

Mental Health Policy - Students

(Reviewer: Caty Jacques, Simon Hilliard, July 2022)

(Approved by SMT September 2022)

1. Introduction

The purpose of the College's Mental Health Policy is to help ensure that we provide a coherent whole school approach when responding to students with mental health problems.

The College has specific legal responsibilities towards students whose mental condition falls within the definition of disability under the law. This requires us to ensure that students with a recognised mental illness are not discriminated against and that reasonable adjustments are made to support their learning.

The College aims to provide a supportive environment that will help students with mental health difficulties to realise their full academic potential and to successfully complete their course. It also aims to facilitate and promote positive mental health and well-being by:

- Empowering students to take responsibility for their own emotional wellbeing.
- Encouraging a collective responsibility within the College community for individuals to be empathetic towards another's need for help and support.
- Providing a range of support services, including a counselling service, a learning support service, medical assistance based in the Medical Centre and support provided by pastoral staff and Guardians, if, and where, appropriate
- Encouraging students with mental health difficulties to seek support or assistance, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), when and where appropriate;
- Ensuring that there is a robust anti-bullying policy in place.
- Having in place effective procedures for the disclosure of information in respect of students with mental health difficulties
- De-stigmatisation of mental health issues by educating students, staff and parents.
- Ensuring that the sources of support are clearly communicated to both prospective and current students via notice boards and visiting speakers.
- Promoting understanding and recognition of mental health difficulties through the PSHCE curriculum, with specific sessions devoted to coping with stress and anxiety.
- Providing guidance and training to staff involved in the support and care of those with mental health difficulties, working closely within frameworks provided by professionals in relevant fields e.g. psychotherapists, psychiatrists, psychiatric workers or GPs;
- Providing clear guidance on the confidentiality of personal information provided by students.
- Holding evenings for parents to help foster and establish greater understanding and co-operation between home and school in promoting good emotional/mental wellbeing.
- Ensuring a good level of staff understanding of mental health issues via the 1 day/2 day Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) courses.

Within the Hurst community, the following are easily accessible and ideally placed to provide pastoral support help and advice to all students:

- Housemasters, Housemistresses and Matrons
- All members of the teaching staff and Tutors
- Chaplain
- Medical Centre staff

- School Counsellors
- Pastoral Intervention Practitioner
- Director of Safeguarding and Deputy Director of Safeguarding
- Deputy Head Pastoral
- Prefects, Guardians

However, whilst the College is committed to providing a supportive environment, it is important to recognise that it is not a mental health facility nor is it a therapeutic community. There are, of necessity, limits to the extent of the support which can be provided and it is not the responsibility of the College to replicate services that already exist in the community and the NHS. Subject to any reasonable adjustment, and if well enough, the student should be included in the school community. There should be open communication, where appropriate, between outside agencies, home, College and Medical Centre (with particular regard to medicines in school).

Finally, the College will also expect parents to inform the school at the point of joining, or as soon as it is known by them, if there has been or is any need for mental health care, admission to A&E post an attempted suicide, or any other such provision relating to mental health, prior to entry to the school or at any time during their time at Hurst.

2. Signs to look for?

Staff may encounter the following situations and contexts:

- Erratic, unaccountable behaviour in pupils e.g. having to leave lessons suddenly;
- Sleep disturbance
- Unusual disengagement from or anxiety about work or extra-curricular activities;
- Unexpected or disproportionate reactions to ordinary situations e.g. volatility or aggression, or obsessive, compulsive behaviour;
- Unexpected and very significant dips in academic understanding, development or performance;
- Unusual social behaviour or social development;
- Unusual responses in their peer group to their behaviour;
- Dysfunctionality in pupils' family lives or trauma.
- Self harming
- Self-isolation
- Changes in appetite

The College will take the advice of psychiatrists and psychologists and work with the student and parents, unless the DSL, or ultimately the Head of College, decides that the College can no longer provide the care and support that is needed for the student, or the student is a risk to themselves or others

FLOW CHART for STAFF GUIDANCE

Identifying a problem

- Direct approach from the student
- Other students or staff have voiced their concerns
- Significant changes in student's appearance noted
- Mood changes noted

- Recent changes in behaviour giving cause for concern
- Academic performance dropped
- Poor attendance
- Student of concern form completed

YES TO ANY OF ABOVE?

