	STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Version	2
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A. Rationale

At Solihull Sixth Form College we aim to create a positive environment where staff and students feel safe to talk about mental health. The transition to sixth form from secondary school, and from sixth form to higher education or employment, are significant moments in a young person's life and we recognise that it can also be a stressful time. We also recognise that there is a link between positive mental health and wellbeing and attendance, attainment, confidence, resilience and progression.

This policy aims to create a whole college approach to ensure that those who are experiencing mental health difficulties are supported.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the approach used by the College to support students and to encourage anyone with mental health difficulties to seek help. The college is committed to the ongoing development of staff to enable them to effectively support students.

C. Leadership and Management

The strategic lead for mental health lead in college is an Assistant Principal. The Mental Health Lead acts as a co-ordinator of the mental health provision across the College, working alongside the College's Safeguarding Team, SENCO, Counsellors and other members of staff in co-ordinating support for students who present with mental health difficulties. The Mental Health Lead identifies need and monitors impact of interventions to meet students' wellbeing needs. They also have access to a network of professional support.

The college promotes emotional health and wellbeing through its communications to parents and students pre and post enrolment at college events, as well as through the curriculum and other organised events at college.

D. Mental Health Awareness

D1. Learning how to manage the normal stresses and demands of study and life is an integral part of building resilience and positive mental health. All students have Academic Coaching as part of their programme of study which provides the foundation of pastoral support in the college. Each student is allocated to an Academic Coach who, in most cases, will be associated with a student for the duration of their college experience. Academic Coaching aims to help students gain the skills they need to make good academic progress as well as supporting their mental health and wellbeing through a programme of group coaching and one to one sessions to prepare students for the next stage of their education or employment.

Coaching sessions help students to recognise signs of change in mental health and wellbeing and identify a range of strategies for building and maintaining positive mental health, including managing stress and anxiety and when and how to seek help. One to one sessions are planned around key events such as the start of Year 12 and mock exams to support students develop skills for coping with transition and exams.

D2. The Student Development Officers lead whole college wellbeing and mental health awareness events throughout the year. They also support student run societies such as LGBTQ, Wellbeing and Health Ambassadors. Any student is able to join a society at any point in their studies.

D3. The college offers a broad enrichment programme which every student is encouraging to engage in. Enrichment aims to equip students with a broad range of skills through a variety of activities and experiences designed to develop employability and life skills, as well developing students as active citizens. The programme also aims to help students develop a positive mindset, able to get the most out of life by being more resilient to its challenges and maximising opportunities. The programme is mapped against the NHS Five Steps to Mental Wellbeing and is clearly outlined in the enrichment guide (connect with other people; be physically active; learn new skills; pay attention to the present moment (mindfulness); give to others).

E. Warning Signs

E1. 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 alert the student's Academic Coach. Possible warning signs, of which all staff should be aware of include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / 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
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism

The Department for Education paper 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools' notes that certain individuals and groups are more at risk of developing mental health problems than others. These risks can relate to the child themselves, to their family, or to their community or life events. These risk factors, and associated protective factors, are listed in Appendix A.

E2. Concerns about a student's mental health can be recorded on CPOMS by any member of staff. These concerns will be triaged by the Mental Health Lead or a member of the safeguarding team.

E3. Responses follow a graduated approach:
- General advice, guidance and support provided by class teachers, Academic Coaches, Mental Health First Aiders and Champions
- Drop-in support from Mental Health Lead
- Regular time-limited support from Mental Health Lead or the college counselling team
- Referral to external agencies such as Kooth, Forward Thinking, Mind and wider NHS services. Full details are in Appendix B.

At any stage in the graduated approach, student engagement is optional, but the advantages will be discussed with the student and parent/carer as appropriate.

E4. Students accessing regular support from the Mental Health Lead or counselling team will be assessed/screened at the start and at the end of the support period. Students' needs are assessed at the beginning of support to ensure that it is targeted. Where needs cannot be met internally, an external referral is made (see F7).

F. Responsibilities
F1. All staff have a responsibility to:
- Listen to concerns raised by students and respond sensitively.
- If information is provided that suggests that the individual or someone else is at serious and imminent risk of harm, then staff members should follow the college's Safeguarding procedures.
- Make appropriate and effective referrals using CPOMS.
- Support students managing mental health difficulties to enable them to participate fully and successfully.
- Treat each student as an individual.

