



Loreto
sixth form college

Staff and Student Mental Strength and Health Policy

Last Review:	February 2024
Approved by Governors:	February 2024
Next Review:	February 2026

Vision

Loreto college is centred in God, rooted in Christ and animated by the spirit of Mary Ward, the founder of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Our vision is that it will be an educational community where each person has the experience of being loved and valued as a sacred individual created by a loving God; a community where students enjoy an enriching and liberating education that helps them grow into the fullness of life and empowers them to be men and women of courage who are alive to the needs of humanity and committed to making a better world.

Introduction

The college aims to be an educational community which gives expression to the core values of Mary Ward – freedom, justice, sincerity, truth, joy, excellence and internationality. The Governing Body and the Senior Leadership Team, as part of the commitment to the values of Mary Ward, are determined to foster a college environment that promotes positive mental health and wellbeing for all members of the college. This document sets out the College's policy and guidance on promoting positive mental strength and health. The college will endeavour to act at all times with justice, compassion and respect for the dignity and worth of all members of the college community and in doing so it will act in accordance with its legal responsibilities and its primary duty of care to children and vulnerable adults for whom it is responsible.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*. Where a concern about a student's mental health leads to a safeguarding concern the procedures set out in that policy should be followed.

Preamble

Loreto College aims to facilitate a community where students and staff are supported in developing resilience in meeting the challenges of everyday life. Research suggests that 1 in 5 young people experience a probable mental health disorder and suffering from a mental health problem can lead to unequal life chances (Children and young people's mental health in 2022, National Centre for Social Research, November 2022¹).

Loreto College will work in partnership with students' parents/guardians, medical professionals and external agencies. Loreto College recognises that it is not a specialist mental health facility and as such is not able to diagnose or treat mental health conditions. Loreto College will seek to advise students and their families on resources and agencies available to help them when suffering from a mental health problem.

Loreto College's Mental Strength and Health Policy aims to:

- Promote good mental health and wellbeing of all students and staff in the college community
- Ensure students and staff who are experiencing poor mental health are supported
- Embed an open culture of promoting and discussing good mental health and wellbeing across the college community
- Promote the training and development of staff across the college community with respect to mental health
- Signpost students and staff to relevant external supportive agencies in order to optimise opportunities for sustainability of their mental wellbeing.

Promoting good mental strength and health

All members of the college community have a role in promoting good mental strength and health. The college seeks to provide a place where all members feel safe and supported in their mental health.

¹ <https://natcen.ac.uk/publications/children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-2022>

For students

- Guiding all students on to a programme of study in line with their prior attainment and leading to qualifications that allow them to succeed.
- Teaching students about strategies to develop good mental health through the tutorial programme and assemblies.
- Enabling students to meet regularly with a personal tutor and can share any concerns they have.
- Facilitating students to meet regularly if needed with their subject teachers on a 1-2-1 basis to get advice on their progress.
- Providing all students with a Head of Hall who can sign post resources available and help with referrals to external agencies.
- Providing the support of two Student Support Officers, a Safeguarding Officer, a Safeguarding Support Officer, and a Safeguarding Manager who are available throughout the day.
- Regularly reviewing the support offered to students who have been identified as having a mental health need.
- Encouraging students to access to the college counselling team.
- Providing student access to the chaplaincy staff, who have mental health first aid training and are available for students to meet with informally.
- Ensuring staff receiving regular training on mental health issues in education.
- Facilitating Heads of Hall to receive regular training on mental health issues in education, ensuring they are kept up to date with external agencies offering support and treatment.

For staff

- Facilitating regular events/activities throughout the college year to promote staff wellbeing.
- Providing staff access to the college chaplaincy staff, who have mental health first aid training and are available for staff to meet with informally.
- Supporting staff to develop their professional skills and interests.
- The appointment of a staff Wellbeing Co-ordinator
- Enabling staff access to the college counselling team.
- A Staff Wellbeing programme offered to all staff on a full-year basis.
- An Employee Assistance Programme offered to all staff via Smart-clinic
- Open door policy operated by the Principal and Deputy Principal so that staff can discuss any matters they wish to raise in privacy.
- Responsive ethos to staff requests for support or assistance for personal issues.
- Facilitating for Heads of Hall and key safeguarding staff access to supervision. See appendix 1.
- A responsive approach to the workload of staff throughout the year, reflecting local and national changing circumstances e.g careful consideration of calendar planning.

