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| **ST ANDREW’S COLLEGE POLICY DOCUMENT** |
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**Introduction**

***This policy should be read in conjunction with:***

* ***Safeguarding policy***
* ***Care of Students with Medical Conditions policy***
* ***Education of Students with Health Needs policy***
* ***PSHE policy***
* ***Counselling policy***
* It is estimated that one in four adults will experience some form of mental health problem during their life. Mental health problems can occur for several reasons but tend to be exacerbated by stressful situations such as the further education setting, where there is increased pressure to succeed and adapt.
* Studying at St Andrew’s College Cambridge will involve adapting to a new country and culture, developing a new social network, gaining independence and being separated from family and friends. This is in addition to the pressures of study and the need to be self-motivated. All these factors can jeopardise an individual’s mental health.
* Many students experiencing mental health problems will manage them effectively with minimal support, but, for others, the impact of the problem will affect their ability to function and it may adversely impact on their ability to succeed.
* St Andrew’s College Cambridge recognises that there is an increasing prevalence of mental health difficulties and that our approach to supporting students with diverse needs should be supported by developing appropriate policies to reflect this.

**Aims of this policy**

* To provide a clear and practical policy framework relating to student mental health issues for students, potential students and staff.
* St Andrew’s College Cambridge has a duty of care to meet students’ educational needs, including pastoral care. This means that students can expect support services to be available and to be of a reasonable standard.
* The Equality Act 2010 and Further and Higher Education Regulations 2006 aim to reduce inequalities experienced by disabled people in relation to further education. In very brief terms, discrimination can occur in four ways:

**"Direct discrimination"** - where the student is treated less favourably on grounds of their disability.

**"Disability related discrimination"** - where a student is treated less favourably for a reason related to their disability e.g. because of the consequences of their disability rather than the disability per se.

**Failure to make reasonable adjustments** - where such adjustments may ameliorate the effect of the disability on the ability to participate.

**Victimisation** - where unfavourable action is taken in consequence of an allegation that a student has been discriminated against.

* It is unlawful for St Andrew’s College Cambridge to discriminate in the student services it provides, or by excluding the student from the institution (whether permanently or temporarily).
* It is also unlawful to subject a student to harassment on grounds of disability.
* The definition of “disabled‟ under The Equity Act (2010) covers people whose mental health is such that there is a long term adverse impact on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
* Therefore, a student with a mental health condition which meets the The Equality Act (2010) definition of “disability‟ must not be treated less favourably than other students as a result.
* This student is also entitled to reasonable adjustments by St Andrew’s College Cambridge to ensure they are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with other students.
* Such adjustments and provisions do not extend to providing long-term academic or other support to someone if it is considered that it is not likely that they are able to successfully complete their course of study. In these cases, careful consideration must be given to ensuring full compliance with the provisions of the The Equality Act (2010).

**Definition of ‘mental health’**

* The [World Health Organization](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Health_Organization) defines mental health as "a state of well-being” in which the individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community"[[1]](#footnote-1).
* For the purposes of this policy, the term “mental health difficulties‟ refers to:

long term mental illnesses or psychiatric conditions which may be classified as a disability under the The Equality Act (2010), emerging mental health problems which may develop into conditions which require ongoing support or intervention, and temporary debilitating mental health conditions or reactions which impact on a student’s ability to fulfil their academic potential.

* There are a range of conditions which come under the umbrella term “mental health difficulties,‟ including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder, and many more, as diagnosed by a relevant medical practitioner.

**A ‘Whole School Approach’ to promoting positive mental health**

We take a whole school approach to promoting positive mental health that aims to help students become more resilient, happy and successful and to prevent problems before they arise. This encompasses seven aspects:

1. Creating an ethos, policies and behaviours that support mental health and resilience, and which everyone understands.

2. Helping young people to develop social relationships, support each other and seek help when they need it.

3. Helping young people to be resilient learners.

4. Teaching young people social and emotional skills and an awareness of mental health.

5. Early identification of students who have mental health needs and planning support to meet their needs, including working with specialist services.

6. Effectively working with parents, carers and agents.

7. Supporting and training staff to develop their skills and their own resilience.

We also recognise the role that stigma can play in preventing understanding and awareness of mental health issues. We therefore aim to create an open and positive culture that encourages discussion and understanding of these issues.

**Strategies for promoting wellbeing within the college**

We aim to support the overall wellbeing of staff and students, whether or not they have specific mental health needs. The ways in which we do this are:

* Displaying information about internal and external support services throughout the college, halls of residence and student handbook, and sending newsletters to staff and students about mental health and the services they can access.
* PSHE lessons which focus on mental health and wellbeing.
* Providing a counselling service for staff and students.
* Operating an ‘open-door policy’ meaning staff and students can speak to senior leadership at any time.
* Empowering the Head of Pastoral Care to oversee and develop the mental wellbeing provision of the college.
* Offering a wide range of sporting and other social activities to enable students to learn new skills, express themselves and build friendships.
* Providing staff training on how to recognise mental health problems, how to help, and how to promote general wellbeing amongst themselves and their students.

