

Student Health and Wellbeing Policy

Contents

	Section	Page
1	Policy purpose statement	2
2	Application	2
3	Introduction	2
4	Key Principles	3
5	Health and Wellbeing Support Provided by the Group	3
6	Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse	3
7	Self-harm and Mental Health	4
8	Stress and anxiety	4
9	Self-Harm	5
10	Eating Disorders	5
11	Healthy Eating	5
12	Smoking/Vaping	6
13	Physical Exercise	6
14	Healthy Relationships and Sexual Health	6
15	Students are responsible for:	7
16	Warning Signs	7
17	Confidentiality	8
18	Signposting	8
19	Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024	9
20	Appendix A - Useful Contacts	10
21	<u>Appendix B: Talking to students when they make a mental health disclosure</u>	13

1- POLICY PURPOSE STATEMENT:

This document sets out the policy for supporting student health and wellbeing of students within EKC group. 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.

2- Application

The objective of this policy is to maximise the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of all students and promote a safe, supportive and healthy environment for teaching and learning.

- 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, when the policy is updated and/or amended, and a copy will be available at all other times on the Group intranet. Staff are required to communicate programmes or initiatives at staff and student meetings.

3- Introduction:

Students starting with EKC for the first time may have to learn to adapt to significant change, For many, these changes are exciting and challenging and an attraction to attend college. However, they can also give rise to anxiety, stress and associated emotional and mental health difficulties. Existing students can also experience these feelings at any time during their time at EKC.

It is important not to label all problems as “mental health” concerns as some may be merely adjustments to a new learning, social and student environment. It is normal for students to experience these emotions, and they are normal reaction to a new experience. However, students may experience emotional or psychological difficulties which are more present and without appropriate support may inhibit their ability to participate fully in their college programme or in the wider community. These difficulties may take the form of a long-term mental illness or a temporary but debilitating conditions or reaction. In addition, some students may arrive with pre-existing conditions, either declared or undeclared.

4- : Key Principles

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

- All staff are made aware of key principles /practice through appropriate training and access to resources
 - 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.
 - 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
-
- Early identification, with early help and intervention

5- 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

6- Drug, Alcohol and Substance Misuse

EKC Group has a zero tolerance on illegal 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

7 - 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 their life. The difficulties can range from stress and anxiety 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

8- Stress and anxiety

Policy Owner: Director of Safeguarding and Student Experience

Approving Body: Policy Committee

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: November 2024

Page 4 of 14

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.

9- Self-Harm

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, with the College Counselling Service or to the Safeguarding Team and external agencies as required ensuring that students have access to a comprehensive support network.

Staff have an important role in monitoring and reducing the impact of mental health difficulties on the student's ability to study. Aligning with the college's commitment to student well-being.

10- 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 have a contextualised understanding of each individual student which may affect their eating habits such as neurodiversity or fasting due to religious practices

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.

11- 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.

12- 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.

It is illegal to sell nicotine vaping products to anyone under 18 or for adults to buy them on behalf of under-18s.

13- 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.

Policy Owner: Director of Safeguarding and Student Experience

Approving Body: Policy Committee

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: November 2024

Page 6 of 14

14- 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.

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.

15- Students are responsible for:

- Maintaining an awareness of their own mental health and wellbeing, together with their peers and others.
- Speaking of their concerns in relation to mental health and wellbeing to a safeguarding lead or any other member of staff with whom they feel comfortable discussing these concerns.
- Engaging with support.

16- Warning Signs

Staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a learner is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These possible warning signs may include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn
- Changes in activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide
- Abusing drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Repeated lateness to or absence from study
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause
- High risk behaviour or destructive habits.

17- Confidentiality

In line with the safeguarding procedures, staff should be honest with regards to the issue of confidentiality and should discuss with the student first wherever possible if there is a need to share information, this should include:

- Who we are going to talk to
- What we are going to tell them
- Why we need to tell them

Except in an emergency, staff should never share information about a student without first telling them. On occasions where the student's consent is withheld, or it is impracticable to try to obtain it, then information can be shared with another member of staff and / or a parent / guardian / external professional in the following circumstances:

- When an individual's mental health has deteriorated to the extent of threatening their personal safety.

