



Sidcot
Live Adventurously

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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1. Introduction

The Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team of Sidcot School fully recognise their responsibilities to protect the mental health and wellbeing of students.

This policy sets out to identify mental health and wellbeing concerns that young people may face, and clarify the management and support given to students who experience mental health and wellbeing challenges. **According to the World Health Organisation, good mental health** may be defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual recognises 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 his/her/their own community. It includes our emotional, psychological, and social state. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we relate to others and make choices.

2. Aims

In keeping with our Quaker ethos and philosophy and our obligations as a responsible educational establishment, we aim to foster a culture that promotes the positive mental health and wellbeing of the whole school population at Sidcot. This policy aims to:

- describe the School's approach to mental health issues
- increase understanding and awareness of mental health issues in order to facilitate early intervention
- alert staff to warning signs and risk factors
- provide support and guidance to all staff dealing with students who experience mental health problems
- provide support to students who experience mental health issues, their peers and family

3. Objectives

- To promote a positive and proactive approach to the mental health and wellbeing of children;
- To ensure that all staff are aware of the necessary protocols and can quickly find the emergency information that they may need;
- To raise awareness and the expectation that the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people is everyone's concern, and that early detection of potential barriers to good mental health, and intervention can significantly aid the recovery of poor mental health;
- To treat all students as individuals – and ensure that students are always fully consulted and informed about their care and treatment;
- To respect a student's rights and confidentiality wherever possible;
- To ensure that safeguarding remains at the forefront of our minds and to ensure that we always work in the best interests of every student;
- To de-stigmatise mental health by educating students, staff and parents/guardians and creating a mental health positive culture.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all children receiving education at Sidcot School, the Junior School (including EYFS) and Senior School (including Sixth Form and Boarding).

This policy applies wherever staff or volunteers are working with students, even where this is away from the school, for example on an educational visit.

The terms 'child', 'children', 'young people' and 'student' may be used interchangeably to refer to all those in our care, including those who are over the age of 18.

This policy is available on the school website, the Intranet, and a hard copy can be provided free of charge from Sidcot School.

5. Safeguarding Responsibilities

Sidcot School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This includes their mental health, emotional wellbeing and protection from harm. The school expects the whole community to share this commitment. The school also has regard to the SEND code of practice: 0-25 years, ensuring that children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and supported appropriately, including those with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

The School fully adheres to statutory safeguarding guidance, including **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, latest edition 2026)** and associated statutory guidance. Mental health concerns are recognised as both a safeguarding and pastoral issue, and staff are trained to respond appropriately where wellbeing concerns may indicate risk of harm.

We recognise that:

- Mental health difficulties may be an indicator of abuse, neglect, or other safeguarding concerns
- Early help and intervention are essential in promoting positive outcomes
- All staff have a responsibility to act on concerns and follow safeguarding procedures

The School maintains a strong safeguarding culture through:

- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSL structure
- A Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL)
- Regular safeguarding and wellbeing meetings
- Use of CPOMS for recording and monitoring concerns
- Staff training in line with KCSIE requirements, including contextual safeguarding and mental health awareness

Where there is concern that a student is at risk of significant harm, staff will follow safeguarding procedures without delay and may involve external agencies where appropriate.

6. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Students may choose to confide in a member of school staff if they are concerned about their own mental health and wellbeing or that of a peer. In such cases, staff must be aware that they cannot promise confidentiality, and that any concern for a student's mental health and wellbeing will be shared within the weekly safeguarding team meetings attended by the Mental Health Lead, and Deputy Head (Pastoral) in the Senior School and the Head of the junior Schools, Assistant Head Pastoral, member of the nursing team and Learning Support Teacher in the Junior School. The member of staff should log their concern via CPOMS at the earliest opportunity. If a member of staff considers that a student is at risk of causing themselves or someone else serious harm, the School's Safeguarding policy must be followed which may result in information sharing with relevant staff members, outside agencies and appropriate third parties.

It is essential that staff do not make promises of confidentiality, even if a student puts pressure on a member of staff to do so (Please refer to guidance in safeguarding policy 2.1).

7. Background to the Policy

Latest research confirms that mental health is a growing concern for young people. Mental health disorders can be categorised into emotional, behavioural, hyperactive disorders and other less common disorders. It is therefore important that as a school we understand and seek to support young people who experience mental health conditions, as far as possible. This policy covers all young people and staff in our school community.

