assistance programme.

We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and will regularly highlight sources of support to students via awareness days and campaigns. Whenever we highlight sources of support, we will increase the chance of students seeking help by ensuring students understand:

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access it
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen next

4.6 Warning Signs

College staff may become aware of warning signs, which indicate a student 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

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
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- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
 - Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
 - Secretive behaviour
 - Lateness to or absence from college
 - Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
 - An increase in lateness or absenteeism

4.7 **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/wellbeing 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 the first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

All disclosures should be made via the green button on the staff portal 'Report a safeguarding Concern'

If the student is immediately at risk, you should speak to a member of the safeguarding team and/or call 999.

4.8 **Confidentiality**

We will be honest with regard to the issue of confidentiality. If it is necessary for us to pass our concerns about a student on, then we will discuss with the student:

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

Colleagues receiving disclosures will be supported by the college through line management and the safeguarding team, and group and 1:1 supervision is available within college if required. This helps to safeguard staff wellbeing and it ensures continuity of care in the case of staff absence; and provides an extra source of ideas and support.

If a student is under 18 parents/carers must always be informed if the student is deemed at immediate risk of serious harm. Having made a disclosure to a member of staff many students

will choose to tell their parents/carers themselves supported by a member of staff but if this is not the case a member of the safeguarding team will make contact. We will follow the guidelines set out in the Lancashire Suicide Prevention and Reducing Self-Harm Strategy and Action Plan 2024 - and the safeguarding team work to the sharing guidelines set out in the Safeguarding Operating Framework.

If a student gives us reason to believe that there may be underlying child protection/safeguarding issues, the safeguarding team will follow the guidelines set out in KCSiE, Working Together to Safeguard Children and in the Safeguarding Operating Framework.

4.9 Working with Parents/Carers

In order to support parents/carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common mental health issues on our college website, communication portal and wellbeing Instagram
- 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 and wellbeing policy easily accessible to parents
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support and promote positive mental health and wellbeing through our regular progress evenings

4.10 Supporting Peers

When a student is suffering from mental health issues, it can be a difficult time for their friends. Friends often want to support but do not know how to do this. In the case of self-harm or eating disorders, 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

Additionally, we will 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

4.11 Training

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

We will host relevant information on our virtual learning environment for staff who wish to learn more about mental health.

Training opportunities for staff who require more in depth knowledge will be considered as part of our appraisal process and additional Professional Development will be supported throughout the year where it becomes appropriate due developing situations with one or more students.

4.12 Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing Activities Plan

The college will produce an annual programme of training activities and events to support Student Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing. This will form part of the colleges annual CPD offer and the Personal Development cross college calendar which can be found on the staff portal.

5 Other Associated Policies / Documents

- Accident, Incident and Dangerous Occurrences Reporting & Investigation Procedure
- Attendance Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Care and Control of Students Policy
- Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
- Education, Health and Care Plan Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Experience of Work Policy
- Events, Trips and Residential Policy
- Health Safety and Wellbeing Policy
- IT Access Usage and Online Safety Policy
- Pastoral Support Policy
- Student Charter
- Student Positive Behaviour Policy
- Student Harassment and Bullying Policy
- Special Educational Needs (SEND) Policy
- Study Support Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Wellbeing at Work Policy