In addition to these responsibilities:

F2. Youth Mental Health First Aiders have a responsibility to:
- Listen, non-judgementally and provide support using the Youth Mental Health First Aid action plan.
- Spot the triggers and signs of mental health issues and to guide the young person to further support – internal and/or external.
- Confidently reassure and support the young person in distress.
- Promote the recovery of good mental health.
- To support with the positive mental health and wellbeing of themselves and others around.

F3. Youth Mental Health First Aid Champions have a responsibility to:
- Advocate for mental health awareness for our students.
- Have an understanding of common mental health issues that may affect our students.
- Spot the signs of mental ill health and to guide them to a place of support.

F4. Academic Coaches have a responsibility to:
- Provide targeted support to students who may be more vulnerable due to additional needs such as holding an EHCP, being in care or a being a young adult carer.
- Have one to ones with students more frequently as required.
- Liaise with parents and teachers as appropriate in providing support.

F5. Progress Managers/ Curriculum Leader/Assistant Curriculum Leaders have a responsibly to:
- Review their own practice, and where applicable, those that report to them, to actively promote equality and to eliminate any form of discrimination against people experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Where an inclusive approach is not possible, to make reasonable adjustments to minimise barriers to participation and academic success in line with the Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy.
- Liaise with parent/guardians to discuss any concerns and record contact as appropriate.

F6. Counsellors have a responsibility to:
- Offer a safe and confidential space for students; the only exception to this is a safeguarding issue.
- Support mental health conditions such as low mood, stress, anxiety and self-harm/injury and through difficult life events such as loss, bereavement or relationship breakdown.
- Help manage emotional discomfort associated with low self-esteem, anger, self-identity and sexuality.
- Help students gain a better understanding of their feelings and thought process through a variety of therapeutic approaches.

F7. The Mental Health Lead has a responsibility to:
- Offer advice and guidance on study related difficulties to students or prospective students declaring on-going mental health difficulties.
- Offer a drop-in service where immediate strategies can be put in place.
- Offer advice to College staff on supporting students with long-term mental health difficulties and inclusive approaches or making reasonable adjustments within the academic environment where appropriate.
- Work towards improving the provision of support for students with on-going mental health difficulties.
- Offer advice about appropriate external services available.
- Work together with the Academic Coaching Team and Safeguarding Team as part of the triage process to develop appropriate procedures and infrastructure to enhance support for students experiencing mental health difficulties.

- Work together with Human Resources to ensure effective support for staff who are impacted by others with mental health difficulties.

- Manage and evaluate the Mental Health First Aid team and offer relevant professional development.
- Co-ordinate the review of the mental health policy on a regular basis.
- Work with external agencies such as Kooth, Forward Thinking, Mind, SOLAR and wider NHS services to develop effective services for students with mental health difficulties. The Mental Health Lead will work with students when referring to external agencies so they know what information is being shared, why and possible next steps.

F8. The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding Team have a responsibility to:
- Maintain strategic oversight of the mental health provision within the college as part of the college's Early Help provision
- Triage CPOMS referrals to assess for wider safeguarding concerns
- Work in collaboration with the Mental Health Lead to ensure the appropriate support is in place for students, both internally and externally, to support their mental health and any additional concerns.

F9. The Senior Leadership Team has a responsibility to:
- Promote emotional health and wellbeing
- Create an ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity
- Develop curriculum, teaching and learning which promotes resilience and social and emotional learning
- Monitor the impact of interventions to meet students' wellbeing needs
- Ensure that students receive timely mental health support
- Work with parents/guardians to ensure shared aims and strategies in the college community
- Enable student voice to influence decisions
- Ensure staff development supports their wellbeing and that of students

These responsibilities are based on the eight principles to promoting a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing (Public Health England working with the Department for Education).

F10. Students have a responsibility to:
- Take reasonable steps to maintain their physical and mental health. However, if they are feeling concerned about their mental health we would encourage them to discuss this with student support staff as soon as possible.
- Maintaining the culture of respect, embracing and valuing difference.
- Treat each other as an individual.
- Participate in student voice to contribute to the development of the college and its services.
- Self-refer to college counselling if appropriate.

