

Student Health and Wellbeing Policy

POLICY STATEMENT:

EKC Group is committed to ensuring, as far as reasonably practicable, a planned approach to students' personal health and wellbeing. It will positively promote the health and wellbeing of all students through information and support, maximising opportunities for students to participate in accessible health and wellbeing initiatives or programmes.

The purpose of this policy is to maximise the physical, mental and social wellbeing of all students and promote a safe and healthy environment in which teaching and learning can take place.

- To promote student health and wellbeing through Group policies, support services, information networks and regular health promotion campaigns (including alcohol awareness, healthy eating, exercise, self-management, drug awareness, mental health awareness), and by liaising appropriately with external agencies.
- To prevent, as far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to physical and mental health and wellbeing. To reinforce the role of the Group in contributing to local and national strategies.

The policy will apply to all students attending programmes and courses at EKC Group.

This Policy will be communicated to all students during their induction phase and a copy will be available at all other times on the Group intranet. Staff will be expected to communicate programmes or initiatives at staff and student meetings.

PROCEDURES:

EKC Group recognises its responsibility to promote an emphasis toward good physical and mental health and wellbeing and therefore it aims to:

- promote good practice in both physical and mental health and wellbeing activities and share successes across the Group
- provide training for key staff to enable them to implement the health and wellbeing policy
- provide central support and guidance for individuals and groups
- provide a comprehensive package of services to support our international students with the challenges of living and studying abroad
- take advantage of training and information sources and actively build relationships with external agencies
- recognise the limits of what key staff can do and seek advice at the earliest opportunity
- provide confidential counselling for students whose wellbeing is affected by either college work or external factors
- promote health and wellbeing through its policies, support services, information networks and health promotions, including alcohol awareness, diet, exercise, self-management, and by liaising with external agencies.

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- encourage students to take more personal responsibility for their health and wellbeing and provide opportunities for them to do so
- identify strategies to reduce stress during preparations for exams and final assessments as well as offering support

Health and Wellbeing Support Provided by the Group

EKC Group will provide support through the area of Learning Support and Enrichment on the following topics by linking with external organisations and professionals:

- Sexual Health
- Drug and Alcohol
- Stop Smoking
- Healthy Eating
- Mental Health Service
- Student counselling
- Tips on reducing stress and increasing relaxation
- Physical fitness
- Healthy relationships and Contraception
- Multi-faith support

Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse

EKC Group has a zero tolerance on drugs, alcohol and substance misuse. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Student Disciplinary Policy. If there are reasonable grounds to believe a student may have drugs on them or are under the influence, the Group will stop and search them in line with the policy. However, the Group recognises its duty to educate students on alcohol and drug related issues in order to assist them to fulfil their legal, personal and social responsibilities.

The Group will raise students' awareness at induction and at identified times throughout the academic year, of the dangers of drugs, alcohol and substances misuse to their health, and where help can be sought. The legal and professional consequences of drug use will be made clear and students will be made aware of the help and support available (within and outside the College) for those with alcohol and drug related problems.

The abuse of drugs is unacceptable to the group at all times, and the use of any illicit drug is a disciplinary offence as well as a criminal offence.

The Group will ensure those who have drug, alcohol or substance misuse problems will be treated fairly and encouraged to seek assistance, and referred to external support agencies

Self-harm and Mental Health

The term "mental health difficulties" is one which encompasses a wide range of experiences which affect an individual's ability to balance his/her life. The difficulties can range from stress and anxiety

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through to serious mental health conditions diagnosed and treated by the health services. Staff may identify students with concerns such as:

- Stress/anxiety attack
- Depression
- Eating disorder
- Changes in behaviour which cause concern
- Lack of engagement or communication

EKC Group will support students through a range of services which may include counselling and/or by referring to external organisations and encouraging the student to seek support from their GP.

EKC Group will:

- maintain a non-stigmatising community
- ensure each student with a mental health difficulty is seen as an individual, not a problem or a condition
- uphold confidentiality (wherever safety is not at risk)
- recognise the limits to what they can do

Stress

It is recognised that stress is a natural part of life, but when the physiological changes continue for a prolonged period, their effects become detrimental.

Stress can be caused by a wide variety of factors and the effects of possible sources of stress will vary with each student. People react differently to work pressures, and deadlines that may motivate one student may be a source of severe stress to another.

Students may be subject to pressure both inside and outside of College, and sometimes it may be a combination of these pressures that results in harmful levels of stress.

Staff will be made aware of stress and its effects on individuals, in order for them to improve their personal effectiveness and that of their students.

Student Progression Mentors/Personal Tutors will provide support to help develop students' academic and personal skills such as organisation skills and time management.

Students will have access to Counselling Services in order to assist them in managing levels of stress, anxiety and self-harm.

Self-Harm

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The Group will raise awareness of self-harm and any concerns should be referred to the Student Progression Mentor/Personal Tutor in the first instance. Student Progression Mentors/Personal Tutors will consult with the relevant support teams and as required to the College Counselling Service or to the Safeguarding Team and external agencies as required.

Staff have an important role in monitoring and reducing the impact of mental health difficulties on the student's ability to study.

Eating Disorders

EKC Group is mindful that many students will become aware of their body shape and weight during their teens and as young adults and in some instances this can lead to an eating disorder. Staff must also be aware that students may be suffering from other conditions such as autism which may affect their eating habits.

Some students may fast for religious reasons.

Staff who have any concerns about a student should refer to the Student Progression Mentor / Personal Tutor in the first instance.

The Student Progression Mentors / Personal Tutors will refer as required to the relevant support teams, College Counselling Service or to the Safeguarding Team and external agencies as required.