8. Parents/Carers/Guardians

Parents must disclose to the school, on the school medical card, annual consent form or directly to the Health Centre and/or Pastoral Staff, any known mental health problem or any concerns they may have about their child's mental health or emotional wellbeing.

It is helpful for parents/carers, and guardians (in appropriate circumstances) to notify the School of any changes in family circumstances that may impact the student's mental or emotional wellbeing, such as illness, separation/divorce or bereavement.

Should Parents, carers or guardians require signposting or support for their young person they should contact the school's Student Support and Wellbeing Lead or the Health Centre.

9. Whole School Context

Monitoring and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people at Sidcot is the responsibility of the Whole School Community. The pastoral team share information about students on a regular basis, in face to face meetings as well as by logging concerns via CPOMS to ensure consistent and effective pastoral care is provided for students who have episodes of poor mental health or who have been diagnosed with a mental health illness. There are several designated areas/staff available for support on a daily basis: The Deputy Head (Pastoral), The Wellbeing and safeguarding Lead within the Wellbeing Hub, The Health Centre, Tutors, Heads of Year, Housemasters and Housemistresses, School Counsellors, Assistant Head Pastoral (Junior School) and Learning Support Teacher (Junior School).

Within the pastoral team there are several qualified Youth Mental Health First Aiders, with some staff in key areas also completing the DMHL training.

Within the whole school context, and through a variety of channels, programmes and personnel, the school aims to:

- Improve the wellbeing and resilience of children and young people
- Raise awareness of mental health through the curriculum
- Promote staff health and wellbeing
- Reduce stigma around mental health
- Integrate students' mental health and wellbeing effectively within Sidcot's pastoral system

The School offers opportunities to talk and avenues of support to students, and signposts services, for both Junior School (including EYFS), and Senior School, through:

Junior School:

- **Take Ten:** Take Ten is a weekly session run by our School nursing team as an opportunity for all Junior School pupils to drop in and talk about something which might be bothering them. Staff will then access

the correct support for them. These sessions can also be used as an opportunity for the nursing team to check in with individuals. If appropriate this may then lead to weekly Take Ten sessions with individual pupils. **Talking Sticks:** This is an opportunity for junior school students to share their thoughts and worries in a safe space and is led by the junior school Quaker Overseer. Any concerns raised can be supported by 1-1 sessions through Take 10, or further referral as required.

- **ELSA: (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)** Two Junior School Teaching Assistants have undergone training provided by the LEA educational psychologist to offer ELSA support to help students with social skills, emotions, bereavement, social stories and therapeutic stories, anger management, self-esteem, counselling skills such as solution focus and friendship. Pupils are invited to join ELSA sessions for a specified period of time.
- **Sidcot School Counselling Service:** A School Counsellor is part of the wider pastoral team. After consultation with parents, a student can be referred to the counselling team, however, student consent/willingness to engage in counselling is necessary for effective counselling to take place.
- **PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) Education** is delivered in a discrete lesson every week by the class teachers. One of the three core themes covered in our PSHE programme is Health and Wellbeing. This core theme is covered in two separate topics over two half terms: 'Healthy Body, Healthy Mind' and 'Coping with Change'. This gives many opportunities to raise awareness of what it means to have good mental health, how we can achieve this and the importance of being able to openly recognise, name and talk about our emotions.
 - **Mental Health Awareness Day/Weeks** We recognise these important dates in our school calendar and share our learning in assemblies, and also with Parents in our Newsletter. This helps bring the whole school community together to reduce stigma around mental health and wellbeing.
 - **ZOR (Zones of Regulation)** We use The Zones of Regulation which provides our whole school community with a shared language of describing our feelings, energy and emotions. It helps our children to build their emotional language and to develop tools that can help them to regulate their feelings when in each zone.

Senior School:

