# Mental Health and Wellbeing for Learners*

Policy

*This term covers both students and apprentices

Head of Safeguarding and EDI
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Version No.1

## 1. Aim

1.1 At City of Wolverhampton College, we foster a supportive and inclusive environment where our students' and apprentices' mental health and well-being are prioritised. We are committed to ensuring the learner voice is valued and heard. For this policy, the term ‘learner’ will be used to encompass both students and apprentices.

1.2 The College recognises that everyone faces different challenges in life, and sometimes we may need extra support. This is why we are committed to ensuring that no one must confront difficulties alone. Promoting positive mental health is a shared responsibility; together, we should cultivate a community where well-being is a top priority.

1.3 The aims of the policy are to:

- Cultivate a culture that promotes positive mental health and well-being for learners.
- Improve understanding and awareness of common mental health challenges.
- Equip staff with the knowledge to recognise early warning signs of mental health concerns.
- Support staff when assisting learners facing mental health difficulties.
- Offer guidance and assistance to learners, staff, and parents/carers affected by mental health issues.

## 2. Scope

2.1 This policy guides all staff at City of Wolverhampton College. It defines our commitment to supporting learner mental health and well-being, providing a clear framework for promoting a positive and inclusive environment.

2.2 All staff are expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and apply it in their roles, in line with other College policies.

## 3. Lead Members of Staff

3.1 While all staff should promote learners’ mental health and well-being, certain staff have specific responsibilities. These include:

- Head of Safeguarding & EDI/Mental Health Lead
- Head of Student Participation
- Head of Inclusion
- Counselling Team
- Safeguarding Team
- Mental Health First Aiders.

3.2 If staff have concerns about a learner’s mental health or well-being, they should initially consult the Head of Safeguarding & EDI/Mental Health Lead.

3.3 If there is an immediate risk of harm, the College's safeguarding procedures must be followed and referred to the Safeguarding Team immediately.

3.4 In a medical emergency, staff must contact Emergency Services immediately.

3.5 Where a referral to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or Mental Health Support Team (MHST) is required, the Head of Safeguarding & EDI/Mental Health Lead will oversee and manage the process.

## 4. Learning about Mental Health

4.1 The College integrates essential skills, knowledge, and understanding into personal development interventions, such as tutorials to equip learners with the tools they need to maintain physical and mental well-being for themselves and others.

4.2 The content of tutorials is tailored to meet the specific needs of each cohort, ensuring relevance and impact. A key focus is empowering students with the skills, confidence, and language to seek help, whether for themselves or others. Additionally, principles are embedded throughout the curriculum to support ongoing mental well-being.

## 5. Signposting

5.1 The College is committed to ensuring that staff, learners, parents and carers are aware of the support services available both within the College and across the city. Information about these services, including those accessible through our college community, can be found on the College's website via the page Mental Health & Wellbeing

5.2 To promote awareness, the College displays key sources of support in communal areas, such as noticeboards and digital platforms, and regularly signposts learners to available resources. By making support visible and accessible, we aim to encourage a proactive approach to mental health and well-being.

## 6. Warning Signs

6.1 Staff play a crucial role in identifying signs where learners may be struggling with mental health or emotional well-being issues. These warning signs must always be taken seriously. If staff observe any of the following indicators, they should promptly share their concerns with one of the staff leads to ensure appropriate support is provided.

6.2 Recognising and responding to signs early can create a supportive environment where learners feel safe seeking help. Possible warning signs include:

- Unexplained or repeated physical injuries that appear non-accidental.
- Significant changes in eating or sleeping habits.
- Increased social withdrawal from friends, family, or activities.
- Noticeable shifts in mood, energy levels, or behaviour.
- Decline in academic performance or engagement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide

- Substance misuse, including drugs or alcohol.
- Expressions of hopelessness, worthlessness, or feelings of failure
- Wearing inappropriate clothing for the weather (e.g., long sleeves in warm temperatures).
- Uncharacteristic secrecy or avoidance of interactions.
- Frequent lateness or absences from college or work placement.
- Complaints of physical pain or nausea without a clear medical cause.
- A pattern of increased absenteeism or disengagement.

## 7. Managing disclosures

7.1 If a learner shares concerns about their well-being or that of a friend, staff should respond with calmness, empathy, and without judgment, ensuring the learner feels heard and supported.

7.2 All disclosures will be handled and recorded appropriately. Information will only be shared with the Safeguarding Team if necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of the learner following the College's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

## 8. Confidentiality

8.1 When staff determine that it is necessary to share concerns about a learner with others, such as the Safeguarding Team or external agencies, this will be discussed with the learner whenever possible. The learner will be informed of:

- Who will be notified?
- What information will be shared?
- Why is sharing the information necessary?
- When will contact be made?

8.2 However, when a learner is at immediate risk of harm, obtaining their consent may not be possible. In such cases, their safety remains the highest priority, and disclosures will be shared with the Safeguarding Team to ensure appropriate intervention and support.

## 9. Joint working

9.1 The College is committed to supporting our students' and apprentices' mental health and well-being. This involves working collaboratively with parents, caregivers, external agencies, and partners to establish a robust support network.

9.2 The College will strive to keep parents and carers informed and supported. To achieve this, we will:

- Provide access to information and resources on mental health and emotional well-being available within the college.
- Facilitate connections to external support services to ensure parents and carers can access additional guidance.

- Ensure clear communication channels so parents and carers know who to contact if they have concerns about their dependent's well-being.
- Offer guidance and practical strategies to help parents and carers support their dependents' mental health.

9.3 The College will liaise with external agencies and professional partners to offer comprehensive support for learners. This may involve collaboration with:

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Mental Health Support Teams (MHST)
- Crisis Team
- Counselling services
- Specialist therapists
- Family support workers
- Healthy Minds
- GP

9.4 By building liaisons, we ensure that learners have access to a broad range of support tailored to their individual needs, helping them maintain positive emotional well-being within and beyond the College environment.