- Don't avoid the situation.
- Be proactive.
- Don't wait for the situation to get worse.
- **Approach the pupil and try to talk to them**

If, after listening you feel unsure and think action may be required your options are; to speak to the HoM, Form Tutor, Medical Centre, DSL

The situation may only require listening. Remember time constraints – be honest with the student and yourself about how much time you have. You don't have to deal with this situation on your own.

Staff Consultation

Are there Child Protection issues?
Discuss who should be given this info.

After discussion with pupil and relevant staff, if appropriate, discuss openly with pupil and ask for consent to speak with parents.

If student DOES want to talk about their problems

Encourage them to tell their parents and offer an open invitation to come back and talk to you.

FOLLOW UP

If the student is unable to tell parents, offer to help to do this or explain that if they do not tell them, you may have to. Explain the reasons why to the student.

Nominate a staff member to tell parents unless inappropriate (CP issues or pupil confidentiality)
Assist in making appropriate referral (internal or external) and set up relevant support and named focal point in school. (HoM/DSL)

Referral can be made to CAMHS or GP by Medical centre or DSL

KEEP GOOD RECORDS

If student DOES NOT want to talk about their problems

Try to encourage them to tell their parents or to speak with Medical centre or school counsellor in confidence.

If unsuccessful, keep open communication with student and keep using gentle encouragement. They may just need some time.

KEEP GOOD RECORDS

Discuss with DSL if concerned about lack of progress or pupil safety.

Try not to take responsibility for the student's problem

Try not to give out advice out of your area of expertise

Remember to look after yourself / Seek support from others

YOU DO NOT NEED TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM

3. Suicide and attempted suicide

- any threat of suicide should be taken very seriously and raised with a DSL.
- students found in a poor/injured state should be treated in line with normal first aid procedures, calling 999 if necessary.
- the HoM and Head of College and Principal should be informed after the parents and emergency services;
- in the event of an incident the student should be supervised directly until placed under medical care or parental supervision and can only stay in College accommodation, post event, if agreed by parents, DSL and the Head of College.
- if a student has attempted suicide, the College will require a 'fit to return to school' letter from their GP, or principal health professional working with them e.g. psychiatrist;
- the College will also reasonably expect parents to inform the College if there has been an incident involving any attempted suicide at home, or during a weekend period, of which the College might otherwise be unaware;
- support will be provided to the student, staff and other students directly affected by any incident.

4. Services for Students

Counselling Service

The College has two qualified counsellors who can provide intervention and support using cognitive behavioural and psychodynamic approaches on an individual and group basis and who can also work in partnership with pupils' GPs, or other external agencies (CAHMS, or the Sussex Partnership NHS foundation trust). This can be arranged by appointment by a Housemaster or Housemistress or by one of the College Safeguarding Team. Our team is not able to offer crisis intervention or open ended therapy, however, and has no facilities for in-patient admission. We can provide a degree of medication monitoring, but no prescription service or psychiatric support. There is also a School Listening Service available with Jerome Joseph, one of our counselling team. Posters with phone numbers are displayed in all of our boarding and day houses.

The Medical Centre

The Centre provides general medical services to our pupils (vaccinations, low-level medications) and this includes services and care for pupils with mental health challenges e.g. the storage and administration of certain agreed drugs and a place of care and support extra to the classroom and the house.

(Information is never disclosed to a third party, including a University, without a patient's permission. The only exception to this would be if it were believed that someone may come to serious harm if the information was not disclosed and the patient would be informed that confidentiality was to be broken.)

Learning Support

For students who require additional support with their studies, Learning Support (LS) offers a range of provision. All have a range of experience of pastoral care. The team also offers advice, screening and formal assessment for students who may have specific learning difficulties and we arrange individual learning support with specialist tutors where there is agreed funding between the College and parents. Advice and assistance with applying for additional support is also available.

The Chaplaincy

Students are able to use Chaplaincy for a wide range of welfare issues, some of which are not related at all to religion, but have to do instead with the complexities of the human condition. Often they do so because they know they will be given both sympathetic as well as professional attention.

5. Supporting pupils with mental health problems

The College ensures that all reasonable measures are taken to minimise the risks of harm to pupils' mental health and wellbeing. These include:

- encouraging a positive, supportive and secure environment for its pupils to learn and develop;
- Raising awareness of mental health issues amongst the pupil cohort via a number of different methods, including via PSHCE lessons, as well as through more informal discussion groups within the Houses;
- Equipping pupils with the skills to enable them to protect their own welfare and that of others;
- Providing medical and pastoral support that is accessible and available to all pupils;
- Identifying pupils thought to be at risk of harm;
- Supporting and monitoring those pupils.

