

Severn Vale School
Student Wellbeing Policy

1. Policy Statement

“Mental health is a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realise their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in.” (World Health Organisation)

At Severn Vale School, we aim to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for both students and staff, working together alongside families, outside agencies and the community.

We pursue this aim using both universal, whole school approaches and specialised, targeted approaches to support students where risk factors are identified. In addition, we aim to recognise and respond to mental health concerns. By developing and implementing a practical, relevant and effective whole school approach we can promote a safe and stable environment for all and in particular, identified students.

2. Purpose

This document describes the school’s approach to preventing harm and promoting positive mental health and well-being and is intended as information and guidance for all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

This document should be read in conjunction with our Health and Safety Policy in cases where a student’s mental health overlaps with or is linked to a medical issue; the SEN and Disabilities Policy where a student has an identified special educational need; the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy where there are safeguarding concerns; the Behaviour Policy where there are concerns about attitude to learning and conduct and the Attendance Policy where attendance is affected by mental health; the Whole School Approach for Young Carers and the Whole School Approach for Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children.

This document has been developed in accordance with guidance in:

- DfE 'Promoting Children & Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing’ (November 2023)
- DfE The Teachers Standards 2012 (Introduction updated June 2013, terminology updated July 2021)
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)

3. Policy Aims

At Severn Vale School, we aim to:

- Promote positive well-being and mental health in all staff and students
- Increase understanding and awareness of common wellbeing concerns in staff and students
- Alert staff to early warning signs of mental ill health
- Encourage and support students to be resilient and mentally healthy
- Make appropriate referrals for intervention from internal and external mental health support

- Provide support and advise students, parents and carers in securing further support from medical professionals
- Provide information to raise awareness of where staff can secure further support from medical and other professionals

4. Key Staff:

All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have a responsibility to both promote the positive mental health of students and help identify concerns. Staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

- Pastoral Staff – Heads of Year, Tutors, Assistant Headteachers for KS3 & KS4
- Julie Williamson – Assistant Head & SENDCo
- Amy Lloyd – Lead Wellbeing Practitioner & Senior Mental Health Lead
- Jasmine Munford – Wellbeing Practitioner
- Carolyn Howchin – Wellbeing Practitioner
- Catherine Stevenson - Designated Safeguarding Lead & Young Carers Co-ordinator
- Charlotte Merryfield – Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead & Family Support Practitioner
- Niki Woolway – Site Manager and Lead First Aider
- Danielle Lee – School Business Manager
- Barry Hockaday - Head of Futures
- Kelly Tucker – Attendance Improvement Manager

Any member of staff who is concerned about the mental health or wellbeing of a student should, in the first instance, follow the Additional Pastoral Care (APC) Protocol - See **Appendix A**

If there is a concern that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate referral to the DSL, Deputy DSL or the head teacher.

If the student presents a medical emergency then the normal procedures for medical emergencies should be followed, including alerting the first aid staff and contacting the emergency services if necessary.

5. Mental health problems in Young People:

These can be classified as:

- emotional disorders, for example phobias, anxiety states and low mood/ depression
- conduct disorders, for example stealing, defiance, fire setting, aggression, and anti-social behaviour
- hyperkinetic disorders, for example disturbance of activity and attention
- developmental disorders, for example delay in speech, social ability, or bladder control
- attachment disorders, for example children who are markedly distressed or socially impaired as a result of an abnormal pattern of attachment to parents or major care givers
- trauma disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, as a result of traumatic experiences, abuse and neglect
- other mental health problems including eating disorders, habit disorders, somatic disorders, psychotic disorders

6. Adverse Childhood Experiences:

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic experiences that can greatly impact children and young people throughout their lives. Research has shown that experiencing ACEs increases the risk of mental and physical health issues.

ACEs include:

- loss or separation – resulting from death, parental separation, divorce, hospitalisation, family conflict or breakdown, being taken into care or adopted, deployment of parents in armed forces families
- life changes – such as the birth of a sibling, moving house, changing school
- traumatic experiences – abuse, neglect, domestic violence, bullying, violence, accidents, injuries
- other traumatic incidents – natural disaster, attack

All staff can access free training on ACES - <https://www.acesonlinelearning.com/>

7. Identifying Needs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns with the Head of Year in the first instance, who will liaise with the Designated Lead for Mental Health if needed.

