

Spiritual and Emotional Well-being Policy

The care of those who are sick in the community is an absolute priority which must rank before every other requirement so that there may be no doubt that it is Christ who is truly served in them (R.St.B. Chapter 36)

1) Preface: School Culture and Policy

The careful pastoral nurturing of spiritual and emotional well-being for all, as part of a strategy for the on-going development of good mental health, is a central aim of Benedictine culture, within the Catholic cultural tradition; as a consequence, it is to be discerned among the key priorities of Downside School, for both pupils and staff.

The following policy illustrates that emotional and psychological well-being are held as being crucially important for all members of Downside's School community; the Head Master, the Leadership Team, Governors, Health Care Team, Pastoral Teams and Teachers are determined to ensure that this remains the case, combating any potential social stigma or negative values being attached to the discussion of concerns regarding psychological or mental health.

It is the aspiration of the school that parents are proud to send their children to a School that cares openly about emotional well-being and mental health, within a context of caring for all aspects of physical and spiritual welfare.

Understanding and awareness

All teachers and pupils need to have on-going education in the importance of emotional well-being and good mental health, thereby building emotional resilience individually and within the School community as a whole and lifting the stigma still too often felt around mental health. One key aspect of this should be to understand the signs of anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems.

The School is committed to increasing mental health literacy through the use of Youth MHFA (Mental Health First Aid Training). The plan is to train all of the pastoral staff in the first instance, and then increase this to all the employees of the School, as well as introduce the Youth MHFA training to the senior pupils.

Downside School has a culture that openly engages in conversations about emotional well-being and mental health and ensures teachers and pupils seek and receive the right professional help. Further information is provided below on how this help can be accessed for pupils. Well-being support arrangements for staff are provided within the context of the EAP programme as well as the well-being section on the HR information drive.

School and External support

GP, counselling and other support services are provided by the School for pupils; parents are fully informed of arrangements and engaged with this, when necessary (see below for further information).

2) Arrangements for Pupil Welfare

At Downside School the concept of the individual flourishing within the context of being nurtured in a community is at the heart of the educational project. The pastoral welfare of boarding and day pupils is a central concern of the School and there is a pastoral support network of staff within the School whose remit is to pay attention to pupils' emotional well-being, as well as their physical and spiritual welfare. Tutors, House Staff and House Masters and House Mistresses (HsM) all share a pastoral responsibility, while all teachers and support staff are trained annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, in order that they remain vigilant within the School community for any signs that a pupil may be in need of pastoral support. While the HsM has primary pastoral responsibility for each pupil, it is incumbent on all staff to keep pupils' pastoral needs in mind.

The school's 'Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy' details the precise arrangements for dealing with concerns of possible/ alleged abuse, while the 'Anti-Bullying Policy' highlights the school's arrangements for dealing with this particular threat to a pupil's well-being.

There is also a Welfare Committee chaired by the Director of Pastoral Care which meets twice a term to review pupils in particular welfare need or at risk. The Committee uses threshold guidance provided by the Somerset LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board) to ascertain where a pupil may be on a continuum of need and intervention and then acts accordingly to support the pupil concerned.

Moreover, there are three key areas where pupils may seek support if they are in emotional distress: i) the Health Centre, ii) the School Counsellor (Mrs Pamela Woodford), iii) the Chaplaincy Team.

The school's 'Worries and Concerns - a pupil's guide' poster highlights to all pupils where they can turn to, if they are in any kind of pastoral difficulty, and this is explained to them in person by the Director of Pastoral Care during the Pupil Induction Programme, at the time of their arrival at Downside, as well as at termly Pastoral Care briefings. The 'Worries and Concerns - a pupil's guide' poster is on every House notice board and on pp 8-9 of the Pupil Handbook.

The poster indicates that help can be sought from a variety of different areas, if pupils are in any kind of difficulty.

Worries and Concerns - A Pupil's Guide

This guide explains what you should do if you feel worried about something and what you should do if you are concerned about how you are being, or have been, treated. Much of what follows may seem obvious to you, but it is important for you to realise that the School will want to help you if you have a problem that is making you unhappy.

You may just wish to talk to someone or you may wish to make a complaint. Either way this advice will assist you to decide what to do.

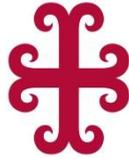
“What do I do if I just want to talk to someone?”

Remember you have close friends who may be able to help, or perhaps a senior boy or girl to whom you feel you can turn. Your House Master or House Mistress or Tutor is always ready to help, or any other members of staff (including domestic staff) you know and to whom you feel you can comfortably talk.

There may be times when you feel you cannot talk with a member of staff. Talk, telephone or write to any of the following:

Your parents		Drink Line	0800 917 8282
The School Health Centre Sister (or any school nurse)	01761 235128	Frank – National Drugs Helpline	0800 776600
The School Doctors	01749 840233	Smoking Quitline	0800 002200
A School Chaplain	01761 235113	NHS Smoking Helpline	0800 169 0169
A Prefect		Victim Supportline	0845 3030900
Somerset Direct, Somerset County Council	0845 345 9122	Samaritans	08457 909090
Avon and Somerset Police	0845 4567000	NHS Direct	0845 4647
ISI	020 7600 0100	Office of the Children’s Commissioner	0800 528 0731
Ofsted	0300 123 4666		
Child Line	FREEPHONE 0800 1111		
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline			
	FREEPHONE 0808 800 5000		
	FREETEXT 0800 056 0566		
Independent Listener (Mrs Parry)	01749 572763 or 07802 400699		
	ehparry@btinternet.com		

If you feel that your concern has not been dealt with, you should raise the matter formally with your House Master/House Mistress, or if appropriate, with the Director of Pastoral Care or the Deputy Head Master



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The Health Centre – in liaison with the pupil's HsM - will normally contact the parents of any pupil who is a cause for particular medical concern and the school's GP will be used as a source of advice on further action to be taken.