Supporting students

Loreto College recognises that a significant number of students are likely to experience a mental health condition whilst studying at the college. The college will seek to make reasonable adjustments to support a student. The following is an illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of how the college may support students experiencing a mental health issue:

- Allowing the student time out of a lesson
- Directing the student to a safe place to compose themselves
- Extending deadlines
- Reviewing a student's programme of study
- Meeting with the student and their family to agree a support package
- Adding SSP or DSP sessions to support a student's progress

- Referral to college counselling
- Making a referral to an external agency
- Accompanying the student to A&E

The college encourages a culture of passing on concerns, no matter how small to the relevant member of staff. The student log and safeguarding log are the best ways to record concerns staff have about a student. It is recognised that a student experiencing a mental health problem may be an indicator that a child has suffered, or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation. Whilst students may not report concerns around peer-on-peer abuse directly, reporting of mental health concerns could be an indicator of this (Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE, September 2023). The student's Head of Hall, who is a DDSL, will have an overview of all concerns shared around an individual student and will follow the guidance set out in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.

Supporting staff

Loreto College recognises that staff may experience poor mental health during their time at the college. In accordance with existing policies on work life balance the college will seek to support colleagues as appropriate. Examples might include:

- Accessing college counselling team
- Making use of the Employee Assistance Programme
- Temporary adjustments in duties and responsibilities

This list is not exhaustive, and any support will be agreed and discussed in consultation with the member of staff concerned, HR and SLT.

Passing on concerns

For students

When a disclosure is made about a student's mental health and their safety is at risk, the procedures as set out in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* should be followed. Additional guidance regarding students presenting with suicidal behavior has been developed – see Appendix 3.

All students and staff are encouraged to look out for one another and report concerns about a student's mental health to their Head of Hall.

The student's Head of Hall or another member of the safeguarding team is best placed to signpost the student to help.

For staff

All staff are encouraged to look out for one another, and where there is a concern about a member of staff's mental health they should pass this on to their line manager or a member of SMT.

Contacting parents, carers or relatives

For students

Loreto College will always seek consent from a student before discussing concerns around their mental health with parents/carers. Where a student refuses consent, the college will decide on a case by case basis what is in the best interests of the student. In making this decision the college will consider:

- The need to work closely and collaboratively with parents/careers
- The impact of disclosing such concerns on the student's well being
- The duty of the college to safeguard against harm to a student as set out in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*

For staff

If the college has concerns regarding the wellbeing of a member of staff it may be judged that it is in their best interests to get in touch with their named 'emergency contact' to get in touch and pass on information. As far as possible this would be done with the knowledge and consent of the member of staff concerned.

Making referrals for students to external agencies

In supporting students in accessing support to manage their mental health, the college will assist in the completion of referrals to external agencies. If necessary, the college can facilitate meetings with external agencies in college. Referrals will only be made where students consent and are willing to engage in the support on offer.

Record keeping

Loreto College will record concerns on myLoreto via the student log (sensitive notes) or the safeguarding log where appropriate. Records that pertain to safeguarding concerns will be treated as outlined in the *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*.

Any records pertaining to staff will be kept in line with existing HR policies.

Reporting of students mental health

The Mental Health lead, in conjunction with Head of Halls, will regularly report to SLT and Governors on the mental strengths and mental health needs identified in the college. These reports will provide an overview of the mental health needs and strengths experienced by students and allow the college to reflect on the support on offer.

Mental Health Student Action Plan

Loreto College has developed a Mental Health Student Action Plan (see Appendix 2) to assist in formalising support around a young person. The action plan can be a useful tool for Heads of Hall to use when meeting with students and/or parents and guardians.

The action plan may be used in supporting students who experience a mental health need, depending on the circumstances of the students and their specific and individual needs.

The action plan will always be used where a student is at risk of being permanently excluded for a breach of their learner agreement and their mental health is a significant factor. In such cases, the Mental Health Student Action Plan must have been completed to ensure the college has taken all possible steps to support the student.

