

## **Gordon's School**

### **Student Welfare Covid-Support Policy**

#### **Rationale**

Some students may be experiencing a variety of emotions in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, such as anxiety, stress or low mood. This may particularly be the case for vulnerable children, including those with a social worker and young carers. It is important to contextualise these feelings as normal responses to an abnormal situation. Some may need support to re-adjust to school; others may have enjoyed being at home and be reluctant to return; a few may be showing signs of more severe anxiety or depression. Others will not be experiencing any challenges and will be keen and ready to return to school. It is important to listen to students, not everyone will need support or a referral. Transition back to school routine will be at different paces for different students and their families.

NHS England recently issued advice on signs parents should look out for and steps that they can take to look after their child's mental health, based on advice from clinicians and first-hand experience from young people and parents. These signs include:

- They may be more upset or find it hard to manage their emotions
- They may appear anxious or distressed. Appearing low in mood, withdrawn or tearful
- Increasing trouble with sleeping and eating
- Reporting worried or negative thoughts about themselves or their future
- For younger children, there may be more bed wetting

Our provision of pastoral, academic and extra-curricular activities for students should:

- support the rebuilding of friendships and social engagement
- address and equip students to respond to issues linked to coronavirus (COVID-19)
- support students with approaches to improving their physical and mental wellbeing
- support the needs of students we are already aware of
- support any individuals/groups we identify as newly vulnerable on their return to school.
- give students space to recover/reflect and be themselves whilst getting used to routine
- support students to reignite their skills to learn, make mistakes and build resilience

At the end of this document you will find useful links and organisations for signposting students and families. Staff may also find this useful – "Coronavirus: Supporting Pupils' Mental Health and Well-Being" written by Anna Freud, NAHT and PSHE Association (Sharepoint)

#### **Behaviour expectations**

Students will adapt to a different learning environment at home, where many of the school's usual expectations and rhythms may not be relevant (for example, use of phones, wearing of school uniform etc). During online lessons however, students are expected to conduct themselves as they are expected to in a classroom. Following instructions from teachers, avoiding distraction and not disrupting other students' learning, and engaging fully in the lessons are all absolutely imperative.

Poor or disruptive behaviour during lessons will be followed up and parents will be informed. Persistent disruption may result in a student being removed from one or more online lessons.

Students are expected to attend their online lesson punctually at the start and not leave until the lesson has been ended by the teacher. Lateness to online lessons will be recorded and followed up by Heads of Houses.

Students failing to hand in work by the deadline set will be monitored and interventions from heads of Key Stages may follow.

## **On return to school**

It is likely that adverse experiences and/or lack of routines of regular attendance and classroom discipline may contribute to disengagement with education upon return to school, resulting in increased incidence of poor behaviour. Some students may struggle to reengage in school and are at risk of being absent and/or persistently disruptive.

They may require support overcoming barriers to attendance and behaviour and to help them reintegrate back into school life. Some students will return to school having been exposed to a range of adversity and trauma including bereavement, anxiety and in some cases increased welfare and safeguarding risks. This may lead to an increase in social, emotional and mental health concerns particularly in vulnerable groups such as children with a social worker and young carers. Additionally, provision for children who have SEND may have been disrupted during partial school closure and there may be an impact on their behaviour.

## **Levels of Support**

These are decided using the Effective Family Resilience Framework

### **Level 1 (School Support)**

**Houses:** The House is a safe place where students should feel comfortable, supported, and a place where they feel they belong. The safe and familiar environment is conducive to supporting the welfare of every child.

**Pastoral staff** There is a range of people that students can talk to in school for day-to-day help and advice. Posters and booklets in the houses signpost who these people are, from the Chaplain, house staff members and safeguarding leads, to senior students and anti-bullying ambassadors.

**Teachers:** Teachers not only monitor a child's academic progress, but will also observe mood and behaviour and alert pastoral staff to any concerns or observations. An issue may be subject-related and therefore resolved by the classroom teacher or Head of Department, or more emotionally based in which case the pastoral staff will intervene.

### **Level 2 (Co-ordinated school support):**

**Heads of House (HoHs)** – Initial concerns picked up by HoHs may be resolved quickly and easily by putting simple support measures in place. More complex issues are managed using Individual Welfare Plans which HoHs will put together with input from the student and parent and set short and long term goals for the success of the plan. Actions will be recorded using the school's online welfare management system (CPOMS).

**Learning Support Department** – HoHs are able to refer SEND related issues to the School's SENDCo for a co-ordinated support plan.

**Student Support Centre** – Nadia Warren will support students whilst allowing them to work in a safe space if necessary. This is provided for students not coping with lessons or being in the classroom, particularly where a lack of focus results in distraction or disruption to others.

**Medical Centre School Nurses** – The Medical Centre is available daily for residential boarders, who are not able to see their own parents daily.

**Teresa Wilcox** Specialist School Nurse, Surrey Heath - Fortnightly 'drop in' sessions at school commencing Friday 18th September. Students can self-refer via Deputy Head's Bulletin link. For students struggling with anxiety following Covid19 and finding transition difficult. She will also be coming into school (end September) to present to Year 7 on transition to secondary school.