Where a pupil has been identified as having a mental health issue or a suspected mental health issue, the College will seek to establish a structured response designed to safeguard that pupil's health, safety and welfare.

6. The Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

All College staff are responsible for fostering a culture at Hurst which encourages pupils to openly discuss their problems, including any mental health concerns. The Director of Safeguarding and Deputy Head Pastoral have overall responsibility for pupil mental health and wellbeing and for co-ordinating and monitoring mental health issues at the College. Where a concern about a pupil's mental health is identified, the DSLs will assess the risks to that pupil's welfare and will consult with the pupil, his or her parents (where appropriate) and other members of staff and the Medical Centre (as necessary) to determine appropriate action to be taken to safeguard, support and monitor that pupil. Those with day to day contact with pupils are likely to be best placed to spot any changes in behaviour which may indicate that a pupil is at risk of a mental health problem. They should report any concerns to a DSL in accordance with the terms of this policy.

7. The Roles and Responsibilities of Pupils

Students need, as they get older, to take some responsibility for communicating their needs and seeking support as without this information there can be no offer of support. They are encouraged to take care of their own mental health, for example ensuring that they get adequate rest, take prescribed medication and access appropriate support. Students should be aware that any behaviour which impacts negatively on fellow students or staff, or is in any way disruptive or offensive, is not acceptable within the College community and will be subject to the College's policies and procedures for the maintenance of good order. Students concerned about a fellow student's mental well-being should be aware of their personal limitations; they should encourage their fellow student to seek specialist support at the earliest opportunity and, if this is difficult they themselves should seek advice in confidence from their Housemaster/Housemistress or one of the College's DSLs.

If someone appears to be in immediate danger of seriously harming themselves or other people, students should contact the nearest member of staff. If the situation arises off-campus, the police should be contacted directly.

8. Staff Training

All staff should be made aware of the terms of this policy and how to deal with suspected mental health problems in students. Appropriate training is provided to staff and this is refreshed at regular intervals to ensure that knowledge is kept up to date.

9. Confidentiality

The College respects students' rights to confidentiality and to data protection and, where possible, the College will seek a student's consent to share confidential information arising from a mental health problem with others before doing so. However, staff should never provide students with an absolute assurance of confidentiality and should explain to them at the outset the importance of sharing information about any mental health difficulties with others, on a need to know basis. The College will balance a student's right of confidentiality against the College's overarching duties to safeguard students' health, safety and welfare and to protect students from suffering significant harm.

Where a student withholds consent and/or in any other circumstances where the College considers it necessary and proportionate to the need and level of risk, confidential information may be shared with staff, parents, medical professionals and external agencies (such as the LSCB) on a need to know basis.

10. College Procedures and Regulations Relevant to Students with Mental Health Problems

The College codes of conduct and disciplinary rules continue to apply at all times and in all contexts. This applies to all students and a diagnosis of mental illness will not automatically mitigate the imposition of penalties for breaches of discipline. However, it is recognised that certain behaviours may result from undiagnosed mental health difficulties in which case, whilst due penalty for any offence will be imposed, the student will also be referred to the relevant support services for assessment. This will enable on-going support to be put in place if appropriate.

In those cases where there is concern that the student is unfit to continue with their studies, or is exhibiting behaviour that is disruptive to the academic, social or business life of the College community, s/he may be required to temporarily withdraw from the College.

The Director of Safeguarding along with the HoM and ultimately the Head of College will also decide the conditions for the pupil/student's return, which will entail a meeting between the student and their HoM. The arrangements for return may include specifying a series of periodic re-assessments and other contractual agreements as appropriate. The pupil may, in certain circumstances, be asked to leave the College.

11. Right to appeal

The student, or their parents, (as age appropriate) will have the right to appeal against a decision to require temporary or even permanent withdrawal. Such an appeal will follow the normal College appeals procedure but the available grounds of appeal will be re-interpreted as:

- That there has been procedural irregularity or other inadequacy in the process by which the temporary withdrawal had been required;
- That there are materially relevant circumstances or evidence that those involved in making the decision to require temporary withdrawal were not aware of;
- That the decision to require temporary withdrawal was, overall, against the weight of evidence.

12. 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 Director of Safeguarding.

In addition, the Director of Safeguarding, in conjunction with the Head of College, will regularly monitor and review mental health and wellbeing issues at the College 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.