Appendix 1: Heads of Hall Supervision Model

Aims

- To support the mental wellbeing of staff who deal regularly with safeguarding
- To ensure best practice is shared across the team

Supervision takes place 6 times a year, approximately once a half term. Supervision takes place onsite, during the college day when a member of staff is free. This time is treated as a priority for staff and other meetings and commitments should fit around this.

Supervision is 1:1 with a qualified psychotherapist who has experience of social work, mental health training and child development.

Supervision is coordinated by the Mental Health Lead and is offered to all Heads of Hall, student support officers, safeguarding officer, and safeguarding support officer. Staff can choose to opt out.

Appendix 2: Mental Health Student Action Plan

Loreto College Mental Health Student Action Plan

Name	<input type="text"/>	Tutor Group	<input type="text"/>
Meeting attendees	<input type="text"/>		
Meeting date	05/07/2021		

SUBJECT UPDATES

	Attendance %	Lates	Working at Grade
Tutorial	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Not applicable
General RE	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Not applicable
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Choose from list
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Choose from list
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Choose from list
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Choose from list

CURRENT CONCERNS

What are the parents / carers concerned about?		<input type="text"/>		
Student Voice	What's going well?	<input type="text"/>		
	What am I concerned about?	<input type="text"/>		
	What are the barriers to my progress?	<input type="text"/>		
What is College concerned about? <i>Please include comments from subject teachers if applicable</i>		<input type="text"/>		
Attendance <input type="checkbox"/>	Punctuality <input type="checkbox"/>	Progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Work submission <input type="checkbox"/>	Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/>

SUPPORT

What support has already been put in place?			
Support	Already accessed	To do?	Comments
GP appointment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Online support (e.g. Kooth.com)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
College counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use of Chaplaincy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
External counselling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Referral to external agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Exam access arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Deadline extensions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Academic support	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Review programme of study	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

ACTION PLAN

I will...			
Home will...			
College will...			
<p style="text-align: center;">The above actions will be reviewed within approximately 25 College days. In the meantime, please keep College informed of any changes to your circumstances and speak to your Head of Hall if you need anything.</p>			
Student signature			
Head of Hall signature			
Parent / carer signature			
Date of next review	16/10/2019	Time of next meeting	HH:MM

Students presenting with suicidal behaviour

When assessing a student who is presenting with suicidal thoughts or behaviours it can be useful to consider the level of risk as a continuum



