



Name of Policy

MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

Purpose

To provide a supportive framework to enable staff to take a fair and consistent approach when resolving learners' mental health and wellbeing concerns which are impacting on their learning.

Author / Job Title

Head of Student Services and Support

**Equality Assessment
By Whom**

Date

Version

1

**Date of next review
(month & year)**

06/2016

Approved by

	Date
Senior Manager	
SMT	19/08/2015
Corporation	

Related policies or procedures or parent policy if applicable

Additional Learning Support Policy
 Student Code of Conduct/Attendance & Punctuality Policy
 Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
 Equality & Diversity Policy
 Progression Policy
 Data Protection Policy

Groups/bodies consulted in the development of the policy

The policy will be reviewed by the E & D management committee and Safeguarding Strategy Committee

To be published on College website

Yes

Introduction

The College is committed to high quality advice, guidance and support for all its learners to support successful completion and progression and recognises the importance of learners' mental health and wellbeing in relation to their academic progress and college experience.

Occasionally learners face personal, challenging situations leaving them unable to meet course requirements in terms of attendance; participation in class or completion of work; or the expectations of the Code of Conduct due to mental health difficulties.

For those learners who are experiencing mental health difficulties it may be more appropriate to address concerns related to attendance and/or behaviour through an approach based on consideration of their ability to study at a particular point in time rather than the disciplinary process.

All action within the College is taken with full regard to the Equality & Diversity Policy.

Scope & Purpose

This policy applies to any learner admitted or enrolled by the College.

It will be implemented on those occasions where the mental health of a learner deteriorates to the point where it raises questions about their ability to continue with their studies.

It will be used to support staff in all areas of the College to deal with instances where a learner's mental health difficulties lead to:

- Concern from staff about a learner's ability to meet the learning outcomes of the course, notwithstanding reasonable adjustments;
- A negative impact on the health, safety, wellbeing and/or learning of the learner and/or others with whom s/he has contact

It provides a supportive framework within which mental health and wellbeing issues are hoped to be resolved.

Problems may have been identified in a variety of ways e.g. long term damage to the learner's health; increase in incidents of self-harm; disruption of the studies of other students; unsustainable demands being made of staff; detention under the Mental Health Act.

The Policy will normally be applied in relation to concerns which arise on the College premises or whilst engaged in any activity related to the course (this could include educational visits and work placements). However, incidents occurring outside the College which raise concerns about a learner, and where it is considered necessary to protect their safety or the safety, interests and reputation of the College, its staff or other learners, may also be considered under this Policy.

The Policy has a three stage procedure, based on the level of support needed by the learner and/or the seriousness of risk posed by the mental health and/or behaviour of the learner. Learners are encouraged to engage positively with the College and access all support available to them, if they choose not to do so, then this Policy may continue without their involvement or alternatively the College could refer back to the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

Communication with Parents/Carers should be made at each stage of the procedure where appropriate. Other relevant agencies e.g. 16-19 mental health team or other health professionals should be contacted as necessary to support any decisions being made.

The College acknowledges that as a result of implementing this policy it will receive personal data of a confidential and sensitive nature and shall ensure that all such data is handled, processed and stored accordingly.

Normally, sensitive personal data and confidential information will only be disclosed to third parties with the express, informed consent of the learner. However, there may be occasions where the College is obliged to disclose, notwithstanding that the learner has refused consent. These occasions include:

- Where the learner's behaviour threatens their safety or the safety of others
- Where the member of staff or the College would be liable to civil or criminal penalty for failing to disclose
- Where a learner's mental health has deteriorated to a serious level such that they are unable to maintain daily living routines and relationships
- Where a learner is at risk of serious exploitation or abuse

Staff should consult with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where there is a need to disclose information without consent.

Procedures

Pre-Entry

Learners who disclose at interview any additional learning need related to their mental health will be encouraged to attend an interview with the Head of Student Services or Learning Support Co-ordinator to ensure appropriate reasonable adjustments and risk assessments are in place prior to commencing any programme. Consent will be sought to share information with relevant teaching staff.

Stage 1 – Emerging Concerns

When a member of staff has a concern about a learner's mental wellbeing they should approach the student in a positive manner. The nature of the concern should be explained to the learner and they should be encouraged to discuss any issues they are having (it is possible they will not have realised the impact of their actions). If appropriate, this is an opportunity to remind the learner about the College Code of Conduct and relevant support available within the College e.g. counselling, learning mentor, additional learning support. It should also be explained that continuation of the same or any additional concerns could result in an escalation to Stage 2 of the policy. (If the member of staff is uncertain about having this conversation student services will be able to support).