- **Wellbeing Hub:** Rose Cottage is a support hub where any student can ask for and access wellbeing and mental health support. This can range from one off 1:1 sessions to short term or group interventions. Any parent or carer who has concerns about the emotional health of their child are invited to contact our Wellbeing and Safeguarding Lead for advice and signposting.
 - **Therapeutic Interventions (CBT & DBT-informed support):** Within the Wellbeing Hub, students have access to structured therapeutic support including **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)-informed sessions** and **Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)-informed skills work**. These interventions may be delivered on a **1:1 basis or in small group formats**, depending on assessed need. These sessions aim to support emotional regulation, anxiety management, coping strategies, distress tolerance, and improved wellbeing resilience. Referrals may come via pastoral staff, self-referral, or safeguarding/wellbeing pathways.
- **ELSA: (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant)** The wellbeing lead has undergone training provided by the LEA educational psychologist to offer ELSA support to help students with social skills, emotions, bereavement, social stories and therapeutic stories, anger management, self-esteem, counselling skills such as solution focus and friendship.
- **Sidcot School Counselling Service within the wellbeing hub.** The School Counsellor is part of the wider pastoral team. Students can self-refer to counselling by either speaking to a member of staff/trusted teacher/tutor/Head of Year or via the Wellbeing Hub or Health Centre Nurses. Parents are able to request counselling for their child, however, student consent/willingness to engage in counselling is necessary for effective counselling to take place.

- **Some office holders are mental health first aid trained, including the Wellbeing Office holders.**
- **The Health Centre** is open daily from 8am to 6pm and provides a calm, safe space, where the nurses can support students physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing needs.
- **PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) Education** is led by tutors and, where appropriate, outside speakers. Students have two PSHE lessons every three weeks as per the rota and messages are reinforced during tutor time and the weekly enrichment period. The programme has a whole school focus on Mental Health and Wellbeing for a whole half term (Appendix 1). This gives many opportunities to raise awareness of mental health illnesses as well as mental health and wellbeing fitness strategies and thus brings the School Community together to reduce stigma around mental health and wellbeing. During term time, the School will arrange for relevant organisations specialising in young people's mental health and wellbeing to give talks, run workshops and also run information sessions for staff, as part of the School's Let's Talk programme.
- Curriculum subjects, which touch on or cover mental health, link back in with the pastoral team, to ensure that support is given to students and staff, where needed.
- Sidcot School has **two independent school listeners** available to all students. This is a free service and contact details are readily available throughout school on Safeguarding posters as well as in Boarding Houses.
- **Displaying information** leaflets and posters throughout the School, the School Health Centre, Wellbeing Hub and boarding houses, which signpost students to organisations specialising in supporting the needs of young people. Information on where to turn can also be found in The Blue Book.
- The **School Doctor** is available to support boarders' mental health and wellbeing concerns, and offer medical interventions and referral to other services if the mental health needs meet the NHS threshold.

Students are also made aware of whom they can turn to when they feel distressed through tutor sessions, school assemblies and signposting posters.

10. School Procedures

School staff recognise that children and young people might experience episodes of poor mental health, and key staff are trained to recognise signs and symptoms.

Upon the formal diagnosis of a mental health illness of a student, the Health Centre nurses, or Student Wellbeing and Safeguarding Lead will seek information from parents and healthcare professionals to support the student and ensure that all relevant information is shared between all parties to make certain of effective integration with the pastoral system. Relevant staff will be made aware of an individual student's mental health diagnosis with the consent of the student and parents. All information is shared on a need to know basis and is treated confidentially.

Where appropriate, the pastoral and wellbeing team will draw up an Individual Wellbeing Plan and a risk assessment ([Appendix 2](#)), in consultation with the student, parents and any specialist services involved in the care and treatment of the young person. This can be shared with staff involved in teaching and providing care for the student.

If the School considers that the presence of a student in the School is having a detrimental effect on the wellbeing and safety of other members of the community, or that a student's mental health concerns cannot be managed effectively and safely within the School, the Headmaster and Deputy Head (Pastoral) for a Senior School student and the Headmaster and Head of the Junior School for a Junior School pupil reserve the right to request that parents withdraw their child temporarily until appropriate reassurances, which may include confirmation from an appropriate and acceptable medical professional, have been given.

Where a student is not well enough to attend school but is able to continue studies at home, under parent/guardian supervision, teaching staff will provide resources and work to support the student's ongoing studies.

The School will work with parents/guardians and mental health practitioners to support a smooth reintegration back into school when students are ready to return; this may include a well-planned, supportive phased return.

Information and signposting to support knowledge and management of specific mental health issues can be found in [Appendix 3](#)

11. Medication

Parents are required to inform the Health Centre if their child is on any medication as part of their therapeutic treatment plan. Please refer to the school medical policy for procedures for the management of medication in school.

12. Advice to parents/carers

Parents and carers should not feel isolated if they know or suspect that their child (or one of their child's friends) is displaying signs of poor mental health. The advice contained within this policy provides a first source of useful information and guidance. If a parent has any concerns, they should contact the school immediately for help, advice and support.

