



STAMFORD

**STAMFORD SCHOOL
MENTAL HEALTH POLICY & PROCEDURES**

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INTRODUCTION

Stamford School is committed to the protection and promotion of positive mental health for all students. We will continuously endeavour to improve the mental health of the school community using whole school approaches, with the aim to identify mental health concerns early and intervene by implementing positive and effective processes and practices as early as feasible to prevent a mental health disorder developing.

AIMS OF THE POLICY:

- To highlight the support available to students who currently have mental health needs, are suspected to have mental health needs or are recovering from a mental health problem/disorder;
- To alert staff to warning signs and risk factors so as to identify as early and accurately as possible where mental health support is required;
- To outline the protocol for staff to alert pastoral SLT so as to seek the correct support and management for students considered to be suffering from or on the verge of suffering from a mental health condition.

DEFINITION

‘Mental health is a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It has intrinsic and instrumental value and is integral to our wellbeing.’ (World Health Organisation)

Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behaviour. Many people have mental health concerns from time to time, but a mental health concern becomes a mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms cause frequent stress and affect your ability to function.

SCHOOL PASTORAL ENVIRONMENT

The School supports and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing by creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population, and equipping students to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This includes teaching students about mental wellbeing through the PSHE programme, the curriculum and a thorough offering of physical activities and pastoral initiatives.

There are layers of pastoral support from trained staff, including the Deputy and Assistant Heads Pastoral (DDSLs), Assistant Head Safeguarding (DSL), Head of Sixth Form, Heads of Year, tutors, Pastoral Support Managers, the Medical Centre and in-house school

counsellors. All strive to demonstrate that each individual pupil is known, valued and listened to.

Lead Members of Staff

Deputy Head Pastoral (DDSL) – Katie Dexter

Assistant Head Pastoral (DDSL) – Alex Colley

Assistant Head Safeguarding (DSL) – Anna Kennedy

IDENTIFY

Being able to recognise signs of mental health concerns is the responsibility of the whole school community. Early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is crucial to avoid the mental health concern becoming a mental illness. Staff will be made aware of students with previous mental health problems on a need-to-know basis.

Mental health problems in young people:

- can be a temporary response to a painful or difficult event in their life or can develop into a debilitating and persistent disorder.
- may emerge suddenly or over a longer period of time and may be of an acute or short-lived nature, or may take a more chronic, long-term course becoming a mental illness.
- may be very subtle to recognise in some students and far more obvious in others, depending on the individual.
- can have a detrimental impact on a student's ability to access school and on their academic attainment.

Areas within the student's school life that may suffer as a result of their mental health problem are:

- Academic achievement
- Attendance and lateness
- Access to extra-curricular activities including sport
- Duration and pace of recovery
- Ability to interact and engage within lessons
- Disciplinary problems

There are too many mental health illnesses and disorders to mention individually. Staff are trained to ensure they can identify some common symptoms of mental health concerns.

Staff will be able to identify a range of behaviour and physical changes, including:

- Physical signs of harm.
- Changes in eating and sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation from friends and family and becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in mood.
- Talking and/or joking about self-harm and/or suicide.
- Drug and alcohol abuse.
- Feelings of failure, uselessness, and loss of hope.

- Secretive behaviour.
- Clothing unsuitable for the time of year, e.g. a large winter coat in summer.
- Negative behaviour patterns, e.g. disruption. Staff will also be able to identify a range of issues, including:
 - Attendance and absenteeism.
 - Punctuality and lateness.
 - Changes in educational attainment and attitude towards education.
- Family and relationship problems. Finally, staff will be well placed to identify any additional needs arising from difficulties that may impact a child's mental health and wellbeing, such as bereavement and health difficulties

REPORTING

Reporting

The most important role school staff can play is to familiarise themselves with the risk factors and warning signs already mentioned. Recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible is key. If there are any changes in a student's behaviour that causes concern, whether mentioned in this policy or not, staff are to follow the clear processes and systems in place to report any pastoral or mental health concerns. If a member of staff has a serious concern, contact is to be made immediately with the DSL or, in their absence, with one of the DDSLs. Staff are to report all concerns on MyConcern, and are guided as to what is the most appropriate course of action for the needs of the individual student. It is important to complete a MyConcern and speak with the DSL, as others may have noticed these changes too.

Managing Disclosures

All members of staff have annual training in safeguarding young people and know what to do when a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend. All disclosures are recorded confidentially in writing and shared with the DSL who will offer support and advise on next steps. Disclosures will only be shared with the appropriate authorities if it's necessary to keep the child safe, in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION

Where vulnerable pupils or groups are identified within the school, provision should be made to support and promote their positive mental health.