It is anticipated that the learner will respond positively, co-operate and access the available support or, where appropriate, modify their behaviour.

The meeting should be noted in ProMonitor along with any agreed actions and standard on-going monitoring should take place.

If the learner is unwilling or unable to respond positively, the member of staff should discuss the situation with the Curriculum Manager and if necessary seek further advice from the Head of Student Services. A decision may be taken to invoke Stage 2 of the Policy.

Stage 2 – Serious or Continuing Concerns

Where continuing or serious concerns about an individual learner's mental wellbeing are raised, the Curriculum Manager and the Head of Student Services should meet with the learner.

Together they should assess the student's perception of the impact that their mental health and/or behaviour is having upon them and/or the wider College community, and ensure the learner understands the College's expectation regarding commitment to study.

If the learner is on a professionally regulated course, there will be consideration of any implications for professional practice.

A risk assessment should be completed, identifying the area of concern, setting out any reasonable support measures and any conditions that the learner is required to adhere to, which may relate to their mental wellbeing, academic studies and/or behaviour.

This assessment should include a 2 week review date and it will be made clear that failure to adhere to the action plan within the assessment may result in Stage 3 of the policy being invoked. The learner is required to confirm acceptance at the meeting. A copy of the assessment will be stored within ProMonitor and with the student's agreement sent to parents/carers.

At the review of the assessment it is expected the learner will have responded positively and co-operated fully, accessing the outlined support and/or modifying his/her behaviour accordingly. If this is not the case or there are further causes for concern about the learner's fitness to study, the matter should be referred to the Vice Principal for Curriculum & Quality. It is likely that Stage 3 will be invoked.

Stage 3 – Immediate, Significant or Persistent Concerns

This stage will be invoked when there are immediate and significant issues or where no progress from previous concerns has been made and where a learner's actions or behaviours are putting the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of themselves or other members of the College community at significant risk and/or are likely to adversely affect the reputation of the College.

If this stage is invoked the learner should be suspended until a case conference can be convened. It is important to note that a suspension of studies is not a disciplinary sanction. The case conference does not include the learner, it is an opportunity to receive information from relevant agencies and staff to inform a risk assessment prior to the Stage 3 meeting with the learner. It should take place within 5 working days of the suspension.

The Vice Principal for Curriculum & Quality will then chair a meeting with the following to determine a course of action.

- Head of Student Services & Support
- Student
- Parent/Carer
- Curriculum Manager or Personal Tutor
- Other relevant staff as appropriate
- External agency staff e.g. health professional

If the student is on a professionally regulated course, the Stage 3 meeting will also consider whether there are implications for professional practice.

The possible outcomes of a Stage 3 meeting are:

- The risk assessment indicates the learner can continue with their studies and that a supportive action plan can be put in place in order for the learner to remain at College. If this is the case the action plan should be re-visited fortnightly to ensure progress is being made
- The risk assessment indicates that completion of the course as a distance learning package should be considered as whilst the learner is capable of study there are significant risks attached to them being on site
- The risk assessment indicates the learner is not well enough to study and should be excluded from the course and the College at this time

The decision and associated reasons will be provided to the learner within 10 working days of the review.

Appeals

Where the College decision is to exclude the learner the learner has the right of appeal.

All appeals should be made in writing to the Principal within 5 College days of the decision.

The Principal will meet with the student to discuss the decision and either:

- Confirm the original decision
- Change the original decision

The learner can take someone to support them to the meeting who must be one of the following: a member of College staff, a fellow student, or a parent/carer. The learner will be advised of the decision within 3 days of the meeting.

The Principals decision will be final.

Exclusion will preclude the learner from applying for another course at the College until the following academic year. Should the learner wish to apply for further study at a future date, the College will require evidence from an external professional that original concerns have been overcome or are under control with reasonable adjustments if required.

Monitoring of the Procedure

The College will include a summary of students considered under the Mental Health Policy within the Annual Safeguarding report submitted to Corporation.

The effectiveness of the Mental Health Policy will be reviewed annually at the Safeguarding Strategic Committee.