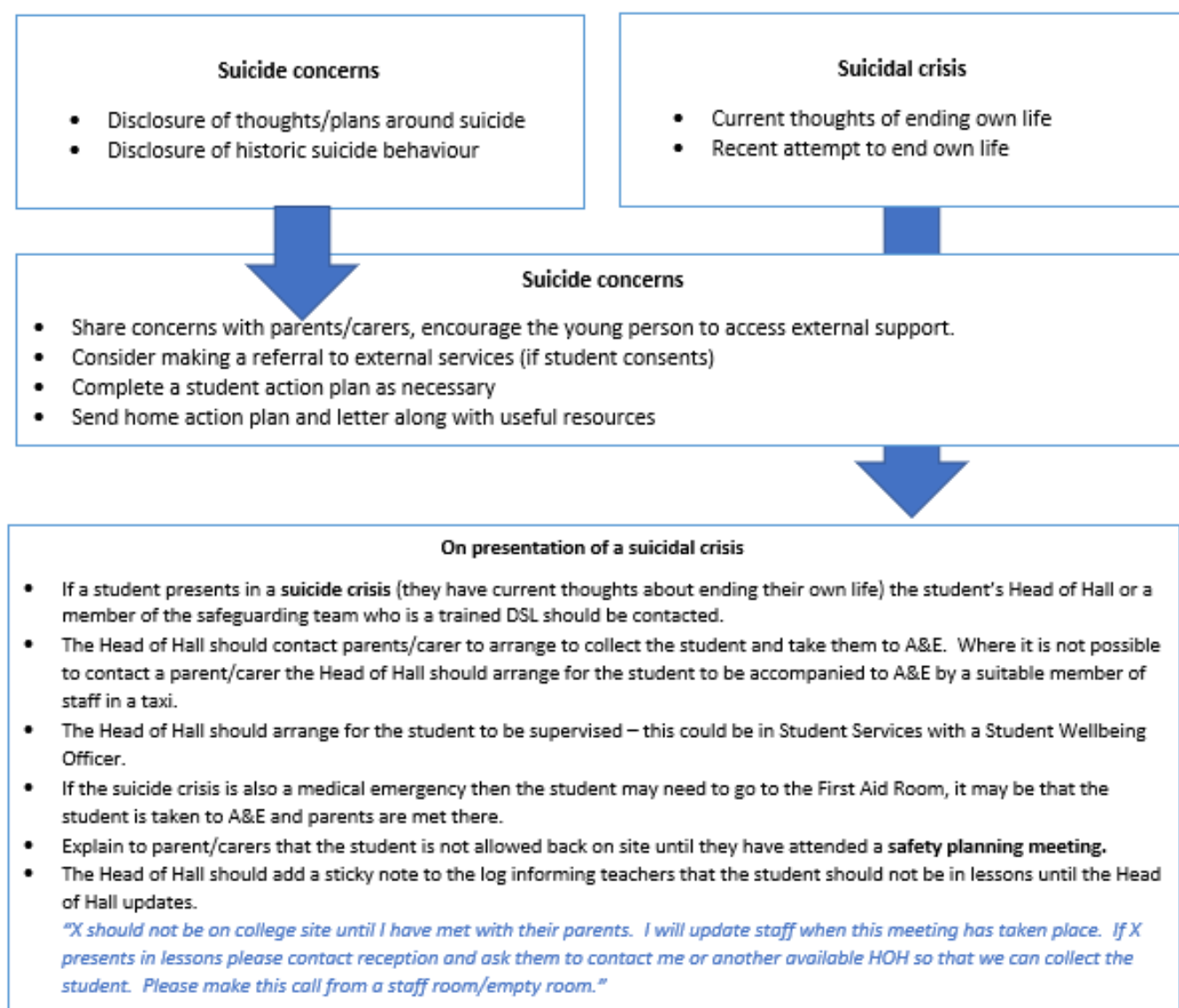
If we are having concerns about a student we should be direct and ask them 'Are you having thoughts of killing or harming yourself?'

It is useful to ask direct questions:

- How long have you had these thoughts?
- Do you have a plan to end your own life?
- Do you have a means to end your own life?
- Do you know when you would end your own life?
- Have you tried to end your own life before?

Students can move up and down the continuum quickly, and lack of a plan does not guarantee safety. Suicide attempts can be impulsive.

Asking students about suicide does not put the idea in their head; instead, it shows we care and that we are open to talking about it.



The next college day

- The Head of Hall will arrange a safety planning meeting with parents/carers
- The Head of Hall will consider if a referral to Children's Services is appropriate and discuss with parents/carers
- Head of Hall will authorise absences until date of safety planning meeting

Safety planning meeting

- Ask parent/carer and student for an update
- Check student has seen a GP or other appropriate professional
- Ask parent/carer for GP contact details in order to pass on concerns (explain this is good practice)
- Check parent's/carer's contact details and ask parent/carer to keep these up to date
- Explain the limitations of college in keeping the student safe
 - Students can leave the campus at any time and will not be challenged by staff
 - Students are not under constant supervision
 - Staff unable to look after students
- Therefore students and parent(s)/carer(s) should make a conscious decision each day that the student is well enough to attend
- Complete safety planning document
- Share a booklet of resources and helplines; explain that the college website is kept up to date
- Agree to follow up in 1 week

After safety planning meeting

- Update log with a sensitive note : *"Please be aware there are concerns about the wellbeing/low mood of this student, if there are any concerns please contact their Head of Hall or a member of the safeguarding team."*
- Send a copy of the safety plan home using letter template
- Save a copy of the safety plan on the safeguarding log

1 week after safety planning meeting

- Phone the parent/carer to check how things are
- Meet with the student to check how they are
- Take further action as appropriate

Note: each new suicide crisis will require a safety-planning meeting even if one has taken place before.

Students presenting on site before a safety planning meeting has taken place.