**Mrs Beecham** – Offering support for emotional needs or concerns, she is available up to 5 hours per week. This support is for students who may have previously been on an IWP, and referrals are made by HoHs to SMF.

**Mr Cherry** – Offering pastoral mentoring for students struggling with non-engagement in lessons and/or school. This support is for students who may have previously been on an IWP, and again referrals are made by HoHs to SMF.

**School Counsellors** – 3 counsellors each offering one day a week allowing capacity for up to 21 students to access counselling per week. Students should self-refer using the form on Gordon's Online (Firefly). Each student may have up to 4 free sessions (in some cases this is 7 sessions), before being offered the opportunity to continue at cost.

### **Level 3:**

**External agency referrals:** Where it is assessed that Level 1 or Level 2 support in school cannot adequately support a student's needs, a referral will be made to C-SPA (Children's Single Point of Access) for support. After an initial assessment, a social worker will decide the appropriate course of action, which may involve either a single agency response or a multi-agency response.

### **Signposting**

Staff may wish to signpost these resources for schools to our students:

- **MindEd** - a free educational resource for frontline staff from Health Education England on children and young people's mental health. Now includes a **Coronavirus Staff Resilience Hub** with materials on peer support, for managers and senior leaders, on stress and fear and trauma and bereavement. Pre-existing, bitesize content includes **death and loss** (for parents and carers with Easy Read PDF); **loss and grief** (for professionals including teachers); and **trauma and coping** (for parents and carers with Easy Read PDF)
- **Good Thinking** digital mental wellbeing resource for London, which breaks down advice for children and young people by specific groups
- **Rise Above for Schools** - a free website for teachers which hosts a range of mental health lesson plans suitable for Year 6, KS3 & KS4. Content is written by teachers and is accredited by the PSHE Association.
- **Anna Freud Centre**, particularly **Mentally Healthy Schools** resources and their **Schools in Mind** network on supporting young people's mental health during periods of disruption.
- **Place 2 Be** on improving children's mental health.
- **The Childhood Bereavement Network** includes **content** specific to COVID-19. The organisation also has a **hub for professionals** supporting bereaved children, with membership currently free until September.
- **Local NHS mental health crisis support lines** (for all ages)
- **Think Piece - A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic.** Barry Carpenter, CBE, Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University. Matthew Carpenter,
- **Kooth.com**, provides free online counselling, advice and wellbeing support and is now available for 10 – 18-year olds within Surrey. Previously children needed to be 11 years old to access Kooth, but now Year 6 children, who may need additional support at this time, can benefit from the service.
- **Childline** 0800 1111
- **NSPCC**
- **Heads Together**
- **Winston's Wish** – Bereavement resources
- **NHS CHAT HEALTH School nurse confidential service 07507329951**
- **<http://www.childrenshealthsurrey.nhs.uk?chat-health>** and the school nurse resources for Y7-9 **<http://www.safespacehealth.uk>**

**Staff may wish to signpost the following resources to parents and carers:**

- The Government's **online educational resources** for home education with a section on mental wellbeing.

- **PHE's guidance** on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing
- Virtual **Oak National Academy** for reception – Year 10 pupils, which offers daily online lessons, a weekly assembly with a pastoral focus and extra-curricular activities to help families maintain a routine at home (NB. intended to complement, not replace, existing schools' online learning offers)
- BBC Education **online learning content**, also for reception to Year 10 pupils, to support home learning, with weekly wellbeing tips provided via their social media pages.
- The **Think Ninja** app has been made freely available to young people (aged 10-18 year olds) across the UK and updated with specific mental health and wellbeing content related to the pandemic.
- **MindEd**, **Anna Freud** or **Place 2 Be** webpages and the **Starline** parent helpline for home learning.
- **Rise Above** is a website co-created and produced by young people to help build resilience and support good mental health in those aged 10 to 16. The content has been adapted to the pandemic and includes new mental health content based on insights from young people who are learning from home.
- **Every Mind Matters** includes an online tool and email journey to support everyone to feel more confident in taking action to look after their mental health and wellbeing. It also includes a section for parents and carers on looking after children and young people during the pandemic.
- Children and young people who are caring for someone with a mental illness can self-refer to the **NHS Volunteer Responders** if they are having issues shopping for food or picking up prescriptions.
- Children and young people can access free confidential support anytime from voluntary and community sector organisations by texting **SHOUT to 85258**, calling **Childline on 0800 1111** or **the Mix on 0808 808 4994**. Children and young people can also find online information on COVID-19 and mental health on the **YoungMinds website**.
- For support with an eating disorder, children and young people can ring **Beat's Youthline on 0808 801 0711**.
- NHS central surrey and family health advice line for parents 01883 340 922 (for students up to 19 years of age)
- Parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Surrey can access free and confidential online support for emotional wellbeing from **Qwell**. Qwell offers parents and carers one-to-one online text chat counselling sessions, with trained counsellors and access to self-help tools.

**Sue Forster**

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