Healthy Eating

EKC Group will promote healthy eating habits for all students, as part of general health awareness. Opportunities will be made available for students, through health promoting activities including Wellbeing Week.

The Group will encourage students to eat appropriately and the food outlets of the Group will offer a choice of food which will assist students in sustaining healthy eating habits.

Smoking/Vaping

EKC Group aims to develop a non-smoking culture but recognises that some students are smokers. The Colleges therefore provide designated smoking and/or vaping areas on campus. Smoking and/or Vaping in non-smoking areas is in breach of the student disciplinary policy and there is a total ban on smoking in all College buildings.

The Group recognises that smoking is an addiction and aims to provide a supportive environment for those wishing to stop. Reasonable support will be offered to students to help them to stop smoking.

Information on stopping smoking with support from local cessation services will be provided for smokers. Those wishing to use e-cigarettes will be required to follow the smoking policy and only use them in the designated areas.

Physical Exercise

EKC Group wishes to promote regular physical exercise for all students, as part of general health awareness.

Opportunities will be made available for students through enrichment activities which in turn will raise awareness of the benefits of regular physical exercise. Links will be published and communicated to local community clubs.

Opportunities will be made available to students to participate in various forms of physical exercise with taster events during induction, Wellbeing Week and throughout the academic year.

Healthy Relationships and Sexual Health

With reference to 'A Framework for Sexual Health Improvement in England March 2019' EKC Group aims to support the sexual health needs of its students by providing support through external agencies and where possible NHS sexual health nurses.

EKC Group recognises its responsibilities in raising awareness of the key important issues that still need to be addressed in young adults and its role in working with local agencies in the prevention of the following:

- Inappropriate relationships
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including Chlamydia testing and diagnoses
- Teenage pregnancy through under-18 conceptions, by ensuring that people have access to the full range of contraception
- HIV, through prevention strategies and increased access to testing to enable early diagnosis and treatment

The Group aims to build a sexual health culture that prioritises prevention and supports behaviour change by:

- Ensuring that students know how to ask for help, and are able to access confidential advice and support about wellbeing, relationships and sexual health
- Ensuring that students have rapid and easy access to appropriate sexual and reproductive health services
- Ensuring that students are able to access support to enable them to make informed and responsible decisions, understand issues around consent and the benefits of stable relationships, and are aware of the risks of unprotected sex
- Ensuring that students are motivated to practise safer sex, including using contraception and condoms
- Increased availability and uptake of testing to reduce transmission of STIs

A list of useful contacts and organisations is contained within Appendix 1 to this policy.

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Sexual Health Education for Vulnerable Groups

EKC Group is committed to ensuring that accessible information and support is made available for young people with learning disabilities and for their parents, including information about sexuality, abuse and consent and practical information about contraception and safer sex where appropriate.

Evidence within government reports indicates that homeless people are at increased risk of STIs and unwanted pregnancies and can come under pressure to exchange sex for food, shelter, drugs and money.

EKC Group will have a particular focus on this and other vulnerable student groups through the Student Progression Mentors/Personal Tutors to ensure early identification of need and support is available. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and forced marriage. Further details are available in the EKC Group Safeguarding Policy.

Related Policies:

Disciplinary Policy and Procedures (Students)

Equality and Diversity Policy

Smoking Policy

Safeguarding and Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

Appendix 1 - Useful Contacts

Non-Smoking

To find out more about the health and wellbeing benefits of quitting smoking visit:

www.nhs.uk/Livewell/smoking/Pages/Betterlives.aspx

Call the Kent Stop Smoking Service now on 0800 849 4444 or text QUIT to 87023.

For further help to quit, visit www.wequit.co.uk or www.nhs.uk to find out which services are available near you.

QUIT – independent charity website: www.quit.org.uk Helpline: 0800 00 22 55

One You Kent: For those under 18 and want to stop smoking: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-careand-health/health/one-you-kent>

Drugs & Alcohol Advice

NHS Choices - <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/studenthealth/Pages/Smoking,alcoholanddrugs.aspx>

Change, Grow, Live <https://www.changegrowlive.org/>

East Kent Substance Misuse Team - <http://eastkentdrugandalcohol.org.uk/> We are with you: <https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/>

Other addiction

MIND: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/addictionand-dependency/addiction-and-dependency-resources/>
<https://www.addictionhelper.com/legal-highs/>

Tel: 0800 9159401

Video Games

<http://www.videogameaddiction.co.uk/help/>

Tel: 08000 886686

Mental Health

Samaritans - 365 days a year/24 hours a day

0845 7909090

www.samaritans.org

Saneline- 365 days a year - 12noon to 11pm weekdays- 12noon to 6pm weekends 0845 7678000

www.sane.org.uk

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MIND Mental health charity for England & Wales 0845 766 0163 <http://www.mind.org.uk/>

Domestic Violence

National Domestic Violence Helpline- 7 days a week. 24 hours a day 0808 2000247
www.refuge.org.uk

Sexual Health

Terrance Higgins Trust

<http://www.tht.org.uk/our-charity/Get-help-now>

Tel: 0808 802 1221

Eating Disorders

Beat - Beating Eating Disorders

Telephone helplines and email services for people affected by eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Youth helpline for people aged under 25. Provide a listening ear, information and literature. Run a network of support groups, postal and telephone contacts throughout the UK. Formerly known as Eating Disorders Association. How to contact:

Phone: 0845 634 1414 adult, 0845 634 7650 youth; youth line open Mon-Fri 4.30pm-8.30pm, Sat 1pm-4.30pm.

Email: help@b-eat.co.uk Website www.b-eat.co.uk