

Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Introduction

Mental health and wellbeing are significant aspects of student life, impacting academic performance, personal development, and overall happiness. This strategy aims to identify how Worcester Sixth Form College will create a supportive environment that fosters positive mental health and wellbeing for all members of our College community.

Aims

The College is committed to providing all students with a good education, supported by high-quality pastoral care, to enable them to develop into resilient adults with good mental health.

Early intervention to identify issues and provide effective support is crucial and the College's role in supporting and promoting mental health and wellbeing can be summarised as follows:

- **Prevention:** creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole College community, and equipping students to be resilient so that they can manage the normal stress of life effectively. This will include teaching students about mental wellbeing through the curriculum and reinforcing this teaching through College activities and ethos.
- **Identification:** recognising emerging issues as early and accurately as possible.
- **Early support:** helping students to access evidence informed early support and interventions.
- **Access to specialist support:** working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialist support and treatment.

The Public Health and DfE report, 'Promoting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing' identifies eight principles to promoting a whole College approach to mental health and wellbeing and this strategy will look to identify the actions the College will take to achieve its overall aim. The College will also ensure that it is meeting its statutory duties as outlined in Keeping Children Safe In Education 2023.

Leadership and Management

College Leadership and Governors support and champion efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing and are invested in actively planning for the prevention, identification and support of the mental health of staff and students.

The College will:

- Identify a member of staff who will act as the Designated Mental Health Lead (DMHL) and undertake appropriate training.
- Identify a Designated Governor with responsibility for Mental Health and Wellbeing and identify training as appropriate;
- Provide opportunities to develop a working relationship between the DMHL and Designated Governor;
- Ensure that leaders and governors are kept up to date with relevant legislation and guidance;

- Conduct an annual survey of student and student wellbeing to assist in identifying the support needs in relation to the mental health of staff and students.

Ethos and Environment

The College will create an ethos and environment that promotes a culture of respect, values diversity and understands the importance of an individualised response to student needs.

Encouraging positive relationships between staff and students, and between peers, is important in promoting student wellbeing, belonging and academic achievement. The College will:

- Promote an environment where all students can make progress towards their personal and academic goals.
- Promote its mental health and wellbeing strategy with stakeholders.
- Organise events to raise awareness of mental health issues and promotion of self-care strategies, e.g. Mental Health Awareness Week.
- Provide access to confidential services such as counselling, mental health and wellbeing support and the student assistance programme.
- Cultivate a supportive and inclusive environment that promotes open communication, empathy and mutual respect.
- Use positive language when discussing mental health to reduce stigma and encourage open dialogue.

Curriculum, teaching and learning

The College's curriculum, teaching and learning will promote resilience and support the social and emotional learning of its students.

The College will:

- Ensure a regular focus on, and positive promotion of, mental health issues through the tutorial programme.
- Increase awareness and understanding of mental health issues among students, staff and parents, by offering face to face and webinar training sessions.
- Include topics such as stress management, resilience and emotional intelligence into the curriculum in order to promote awareness of mental health and wellbeing.
- Offer workshops, assemblies, and events to reduce stigma and enhance students' understanding of mental health.
- Establish peer mentoring or buddy systems to foster connections and provide emotional support among students;
- Promote outdoor activities and access to green spaces, which positively impact mental health.

Student Voice

Students will be encouraged to contribute to strategic decisions that impact their experience of College life. Research suggests that this can benefit the mental health and wellbeing of young people by helping them to feel part of the College.

The College will:

- Maintain a Student Union body and seek their views on College matters.
- Ensure that there are student representatives on the Local Governing Body.
- Routinely survey students in relation to teaching and cross-College matters to include provision to support their mental health and wellbeing.
- Establish opportunities for peer support so students can connect with and support each other; fostering a sense of belonging and reducing feelings of isolation.
- Recruit and train student volunteers as mental health ambassadors who can provide peer support, organise events and raise awareness about mental health.

Staff Development and Wellbeing

Staff will receive appropriate training to enable them to support their own wellbeing and that of our students. The College is committed to the DfE Workplace Wellbeing Charter National Standards.