Possible warning signs of wellbeing concerns include:

- Physical signs of self-harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental
- Changes in eating / sleeping habits
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming fearful, socially withdrawn, low self esteem
- Changes in behaviour, activity and mood
- Lowering of academic achievement
- Possible abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Expressing feelings of failure, uselessness or loss of hope
- Changes in clothing – e.g. long sleeves in warm weather
- Secretive behaviour
- Skipping PE or getting changed secretly
- Lateness to or absence from school without explanation
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause

8. Wellbeing Support in School

At Severn Vale, we provide targeted support for individuals via Pastoral Staff, Wellbeing Practitioners, qualified counsellors and external agencies (**See Appendix B**)

We provide students and parents/carers with clear information about the opportunities available to them to discuss any wellbeing issues. Students regularly access their Head of Year or Wellbeing Staff on an ad-hoc basis as the need arises.

A referral for wellbeing support can be made by Pastoral Staff. Referrals are made using the Wellbeing Referral Form (**See Appendix C**). A Wellbeing Referral Process is followed (**See Appendix D**) whereby referrals are triaged weekly by the Lead Wellbeing Practitioner. Depending on the need of the student, they may be allocated Wellbeing Support Sessions with a Wellbeing Practitioner, Counselling or Group Work. Referrals

may also be signposted to other services in the community (e.g. to the Navigation Hub) if deemed appropriate.

Also included in our robust offer of early intervention is wellbeing support from our service level agreement with Yes Mentoring, who provide a varying range of support appropriate to the needs of a referred students.

9. Referral to external agencies

Some students may require referral to external services so that emotional, social and/or behavioural problems can be addressed at a more appropriate level. For example, some students may require specialist support for specific mental health issues.

Students may also be referred externally to enable them to access support more quickly, if they are likely to be waiting a long time for internal wellbeing support to start in school.

Navigation Hub:

As a school, we are able to refer in to the Children & Young People's Multi-Agency Navigation Hub in Gloucestershire ([Children and Young People's Multi-Agency Navigation Hub : Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning](#)). The Navigation Hub brings together Education, Health, Voluntary Sector and Early Help Services to collectively provide advice, assessment and/or intervention through a streamlined point of contact.

Navigation Hub Referrals can be made via the Navigation Hub webpage (via GHLL) - <https://www.ghll.org.uk/mental-health/mental-health-local-services/children-and-young-peoples-multi-agency-navigation-hub/>

School Nurse:

Where appropriate, staff can refer students to the **school nurse**. We have a school nurse who runs drop in sessions on a Monday lunchtime in The Sanctuary.

www.glos-care.nhs.uk/school-nursing-referral-form

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services NHS (CAMHS):

Currently, schools are not able to make direct referrals to CAMHS in Gloucestershire.

CAMHS referrals can be made via medical professionals (e.g. GP, School Nurse)

If pastoral staff / Wellbeing Staff feel a CAMHS referral is necessary, the school can submit a Navigation Hub referral.

10. Working with Parents

Where it is deemed appropriate to inform parents/carers of a wellbeing concern, we must be sensitive in our approach. Before disclosing to parents, the following questions should be considered (on a case-by-case basis):

- Can the meeting happen face to face? (*This is preferable*)
- Where should the meeting happen?
- Who should be present? (*Consider parents/carers, the student, other key members of staff*)
- What are the aims of the meeting?

It can be shocking and distressing for parents/carers to learn of their child's wellbeing concerns. We should be mindful and accepting of the parent/carers reaction and give them time to reflect.

We should always highlight further sources of information / support (e.g. Let's Talk Well Parent Helpline). We should provide clear means of contacting us with further questions and consider booking in a follow-up meeting or phone call. Meetings should end with agreed next steps.