- Note will be placed on the student log to make all staff aware
"X should not be on college site until I have with their parents. I will update staff when this meeting has taken place. If X presents in lessons please contact reception and ask them to contact me or another available HOH so that we can collect the student. Please make this call from a staff room/empty room."
- Staff should phone reception and request them to contact a HoH who will then meet the student and take them to a member of the Safeguarding Team.
- Arrangements must be made for the student to go home - , ideally being picked up by parent/carer or parent/carer to be contacted and give permission for the student to make their own way home.

Name		Tutor Group	
Meeting attendees		Meeting Date	24 September 2021
Staying safe at home	<p>Use this space to record what the student can do to keep them safe at home.</p> <p>Useful questions could be 'How does the student take care of themselves, how would they like to be supported, who can they contact in an emergency.</p> <p>Specific ideas will be unique to the young person's situation but might include accessing kooth.com, texting SHOUT to 85258 or calling the Samaritans on 116 123 or Papyrus 0800 0684141. Talking to parents/carers at home if they are having thoughts around suicide, trying distraction techniques etc. Developing a good sleeping/eating routine, exercising, having contact with friends and family.</p>		
Staying safe in college	<p>As part of the discussions, it should be made clear the risks of attending college.</p> <p>The young person should agree to speak to someone at home each morning to check in if they are feeling ok to attend college.</p> <p>The student should agree to come and speak to <u>Well/Student Services/FAR</u> if they start to feel unwell and may need to be shown where to access these places.</p> <p>The student should agree to follow the sign-out procedure and a parent/<u>carer</u> should have a copy of their timetable.</p>		
Long term safety planning	<p>This could be accessing support such as CAHMS, Emerge or GP</p>		
Student signature			
Parent/<u>carer</u> signature			
Head of Hall signature			

Anxiety Based School Avoidance (ABSA)

Describes a group of young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school.

“School refusal occurs when stress exceeds support, when risks are greater than resilience and when ‘pull’ factors that promote school non- attendance overcome the ‘push’ factors the encourage attendance” (Thambirajah|et al, 2008: p. 33)

No link to
socio
economic
status

1-2% of
young
people are
absent due
to ABSA

Equally
common in
males and
females

Why?

Factors in college:

To avoid uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school, such as feelings of anxiety and low mood

To avoid situations that might be stressful, such as academic demands, social pressures and aspects of the school environment

Factors outside college:

To reduce separation anxiety or to gain attention from significant others, such as parents or other family members

To pursue tangible reinforcers outside of school, such as going shopping or playing computer games

Impact

Reduced
social
opportunities

Poor
academic
attainment

Limit
employment
opportunities

Poor adult
mental
health

Risk factors:

School Factors	Family Factors	Child factors
Bullying (the most common school factor)	Separation and divorce or change in family dynamic	Temperamental style- reluctance to interact and withdrawal from unfamiliar settings, people or objects
Difficulties in specific subject	Parent physical and mental health problems	Fear of failure and poor self confidence
Transition to secondary school, key stage or change of school	Overprotective parenting style	Physical illness
Structure of the school day	Dysfunctional family interactions	Age (5-6, 11-12 & 13-14 years)
Academic demands/high levels of pressure and performance-orientated classrooms	Being the youngest child in the family	Learning Difficulties, developmental problems or Autism Spectrum Condition if unidentified or unsupported
Transport or journey to school	Loss and Bereavement	Separation Anxiety from parent
Exams	High levels of family stress	Traumatic events
Peer or staff relationship difficulties	Family history of EBSA	
	Young carer	

Areas of strength

- Developing aspiration and ambition
- Increasing confidence, self-esteem, value in themselves
- Developing feelings of safety, security, and a sense of belonging
- Having positive experiences where they can succeed
- Having positive relationships with peers and staff
- Feeling listened to and understood
- U/understanding the relationships between thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- Willingness to work in partnership with school, family and external professionals
- Developing parenting skills and understanding
- Flexibility of approaches within school, listening to the voice of the young person

Signs of ABSA



Swift action can prevent ASBA becoming entrenched.

Based on 'Anxiety Based School Avoidance – Manchester Schools Guidance Document September 2021
<https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/advice.page?id=17Mj5WlOnyE>