G. In-College Support Services

G1. Students can access support from any member of staff, but their Academic Coach is the main point of contact. The Academic Coaching team have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders.

G2. The Mental Health Lead offers drop-in sessions for students as well as group sessions (such as exam stress and resilience) at key points throughout the year. These are open to all students.

G3. Students can access a range of mental health and wellbeing information and support, including contact information for external agencies, through the student hub. They can access this at any time whether in college or not.

G4. The college has its own counselling team. Counselling is private and confidential; the only exception to this is a safeguarding issue. Counselling offers a space and time to work through problems and issues in a safe environment. The counselling team has experienced counsellors who are well qualified in therapeutic counselling and work ethically under the guidelines of The British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists. Students must self-refer to counselling by email.

G5. The Additional Learning Support team also offer mental health support to both SEN and non-SEN students. They work closely with secondary schools to support transition for EHCP and LAC students, as well as ensuring that students who are entitled have the required exam access arrangement support. The ALS team can offer students a quiet space to work independently.

G6. Whilst the Mental Health Lead, Counsellors and other members of Student Support staff may have a key role in supporting students with mental health difficulties, the college recognises that external agencies such as the NHS services have a duty to carry out assessment and treatment of serious mental health difficulties or emergencies.

H. Parents

H1. Parents are encouraged to share any information or concerns which would help the College in supporting the wellbeing of their child. We will also signpost parents to sources of information and support which may be helpful. The student's Academic Coach is the first point of contact for parents.

H2. Details of mental health support are shared in the Principal's Update which is emailed to parents.

H3. In general, we will discuss any mental health concerns with parents/carers in order to work collaboratively for the wellbeing of the student. However, there may be occasions where the college does not contact parents/carers because it considers that the contact may increase the risk of significant harm to the child.

I. Emergency Situations

I.1 Any concerns that a student might be at risk of suicide must be added to CPOMS and the Mental Health Lead/Emergency Duty Manager notified.

I.2 If a risk is expressed but not immediate, students will be supported to arrange an emergency appointment with their GP. A member of staff can make the initial phone call to explain the urgency of the situation and the phone passed to the student to make an appointment. Contact details of organisations to support such as Samaritans, Shout and Papyrus will be given to the student. Contact details for organisations are provided in the appendix.

I.3 If a student has confirmed an immediate suicide intent, the Emergency Duty Manager will be notified by the member of staff to whom the disclosure has been made. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will also be notified, and emergency services contacted. On return to college, the Mental Health Lead will meet with students to discuss any support needs.

I.4 Self-harm includes acts to deal with overwhelming thoughts and feelings, as well as attempted suicide. Self-harm in itself does not indicate a suicide risk. Any disclosures of self-harm will be recorded on CPOMS and triaged by the Mental Health Lead or a member of the safeguarding team. First Aid will be called if there is an immediate medical need.

J. Safeguarding Team

Any concerns about a student's welfare can be raised to any member of the College's safeguarding team. Students can also contact any member of the team directly.

K. Confidentiality

If a student discloses concerns about themselves, or about a friend, the response will be supportive. All disclosures will be recorded confidentially including the date of disclosure; to whom the disclosure was made; nature of the disclosure and any agreed next steps. Students will be informed that this information will be shared with the Mental Health Lead. The wider safeguarding team also have access to records.

It is important to also safeguard staff emotional wellbeing. By sharing disclosures with a colleague this ensures one single member of staff isn't solely responsible for the student. This also ensures continuity of care should staff absence occur and provides opportunities for ideas and support.

L. Staff Development

L1. Staff training is part of the College's professional development plans. Staff are able to access training to increase their knowledge of mental health and wellbeing to equip them to be able to identify mental health difficulties in their students and understand what they should do if they have a concern.

L2. Updates to staff on supporting students' mental health is delivering through weekly staff briefing and available for all staff to access at any time.

L3. The College has trained staff and youth Mental Health First Aiders who can be contacted for support. There is also a team of trained youth Mental Health Champions. The Mental Health Lead is trained to deliver mental health first aid training to staff.

