



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, including their mental health and emotional wellbeing, and expects the whole community to share this commitment.

We recognise that children have a fundamental right to be protected from harm and that students cannot learn effectively unless they feel secure. We therefore aim to provide a school environment which promotes self-confidence, a feeling of self-worth and the reassurance that students' concerns will be listened to and acted upon.

In addition to the child protection measures outlined in the School's safeguarding policy, the School has a duty of care to protect and promote a child or young person's mental or emotional wellbeing. The 'Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health Provision: A Green Paper', published in December 2017, sets out the government's proposals for creating a strong network of support in schools. In response to this Sidcot School has a 'Student Support and Wellbeing Lead' and 'Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL)' with further DMHL trained student support staff within the health centre, sixth form and Junior School.

The School is aware of the potential risk of harm through extremism and will identify any students at risk of this and will act appropriately in accordance with the safeguarding policy and PREVENT agenda.

Safeguarding procedures will be followed (see safeguarding policy) if a student is at risk of suffering significant harm or presents a risk of harm to others.

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). The member of staff should log their concern via MyConcern 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 MyConcern, 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, with a registered mental health nurse within the team (Designated Mental Health Lead DMHL), Take Ten Mentors, Tutors, Heads of Year, Housemasters and Housemistresses and School Counsellors.

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 twice weekly opportunity for all junior school children to drop in and talk about something that might be bothering them. Whatever the concerns raised, staff are able to assess and offer follow-on support when children share their worries. Some children come as a one-off, others come for a few weeks. Children are able to relax and feel safe in the session, supporting and safeguarding children is integral to Take Ten in the Junior School. Following on from Take Ten, follow on 1-1 sessions can be arranged with a school nurse who is DMHL trained, or referral to a school counsellor, with parents' consent.
- **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.

Senior School:

- **Wellbeing Hub:** Rose Cottage is a support area within the school grounds 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.
- **Take Ten:** Take Ten is a daily lunchtime drop-in session for students in the Senior School. Students are invited to talk through any concerns they may have and are at times referred to the Take Ten Mentors for specific interventions/programmes of support. Issues that students are encouraged to bring to drop-in sessions can include anything from personal issues, friendships and relationships, pressure and exam stress - or they can just be an opportunity just to take 10 minutes out of the day to relax and have an informal chat. All Take Ten Mentors work as part of the pastoral team and follow the school's safeguarding policy at all times.

- **Sidcot School Counselling Service withing the wellbeing hub.** The two School Counsellors are 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. Staff and parents are able to refer students however student consent/willingness to engage in counselling is necessary for effective counselling to take place.
- **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** takes place weekly and is led by tutors and, where appropriate, outside speakers. 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.
- 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 team will draw up an Individual Wellbeing Plan ([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.

The Student Wellbeing and Safeguarding Lead, supported by the DMHL and school nurse team (All DMHL trained), and with input from key staff within school/boarding

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) reserve the right to request that parents withdraw their child temporarily until appropriate reassurances 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.

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 2014

National minimum standards for Boarding Schools 2015

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)

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

The Children's Act 2004

Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils 2015

Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (March 2015)

The Prevent Duty – Departmental advice for schools and childminders (June 2015)

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

Preventing and tackling bullying (October 2014)

Working Together (2019)

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.

[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](#)

Information and signposting to support common mental health issues

Prevalence of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Issues Source: Young Minds

- 1 in 10 children and young people aged 5 - 16 suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder – that is around three children in every class.
- 1 in 15 children and young people deliberately self-harm.
- More than half of all adults with mental health problems were diagnosed in childhood. Less than half were treated appropriately at the time.
- Nearly 80,000 children and young people suffer from severe depression.
- Over 8,000 children aged under 10 years old suffer from severe depression.
- 3.3% or about 290,000 children and young people have an anxiety disorder.
- 72% of children in care have behavioural or emotional problems - these are some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

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

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- 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

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- On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/researchand-resources/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

- 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-difficulties-in-younger-children
- Anorexia and Bulimia Care (ABC): www.anorexiaandbulimiacare.org.uk
- Boy Anorexia: www.boyanorexia.com
- 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>

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