In certain circumstances a pupil may be referred to CAMHS Somerset (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service) – the GP would normally make the referral – for specialist assistance. A range of strategies may be used to support the pupil, including medical assistance when necessary and therapies such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

The local CAMHS service is based at Wells:

Specialist C.A.M.H.S. Mendip

Priory House

Priory House Site

Glastonbury Road

Wells BA5 1XL

Telephone: (01749) 836561

Fax: (01749) 836563

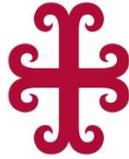
E-mail: camhsmendip@sompar.nhs.uk

There are other points to consider, however, including i) Suicide Prevention and ii) Emotional Well-Being & Resilience within the Curriculum.

3) Suicide Prevention

If a pupil seeks help because they have suicidal thoughts or are in a state of depression or serious anxiety, the following actions will be taken by school staff:

- i) every sympathy and support will be provided to the pupil, together with reassurance that a positive outcome is possible for them,
- ii) the matter will be reported to their HsM, the Director of Pastoral Care, the Head of Nursing Care and the Deputy Head Master in his role as Designated Safeguarding Lead,
- iii) they will be referred to the Health Centre,
- iv) they will be offered the services of the School Counsellor,
- v) the matter will be discussed with their parents,
- vi) the pupil will be placed on the school 'At risk' list, coordinated by the Director of Pastoral Care,
- vii) external agencies will be liaised with (e.g. CAMHS), following any referral from social services or a GP.



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In normal circumstances, the primary point of contact for the parents and the pupil will be the HsM, however, depending on the nature of the situation, a senior member of the school staff (normally the Director of Pastoral Care or the Deputy Head Master) may take over as the lead person if the situation is particularly complicated or the condition severe. In tandem with this, the Head of Nursing Care of the Health Centre will proactively liaise with the school GP (if a boarder), with the home GP (if a day pupil) and with parents, relaying any key information, as appropriate, to pastoral staff.

A pastoral care welfare plan will be devised for the individual pupil to monitor and manage their individual pastoral needs; this will be coordinated between the Deputy Head Master, the Director of Pastoral Care, the Head of Nursing Care and the HsM, and may involve regular meetings with various parties in attendance. The resulting Welfare Plan is a dynamic document which will be uploaded on MyConcern and reviewed termly.

In the case of any actual suicide attempt, the following must happen:

- 1) The medical needs of the pupil must be attended to as a matter of the greatest urgency; a member of staff should call an ambulance if need be, and the medical department should also be informed as a matter of urgency
- 2) Parents must be informed as soon as possible; the Deputy Head Master will take the lead on who should contact the parents, in liaison with the Head Master, the Director of Pastoral Care and the HsM
- 3) The Head Master, Deputy Head Master and Director of Pastoral Care must all be informed as a matter of urgency, as should the Senior Chaplain
- 4) A Crisis Meeting of the Senior Leadership Team will be called, as soon as possible to consider any further action

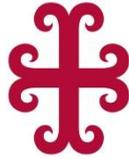
In the event that a pupil commits suicide at Downside, the member of staff who finds the pupil should call the Emergency Services immediately and inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team; senior staff should then refer to the **Emergency Plan** for guidance on further action.

4) **Emotional Well-Being and the Chaplaincy**

There are a variety of elements within the curriculum and in the structure of daily life at Downside which work towards the fostering of emotional well-being within the school.

The Work of the Chaplaincy: this is of crucial significance in a Benedictine School, in terms of the spiritual nurturing of both pupils and staff. The statement of the eight aspects of a Benedictine education that is provided in the Pupils' Handbook demonstrates the principles that are central to the school, which the chaplaincy and other areas of the school endeavour to uphold: The work of the Chaplaincy is similarly summarised in Chaplaincy Handbook.

When mental or spiritual crises occur for individuals, the school's chaplains, as directed by the Senior Chaplain, Dom James Hood, will endeavour to assist the person concerned in



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whatever way they most usefully can, sometimes just by listening, sometimes by providing spiritual counsel, sometimes by praying with, or for, the person affected, and/or their family. In some instances, where other forms of therapy are ineffective, such spiritual counselling can be effective; while such assistance should not prevent other options, in terms for example of medical assistance and/or psychotherapy, being considered, nevertheless there is a central place at Downside and in its wider community, for such chaplaincy support, which is much valued by staff, pupils and parents.

A particular ministry using a form of healing prayer and revitalisation to help pupils/staff (on a personal level) to reconnect with themselves and God is offered when appropriate by the Senior Chaplain. The Senior Chaplain also communicates with the Director of Pastoral Care and the Head of Nursing Care to facilitate any referral, as appropriate, of any member of the school community who might benefit from spiritual support. The emphasis, however, is primarily to use the normal channels of pastoral or medical support first and then supplement that, as may be required.

5) Emotional Well-being within the Curriculum

The teaching of well-being has always been in some measure part of the curriculum at Downside, given the Benedictine ethos of the school and its high standards of pastoral care, which have ensured that the SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) Curriculum within the school has been thoughtfully designed and delivered, partly through lectures (including the Sixth Form Lecture Programme), partly through the tutorial system and what is the SMSC programme. Enhancements to this programme, which includes year group retreats, are made each academic year to ensure that the programme is balanced and appropriate for pupils.

Policy Written by AFN (11th April 2015)

Policy Reviewed by CMY February 2018