13. Advice to Staff (Looking after Staff Mental Health)

It is important to recognise that as staff deliver a high level of pastoral support to students experiencing poor mental health, this can impact on one's own emotional wellbeing. The school nurses are available to offer staff confidential support and signposting if needed.

14. Complaints

Should parents/carers or students be dissatisfied with the support provided they may discuss their concerns directly with the Deputy Head (Pastoral),

In addition; the School has a complaints policy (2.6) which is available on the School's website and in hard copy format.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed every year or sooner if practice or changes to legislation or policy so require, by the pastoral team.

16. Useful Resources and Helplines

Childline – 24/7 helpline for children and young people. 0800 1111 (free phone from landlines) or 0800 400 222 – text phone. www.childline.org.uk

Young Minds – national charity committed to improving the mental health of children and young people. Interactive website for advice and information. www.youngminds.org.uk

Recover Your Life – Self-harm support community providing support and advice to those seeking to recover from self-harm. www.recoveryourlife.com

National self-harm network – support for individuals who self-harm, friends and family.

0800 622 6000 (Thursday – Saturday 7 p.m. – 11 p.m., Sunday 6.30 p.m. – 10.30 p.m.) www.nshn.co.uk

Substance Advice Service (SAS) – provides confidential advice and support to young people who are concerned about their alcohol or drug use.

Tel: 01275 888 360 or 01275 888 361 Email:

sas@n-somerset.gov.uk

This is not a drop in service, address will be given at point of contact.

SWEDA – Supporting people with eating disorders across the South & West <https://swedauk.org/>

17. References

Mental health and behaviour in Schools

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/755135/Mental_health_and_behaviour_in_schools_.pdf

Mental health behaviour guidance to be issued to schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/mental-health-behaviour-guidance-to-be-issued-to-schools>

Counselling in Schools; a blue print for the future (March 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416326/Counselling_in_schools_-_240315.pdf

Mind <https://www.mind.org.uk/>

[Independent Schools Standards Regulations](#)

[The Regulatory Handbook for the Inspection of Schools \(a commentary\) September 2020](#) SEND code of practice 2024

National minimum standards for Boarding Schools 2022

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)

What to do if you are worried a child is being abused 2015

The Children's Act 2004

Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils 2023

Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (March 2024)

The use of social media for on-line radicalisation (July 2015)

Preventing and tackling bullying (October 2017)

Working Together To Safeguard Children (2026)

18. Supporting Policies

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection Policy

2.6 Complaints procedure

2.11 Equal Opportunities Policy

3.1 Admissions Policy

4.1 Medical Policy

4.2 Supporting Students with medical conditions, and disabilities

5.6 Smoking Drugs and Alcohol

8.1 Health and safety Policy incorporating first aid policy

Document Change History – document any changes since policy drafted on 6 June 2016.

Date of change	Detail significant changes and any new legislation / guidance taken into account
03.12.2016	Minor grammatical changes – Adopted by Board
07.10.2017	Reviewed and adopted by the Board.
05.10.2019	Large elements rewritten Pastoral Group will review the policy in the future. Reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review
10.11.2020	Minor changes made to bring in line with current practice.
16.09.2021	Changes to include Rose Cottage – new Wellbeing Hub.
13.05.2022	Minor changes to reflect development of roles and responsibilities.
18.07.2022	Comments from Governor incorporated into policy wording. Link to the new academic year PSHE programme of study inserted as Appendix 1.
May 2024	Removed reference to Take Ten Updated policy
1 September 2025	Policy updated. Minor changes made.

Appendix 1

PSHE programme of study supporting student mental health and wellbeing

<https://sidcot.fireflycloud.net/resource.aspx?id=144202>

Appendix 2

Individual Wellbeing Plan

Wellbeing & removing Barriers to Learning

Student Name					Background (school attended, home country)
Tutor(s)					
Last Updated					
Boarding House					
Subjects					
Teachers					

Wellbeing issues (happiness, anxiety, health concerns etc....)

--

Academic Barriers (exams, SEN support, strategies for learning)

--

What the student wants subject teachers to know

--



What the student has done in the past to overcome barriers (support or strategies they have used)

--

Resources for further information and guidance (add website links or information from other services)

--

[Appendix 3](#)

Signposting, information and guidance to support issues most commonly seen in school-aged children.