**The following sections provide guidance and procedures for supporting students with specific mental health needs.**

**Disclosure, referral and confidentiality**

* It is recognised that the decision to disclose a mental health difficulty can be very difficult and dependent on several factors. Students may be reluctant to disclose mental health difficulties as they may be worried that it will affect their academic standing. They may also be reluctant to admit to a problem because of stigmatisation or because they are scared or in denial of the problem themselves. St. Andrew’s College Cambridge encourages students to disclose any difficulties at an early stage so that the help they may need can be discussed

and addressed.

* It is the student’s responsibility to inform us if they are unable to fulfil the requirements of their course for any reason, whether this is done personally or through a third party.
* Students have the right not to disclose their mental health difficulties. However, if a student decides not to disclose a mental health difficulty, it is likely to make it more difficult for the school to support them appropriately. Therefore, in cases where it is apparent that a student has mental health difficulties, but is unwilling to discuss this further and with appropriate people, the implications for the provision of meaningful support will be discussed
* Where a student’s mental health difficulties are long-term and can be classified as a disability, it is important that Helen Widdall is informed to ensure that we can support the student in full compliance with The Equality Act (2010) obligations. Where students have agreed to self-refer, staff are required to follow this up with the student.

**Referral**

At any point during their course, students may speak to Helen Widdall for support if they are experiencing mental health difficulties. She can then assist in referring them to a GP or a local support service.

**Counselling service**

A college counselling service is provided to staff and students. They can access this service by e-mailing counselling@standrewscambridge.co.uk.

**Confidentiality**

Any initial disclosure of a mental health difficulty to a member of staff will be treated sensitively. The member of staff concerned will discuss with the student how this information can be passed on to get them the most appropriate support from the college and external support services.

We understand that students may feel uncomfortable with information relating to their mental health being shared with other members of staff within the college and with outside agencies. To ensure that students feel confident and are willing to seek help, St. Andrew’s College Cambridge makes the following assurances about the way in which such sensitive information will be handled:

* Information relating to a student’s mental health will not normally be shared with staff, other schools, parents, other students or outside agencies without express permission from the student.
* Under all normal circumstances, students will be made aware of who their information is being shared with, and the reason for this.

It is recognised that there may be situations where there is a need to act within a limited time-frame in order ensure that appropriate support can be organised for a student. In such situations, all reasonable steps will be taken to obtain permission from the student, but where this is not possible, and the issue is serious and considered to be in the best interests of the student, communication will take place between Helen Widdall, Hanna Claydon and external agencies.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to disclose without a student’s permission. For example, if it is felt that a student’s mental health poses an immediate danger to themselves or to others. In these rare instances, information will have to be disclosed to third parties and outside agencies who are experienced in dealing with such emergencies.

**Guidance for staff in helping students with mental health difficulties**

* If a student discloses a mental health problem to a member of staff, it is vital that the member of staff takes this disclosure seriously and can guide the student towards appropriate support services in a timely manner to reduce the potential impact on a student’s studies and general well-being.
* Members of staff may at times feel that they do not have the knowledge or expertise to deal with a situation and that they require advice from other agencies. It is the responsibility of individual staff members to recognise situations that lie beyond their job role and competence, and to make appropriate referrals.
* For further information about common mental health problems, their signs and symptoms, staff are advised to visit <http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems>
* Staff are advised to talk difficult situations through with colleagues, while still maintaining the student’s confidentiality. Staff who require further confidential advice about dealing with a student who has (or who they suspect of having) a mental health difficulty can contact Helen Widdall. Staff do not need to disclose details of a student’s identity at this stage.

Contact details for Helen Widdall are as follows;

Helen.widdall@selectenglish.co.uk

01223 364735

07756588763

* Staff are advised to keep factual and accurate records of any interactions with students where there have been mental health concerns. It is advisable to make a note of what actions were taken in these situations, and be mindful of guidelines on data protection and confidentiality.
* Where students have agreed to self-refer to a GP or outside agency, staff are required to follow this up with the student.
* Whenever you make notes about a student, you should bear in mind that the Data Protection Act 1998 may allow the student to see those notes.

**Review: 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019**

Next review August 2020

1. ["Mental Health: Strengthening Our Response (Fact sheet N°220)"](http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs220/en/). World Health Organisation. Retrieved 3 February 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)