To further support parents/carers, we will:

- Highlight sources of information and support about common wellbeing concerns on our school website.
- Make our Wellbeing Policy easily accessible to parents/carers.
- Share ideas about how parents/carers can support positive mental health in their children, for example through information evenings.

11. Teaching about Mental Health

The skills, knowledge and understanding needed by our students to keep themselves and others physically and mentally healthy and safe are included as part of our developmental Futures curriculum. Embedding mental health education in our curriculum at all stages is a good opportunity to promote wellbeing through the development of healthy coping strategies.

The specific content of lessons is regularly adapted to meet emerging needs in society; there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, resilience, understanding, language and confidence to seek help (internal and external services), as needed, for themselves or others.

Across the curriculum students will explore specific topics that speak into the stage of life they are currently navigating, many of which are built around the most current, evidence-based practice on wellbeing. Some topics overtly focus on mental health and wellbeing (such as The 5 Ways to Wellbeing in Yr7, Strategies for Life in Yr9 or Wellbeing in Yr10), whilst many others explore issues that indirectly impact our wellbeing, such as the Yr9 topic on Influences or the Our Values topics of Yr7&8. Alongside this, every Futures lesson begins with a school-wide 'wellbeing starter' task. Each week students are presented with either a strategy to help manage big feelings in the moment or a way of thinking to help us look after ourselves over the longer term.

As part of our efforts to help develop students' emotional well-being, all KS3 students will be asked to keep a gratitude journal for their homework in Futures. Every day they will be asked to write down 1 thing they are grateful for in their Futures reflection log. If we can encourage students to look for the positives in their day and in doing so build the neural pathways that make this thinking easier, they will be better equipped to approach their well-being with positivity and hope.

A feature of our curriculum is the focus on making learning portable and memorable. If students' learning about their wellbeing is confined to the classroom, they won't have it with them when they need it. This has led to the creation of our 'Lines for Life'. A series of six statements that form the thread through the curriculum and are repeated frequently, both in lessons and wider-school moments such as line-up, academic and pastoral interventions, and signage around the school. In doing this, students are given memorable phrases that reinforce the values and mindsets that will best equip them to journey through life, negotiate the highs and lows, and better support others as they do so.

12. Managing student disclosures

A student may disclose wellbeing concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff, so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately to a disclosure.

If a student chooses to disclose concerns about their own mental health or that of a friend to a member of staff, the member of staff's response should always be calm, supportive and non-judgemental.

The school's response to mental health & wellbeing disclosures is covered by our Additional Pastoral Care (APC) Policy.

The monitoring of APC systems for each year group is the responsibility of the Head of Year and attached Assistant Headteacher (Key Stage).

Mental Health Disclosure Protocol for Staff:

If a student presents with any of the above issues, please:

1. Listen carefully to what the child is saying
2. Remain calm and take what the child is saying seriously ensuring that they know you are doing so
3. Reassure the child that they are doing the right thing by telling someone
4. Where possible ensure that you continue your conversation where you cannot be overheard
5. Do NOT promise confidentiality – Explain that you need to pass it on to Pastoral Staff
6. Do ask if the student has told another adult or is accessing support about how they are feeling
7. Follow the APC Procedure (**Appendix A**) as soon as possible. If the child is in immediate danger/at risk from another person, contact the safeguarding team immediately.

Emergency APC Response Protocols:

If a student presents as having suicidal thoughts at that present time or has taken action to harm themselves (e.g. overdose of medication) please follow these protocols;

1. Do not leave Student alone. Ensure they are supervised at all times.
2. Call a First Aider immediately.
3. Parents to be notified and request made for parent to collect and take to A&E as per NHS guidance (Please be aware that any admission to A&E for suicidal thoughts/self-harm/mental health should automatically mean an assessment is done by the Mental Health Liaison Team within the hospital).