Support and Intervention

Following receipt of a MyConcern, the appropriate course of action will be decided. This may include:

- Contacting parents / carers
- Arranging professional assistance e.g. doctor, nurse

- Arranging an appointment with a counsellor
- Giving advice to parents, teachers and other students
- Taking to A&E

Accessing specialist internal support: Stamford School has school counsellors who are available every weekday. Counsellors run sessions for students with any emotional concerns to give this support early with the aim to avoid any disorder developing or recognise when further intervention is needed. Appointments can be made directly as a self-referral or through any member of staff. A Play therapist is also available at SJS and referrals can be made through the Deputy Head Pastoral at the Junior School. Students can have up to four counselling sessions and then it is recommended to seek further external counselling support.

It may be necessary to inform parents or carers of any concerns relating to the mental health of their child. We will be sensitive in our approach and will always invite the parents/carers for a face-to-face meeting, subject to any restrictions.

Access to external support: we will highlight what help is available, for whom, how to access it and when it can be accessed as well as what is likely to happen once the student has received the support. We work effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

Individual Care Plans (also known as Pastoral Support Plans) are drawn up for students where there is concern about a potential mental health problem or where a student has received a diagnosis of a mental health programme. Parents and students are involved in the consultation of the ICP, and it is regularly reviewed with all parties.

Signposting: there are posters around the school highlighting what help is available both internally and externally. Details of external support are shown including how to access further support outside school hours.

Required Absence from School – “Circuit Breaker”

All students with any mental health concern who are at serious risk to themselves or others will be required to take a period of absence from the school whilst they undergo further evaluation, support and treatment. The school will follow up that specialist appointments have been made and been attended.

Students will return when there is an agreement by both the school and medical professionals that this would be in the student's best interests and all reasonable adjustments have been agreed. This could be in the form of a phased return. Boarding students may be advised to return as day students in the first instance, as a part of this phased return to school.

The students and parents will be kept informed and supported throughout this process.

On a student's return to the school, the Pastoral Leadership Team will be the key point of contact for staff, parents, the student and external agencies and will keep in regular contact with the student and their parents.

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. 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.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONSENT

Stamford School respects students' rights to confidentiality and, where possible, the School will seek a student's consent to share confidential information arising from a mental health problem with others before doing so.

1. The School also recognises that it is good practice to involve parents in a student's treatment - wherever possible; however, the School balances this against the wishes of students who are Gillick competent to consent to, or withhold their consent in relation to treatment, without the involvement of their parents.
2. Safeguarding concerns. The School will balance the student's right of confidentiality against the School's overarching duties to safeguard students' health, safety and welfare and to protect students from suffering significant harm and where a student withholds consent and / or in any other circumstances where the School considers it necessary and proportionate to the need and level of risk, confidential information may still be shared with staff, parents, medical professionals and external agencies (such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board, LSCB).
3. There are eventualities (e.g., when a student is self-harming or suicidal) when the school has a duty to inform parents who are caring for their child, even if this goes against the student's wishes.

For this reason, staff should never provide students with an absolute assurance of confidentiality, and should explain to students at the outset the importance of sharing information about any mental health difficulties and treatment with others, on a "need to know basis".

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Where there are concerns relating to specific individuals, these will be discussed with appropriate staff on a "need to know" basis and a plan to support and monitor that student implemented, as set out in this policy.

Monitoring of individual assessments and students' progress will be coordinated by the HOY/DSL, together with Medical Professionals, if relevant.

In addition, the HOY/DSL will regularly monitor and review mental health and wellbeing issues at the School in order to support affected individuals and to identify trends, issues of concern and the operation of this policy, so that these can be addressed at a whole School level.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Stamford School Emotional Health and Wellbeing Policy and Stamford School Safeguarding Policy.

The revised edition published November 2018 of DfE advice Mental Health and Behaviour in schools can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2>

APPENDIX 1

Further guidance

Below is a list of further guidance to assist staff at the School in dealing with mental health problems of students.

Guidance:

Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, March 2016) [Advice template](#)

Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future (DfE, March 2015) [Advice template](#)

PSHE Teacher Guidance: Preparing to teach about mental health and emotional wellbeing (PSHE Association, March 2015) [Mental health and emotional wellbeing teacher guidance](#)

Web resources:

Anti-bullying Alliance <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

BEAT provides advice regarding eating disorders <http://www.b-eat.co.uk/support-services>

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) [Guide to CAMHS | Mental Health Services | YoungMinds](#)

Mind <http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/>

MindEd <https://www.minded.org.uk/>

Samaritans <http://www.samaritans.org/your-community/supporting-schools/deal-teaching-resources>

Young Minds is a charity aiming to improve the mental and emotional well-being of children and young people. [YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People | YoungMinds](#)

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