The College will:

- Provide training for staff on mental health awareness, recognising signs of distress, effective communication strategies and referral pathways to support students' mental health needs.
- Continue to offer a range of wellbeing initiatives.
- Survey staff to include feedback on training needs and support for mental health.
- Promote the Employee Assistance Programme.
- Provide opportunities for staff feedback via the staff satisfaction focus group and workload forum and aim to find ways to improve staff mental health and wellbeing.

Identifying need and monitoring impact

Through identifying need and monitoring the impact of interventions the College aims to improve its support for mental health and wellbeing.

The College will:

- Use any available data to identify trends in health and wellbeing and any members of the College at risk or in need of support.
- Maintain robust pastoral support for students complimented by counselling and mental health provision.
- Implement preventative measures to address stress, anxiety and other mental health challenges before they escalate, e.g. tutorials focused on managing stress.

Working with parents, families and carers

The College welcomes any opportunity to communicate and engage with parents and carers.

The College will:

- Develop positive relationships and work jointly with parents, families and carers.
- Engage parents through information sharing via newsletters or information sessions to equip them with the knowledge and skills to support their child's mental health.
- Share concerns about a student where this is not breaking confidentiality.
- Promote the support available in relation to mental health and wellbeing for students.

Targeted support and appropriate referrals

To support student mental health and wellbeing, it is important that the College identifies clear referral pathways to external agencies where necessary.

The College will:

- Collaborate with local mental health organisations and professionals to provide additional resources and expertise to support students' mental health needs.
- Provide access to its counselling services, mental health and wellbeing support, and information on the Student Assistance Programme.
- Train staff and students in basic mental health first aid techniques.
- Curate a list of reliable online resources and helplines for mental health support.

Monitoring and Evaluation

By implementing this mental health and wellbeing strategy, the College is committed to creating a supportive and nurturing environment where all students can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

To ensure the strategies identified are effective the College will:

- Continuously assess the effectiveness of our mental health initiatives.
- Collect feedback from students, staff, and parents.
- Monitor mental health-related incidents, referrals, and outcomes.
- Be prepared to adjust strategies based on emerging needs and challenges.

September 2024

Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan

Principle	What this looks like at WSFC	Targets
Leadership and Management	College Leadership and Governors support and champion efforts to promote emotional health and wellbeing and are invested in actively planning for the prevention, identification and support of the mental health of staff and students.	Ensure that Governors are aware of the whole College approach to mental health and wellbeing with opportunity to provide challenge and scrutiny.
Ethos and Environment	The College creates an ethos and environment that promotes a culture of respect, values diversity and understands the importance of an individualised response to student needs.	Ensure that departments have time to reflect on individual student needs so that they can plan appropriately.
Curriculum, teaching and learning	Through the College's curriculum, teaching and learning it will promote resilience and support social and emotional learning of its students.	Staff training in strategies to support mental health. Ensure teachers have access to available information about students and mental health conditions and reasonable adjustments.
Student Voice	Students will be given the opportunity to contribute to decision making processes in relation to aspects of College life that directly impact them.	Student focus groups to meet with the DSL and Safeguarding Officer with a view to identifying any areas of College where students feel vulnerable and any additional support that can be offered.
Staff Development and Wellbeing	Staff will receive appropriate training to enable them to support their own wellbeing and that of our students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities to increase the number of staff with mental health first aid training. • External training for staff on strategies to support mental health, • Papyrus training on suicide prevention for tutors.
Identifying need and monitoring impact	Through identifying need and monitoring the impact of interventions the College aims to improve its support for mental health and wellbeing.	
Working with parents, families and carers	The College welcomes any opportunity to communicate and engage with parents and carers.	Share regular information with parents on local risks and how to support their child with mental health issues.
Targeted support and appropriate referrals	To support student mental health and wellbeing, it is important that the College identifies clear pathways of support relevant to the individual and refers to external agencies where necessary.	Review numbers accessing College counselling, support via the Mental Health & Wellbeing Officer and external support via Onside Advocacy and WEST. Identify, where possible, additional opportunities to increase capacity and effectiveness of the services offered.