M. Associated Policies
Equality Information & Objectives
Health, Wellbeing and Fitness to Study Policy
Safeguarding Policy
SEND Policy
Young Adult Carers Policy

Appendix A

Risk and protective factors that are believed to be associated with mental health outcomes. Taken from Department for Education paper 'Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1069687/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools.pdf

	Risk factors	Protective factors
In the child	- Genetic influences - Low IQ and learning disabilities - Specific development delay or neuro-diversity - Communication difficulties - Difficult temperament - Physical illness - Academic failure - Low self-esteem	- Secure attachment experience - Outgoing temperament as an infant - Good communication skills, sociability - Being a planner and having a belief in control - Humour - A positive attitude - Experiences of success and achievement - Faith or spirituality - Capacity to reflect
In the family	- Overt parental conflict including domestic violence - Family breakdown (including where children are taken into care or adopted) - Inconsistent or unclear discipline - Hostile and rejecting relationships - Failure to adapt to a child's changing needs - Physical, sexual, emotional abuse, or neglect - Parental psychiatric illness - Parental criminality, alcoholism or personality disorder - Death and loss – including loss of friendship	- At least one good parent-child relationship (or one supportive adult) - Affection - Clear, consistent discipline - Support for education - Supportive long term relationship or the absence of severe discord
In the school	- Bullying including online (cyber) - Discrimination - Breakdown in or lack of positive friendships - Deviant peer influences - Peer pressure - Peer on peer abuse - Poor pupil to teacher/school staff relationships	- Clear policies on behaviour and bullying - Staff behaviour policy (also known as code of conduct) 'Open door' policy for children to raise problems - A whole-school approach to promoting good mental health - Good pupil to teacher/school staff - Relationships - Positive classroom management - A sense of belonging - Positive peer influences - Positive friendships

	Risk factors	**Protective factors**
		- Effective safeguarding and Child Protection policies. - An effective early help process - Understand their role in and be part of effective multi-agency working - Appropriate procedures to ensure staff are confident to raise concerns about policies and processes, and know they will be dealt with fairly and effectively
In the community	- Socio-economic disadvantage - Homelessness - Disaster, accidents, war or other overwhelming events - Discrimination - Exploitation, including by criminal gangs and organised crime groups, - trafficking, online abuse, sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation - Other significant life events	- Wider supportive network - Good housing - High standard of living - High morale school with positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying - Opportunities for valued social roles - Range of sport/leisure activities

Appendix B: Support

Mind is a mental health charity that provide advice and support to empower anyone who is experiencing a mental health concern.
Birmingham Mind: **0121 262 3555** (open 24 hours a day)
www.birminghammind.org

The Mix – essential support for under 25's. They are there to help with everything from homelessness, financial support to mental health.
The Mix: https://www.themix.org.uk/

Papyrus is the UK charity for the prevention of young suicide
Papurus: www.papyrus-uk.org
HOPELINEUK: Call **0800 068 4141**   Text: **07860 039967**

Forward Thinking Birmingham offers support, care and treatment for people up to the age of 25
Forward Thinking Birmingham: **0300 300 0099 and select option 1.**
Pause: https://forwardthinkingbirmingham.nhs.uk/pause

Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential and 24/7 text service.
Shout: National Crisis Text Service – **Text Shout 85258**

Samaritans provide emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope or are at risk of suicide.
Samaritans: Call **116 123**
Jo@samaritans.org

Kooth is an online mental wellbeing community
Kooth: www.kooth.com

The Waiting Room is a one stop directory for health and wellbeing services.
The Waiting Room: https://the-waitingroom.org/

Hub of Hope is a nationwide mental health database finding support in their location.
Hub of Hope: https://hubofhope.co.uk/

Health for Teens offers information on a range of physical and emotional topics.
Health for Teens: Text: **07520 615730** (text for confidential health advice)

Beat is a charity supporting those affected by eating disorders.
Beat Helpline (eating disorders): **0808 801 0677** (9am-midnight weekdays. 4pm-midnight weekends & bank holidays).
https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/

Apps

Calm Harm – Helps you manage or resist the urge to self-harm.
Clear Fear – Helps you to learn how to reduce the physical responses to anxiety.
Move Mood – Helps to increase your motivation to change your low mood.
Worth Warrior – Helps to manage negative body image, low self-worth and eating difficulties.
Hub of Hope – Helps people find much needed support using their phone's location.

If you, or someone else is in immediate risk of serious harm or injury, you should call the emergency services **Call 999**.