The links will take you through to the most relevant page of the listed website. Some pages are aimed primarily at parents, but they are listed here because we think they are useful for school staff. Support on all issues young people might face can be accessed via:

- Young Minds (www.youngminds.org.uk)
- Mind (www.mind.org.uk)
- and (for e-learning opportunities) Minded (www.minded.org.uk)

SELF-HARM

Self-harm describes any behaviour where a young person causes harm to themselves in order to cope with thoughts, feelings or experiences they are not able to manage in any other way. It most frequently takes the form of cutting, burning or non-lethal overdoses in adolescents, while younger children and young people with special needs are more likely to pick or scratch at wounds, pull out their hair or bang or bruise themselves.

Online support

- SelfHarm.co.uk: www.selfharm.co.uk
- National Self-Harm Network: www.nshn.co.uk
- www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk
- www.harmless.org.uk

DEPRESSION

Ups and downs are a normal part of life for all of us, but for someone who is suffering from depression these ups and downs may be more extreme. Feelings of failure, hopelessness, numbness or sadness may invade their day-to-day life over an extended period of weeks or months, and have a significant impact on their behaviour and ability and motivation to engage in day-to-day activities.

Online support

- www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression
- www.mind.org.uk
- www.mindfull.org
- www.youngminds.org.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.getconnected.org.uk
- www.therelationshipcentre.co.uk/talkdontwalk
- www.depressioninteenagers.co.uk
- www.thestudentsagainstd Depression.org
- www.thecalmzone.net
- www.youthhealthtalk.org
- www.youth2youth.co.uk

ANXIETY, PANIC ATTACKS AND PHOBIAS

Anxiety can take many forms in children and young people, and it is something that each of us experiences at low levels as part of normal life. When thoughts of anxiety, fear or panic are repeatedly present over several weeks or months and/or they are beginning to impact on a young person's ability to access or enjoy day-to-day life, intervention is needed.

Online support

- Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk
- www.nopanic.org.uk
- www.ocdaction.org.uk
- www.ocduk.org
- www.getselfhelp.co.uk

OBSESSIONS AND COMPULSIONS

Obsessions describe intrusive thoughts or feelings that enter our minds which are disturbing or upsetting; compulsions are the behaviours we carry out in order to manage those thoughts or feelings. For example, a young person may be constantly worried that their house will burn down if they don't turn off all switches before leaving the house. They may respond to these thoughts by repeatedly checking switches, perhaps returning home several times to do so. Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) can take many forms – it is not just about cleaning and checking.

Online support

- OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd

In addition, see list under Anxiety heading.

SUICIDAL FEELINGS

Young people may experience complicated thoughts and feelings about wanting to end their own lives. Some young people never act on these feelings though they may openly discuss and explore them, while other young people die suddenly from suicide apparently out of the blue.

Online support

- Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org
- www.samaritans.org
- www.cwmt.org
- www.stampoutsuicide.org.uk
- www.asist.org.uk
- Cruse Bereavement Care: www.cruse.org.uk or www.rd4u.org.uk
- Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide: www.sobs.org.uk
- Sane/Saneline: www.sane.org.uk
- On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/researchandresources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight/

EATING PROBLEMS

Food, weight and shape may be used as a way of coping with, or communicating about, difficult thoughts, feelings and behaviours that a young person experiences day to day. Some young people develop eating disorders such as anorexia (where food intake is restricted), binge eating disorder and bulimia nervosa (a cycle of bingeing and purging). Other young people, particularly those of primary or preschool age, may

develop problematic behaviours around food including refusing to eat in certain situations or with certain people. This can be a way of communicating messages the child does not have the words to convey

Online support

- [SWEDA, England, UK \(swedauk.org\)](http://swedauk.org)

- Beat: the eating disorders charity: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders

- Eating Difficulties in Younger Children and when to worry: www.inourhands.com/eating-difficultiesinyounger-children

- Anorexia and Bulimia Care (ABC): www.anorexiaandbulimiare.org.uk

- Student Run Self Help: www.srsh.co.uk

- Men Get Eating Disorders Too: www.mengetedstoo.co.uk

- <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anorexia-nervosa/pages/lynsey-and-helen-stories.aspx> -

<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG9>

- [Advice for parents – Eating disorders - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

OTHER ISSUES

Rethink Mental Illness: www.rethink.org

IRIS: www.iris-initiative.org.uk

Hearing Voices Network: www.hearing-voices.org bipolarUK:
www.bipolar.org.uk

Voice Collective: www.voicecollective.co.uk

Mental Health Care: www.mantalhealth.org.uk