Policy Owner: Director of Safeguarding and Student Experience

Approving Body: Policy Committee

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: November 2024

Page 8 of 14

- When an individual is at risk of serious abuse or exploitation.
- When an individual's behaviour is adversely affecting the rights and safety of others.
- Where the member of staff would be liable to civil or criminal procedure if the information were not disclosed.
- Staff should consult with the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Lead, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Director of Safeguarding and Student Experience if they believe there is a need to share information. Initial discussion should not identify the learner until the grounds for breaking confidentiality have been established and agreed upon

All information will be kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018) and the Data Protection Act (2018).

18- Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents/carers are aware of sources of support within EKC Groups and in the local community, who it is aimed at and how to access it as outlined in Appendix A. We will display relevant sources of support in communal areas and will regularly highlight sources of support to students within relevant parts of the curriculum, ensuring learners and staff understand

- What help is available
- Who it is aimed at
- How to access
- Why to access it
- What is likely to happen

19- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Section 183 highlights that Schools and colleges have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils.

Section 184 Reminds us that Mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure they have clear systems and processes in place for identifying possible mental health problems, including routes to escalate and clear referral and accountability systems.

Section 188 offers further support and guidance , Public Health England⁴⁷ has produced a range of resources to support secondary schools to promote positive health, wellbeing and resilience among children including its guidance [Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#). Its resources include social media, forming positive relationships, smoking, and alcohol. See [Rise Above: Resources for School from Public Health England](#), from the Education People, which has links to all materials and lesson plans. The department

Policy Owner: Director of Safeguarding and Student Experience

Approving Body: Policy Committee

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: November 2024

Page 9 of 14

has also published, [‘Every interaction matters’](#) a pre-recorded webinar which provides staff with a simple framework for promoting wellbeing, resilience, and mental health. This sits alongside our [Wellbeing for education recovery](#) program content, which covers issues such as bereavement, loss, anxiety, stress and trauma.

Section 189 provides published advice and guidance on [Preventing bullying](#) (which may also be useful for colleges). [The Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges guidance sets out how schools and colleges](#) can help prevent mental health problems by promoting resilience as part of an integrated, whole school/college approach to social and emotional wellbeing, which is tailored to the needs of their pupils and students

20- Appendix A - 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.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/>

Policy Owner: Director of Safeguarding and Student Experience

Approving Body: Policy Committee

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: November 2024

Page 10 of 14

Tel: 08000 886686

Mental Health

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 and information:

- [Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk](http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk)

Depression

Depression is more than simply feeling unhappy or fed up. Most of us will, at some point in our lives, experience low mood or feeling down, which can last a few days or even stretch into a couple of weeks. However, when we're depressed, our low mood and other related mental and physical symptoms will carry on persistently for weeks and weeks, months or even years with no let up. If we experience episodes of depression, our whole life and relationships can be affected, and everyday tasks that were once easy can become overwhelming.

Online support and information:

- [Depression Alliance: www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression](http://www.depressionalliance.org/information/what-depression)

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

- [OCD UK: www.ocduk.org/ocd](http://www.ocduk.org/ocd)

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

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 and information:

- [Prevention of young suicide UK – PAPYRUS: www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)
- [On the edge: ChildLine spotlight report on suicide: www.nspcc.org.uk/preventingabuse/research-and-resources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight/](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventingabuse/research-and-resources/on-the-edge-childline-spotlight/)

Psychosis

Psychosis is a medical term. An individual with psychosis will process the world around them differently to other people. This can include how they experience, believe or view things.

They might see or hear things that others do not or believe things other people do not. Some people describe it as a "break from reality". There are different terms use to describe psychosis. Such as

“psychotic symptoms”, “psychotic episode” or “psychotic experience.”

Traditionally psychosis has been seen as a symptom of mental illness. But this isn't necessarily the case. Psychosis is not always because of a mental illness. There are many theories about what causes people to experience psychosis. Online support and information:

- [What are symptoms of psychosis? \(rethink.org\)](http://rethink.org)

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

Policy Owner: Director of Safeguarding and Student Experience

Approving Body: Policy Committee

Stage of approval: Approved

Date of approval: November 2024

Page 12 of 14

Eating Disorders

Beat - Beating Eating Disorders –

This includes Anorexia Nervosa, ARFID, PICA, BED, Bulimia Nervosa, Orthorexia, OSFED, PICA and Rumination Disorder.

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

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 and information:

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