***Should parents not be available then 2 appropriately identified staff to escort student to A&E until parents can arrive.**

4. Pastoral staff involved should email summary of events leading to A&E referral to Head of Year, attached SLT members and Safeguarding Team for records.
5. Contact to be made by parent with school regards outcomes of Hospital assessments prior to students return.
6. On return to school Pastoral Team to liaise with Site Manager, Wellbeing Team and Safeguarding team to complete Risk Assessment if necessary.
7. A return to school meeting to be arranged by Head of Year or Assistant Headteacher (Key Stage) alongside Wellbeing Practitioner / Safeguarding Team if necessary).
8. Relevant staff to be made aware of students return and terms of Risk Assessment where appropriate.
9. Head of Year and Assistant Headteacher (Key Stage) to review Risk Assessment after agreed time frame with student and parent.

13. Gloucester Hospital Education Service

A consultant may refer a student to the Gloucester Hospital Education Service if they are unable to access school due to mental health reasons. If the referral is accepted, the student is dual registered and Severn Vale School works with GHES to support learning.

14. Graduated Pathway

Identified students may benefit from a My Plan/My Plan Plus as a result of well-being issues they may experience. As part of the graduated pathway, review meetings are held by a member of staff from the SEND or Pastoral team. Parents/carers will have a vital role to play in these conversations in supporting their child's well-being and other agencies will be involved dependent on the level of need.

15. Bereavement

Bereavement and loss affect everybody at some time and, as a close community, our school aims to provide the best support for our students during such times and the natural process of grieving. Bereavement affects everyone in different ways and for different periods of time. We want to help all members of the school community, when they could be feeling at their most vulnerable, in the way that best meets their needs.

We recognise that traumatic bereavement needs support structures to help manage the challenges this brings, including the possibility of the lasting impact of trauma and may need specialist agency support which can be accessed.

The pastoral and teaching response includes:

- Sensitive communication
- Additional Pastoral Care for individual students
- Onwards referrals to in-school wellbeing support and/or external agencies
- Sensitivity to subject matter in lessons and provision for alternative learning if needed
- Advice and support in accessing individual bereavement and grief support

As a school, we recognise the importance of long-term support for those who are bereaved, and will endeavour to provide opportunities for remembrance where appropriate.

16. Extra Curricular Activities:

We encourage all students to participate in extracurricular activities to enhance their wellbeing; physically, emotionally and socially. There are a wide variety of clubs and interests available.

Appendices

APPENDIX A – Additional Pastoral Care (APC) Process

**Additional Pastoral Care
Process
Guide for Staff**

-Students may present as 'sad', anxious or depressed.
-Students may present or disclose thoughts of self-harm, actual self-harm (i.e. cuts, burns, scratches).
-Students may present or disclose as having had suicidal thoughts or feeling suicidal.

Student discloses that they are at risk from another person (s)

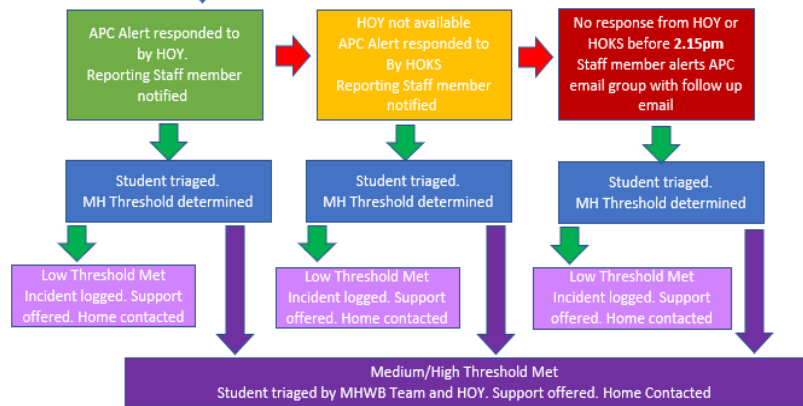
Contact the Safeguarding Team

Do NOT promise confidentiality – Explain that you need to pass it on to Pastoral and MHWB Staff.
Do ask if the student has told another adult or is accessing support about how they are feeling.
If a student who discloses is accessing support then the concern should still be passed on.

Contact Head of Year asap via Year group APC Email
This will go to HOY + Head of Key Stage + Mental Health Practitioners + Safeguarding Team

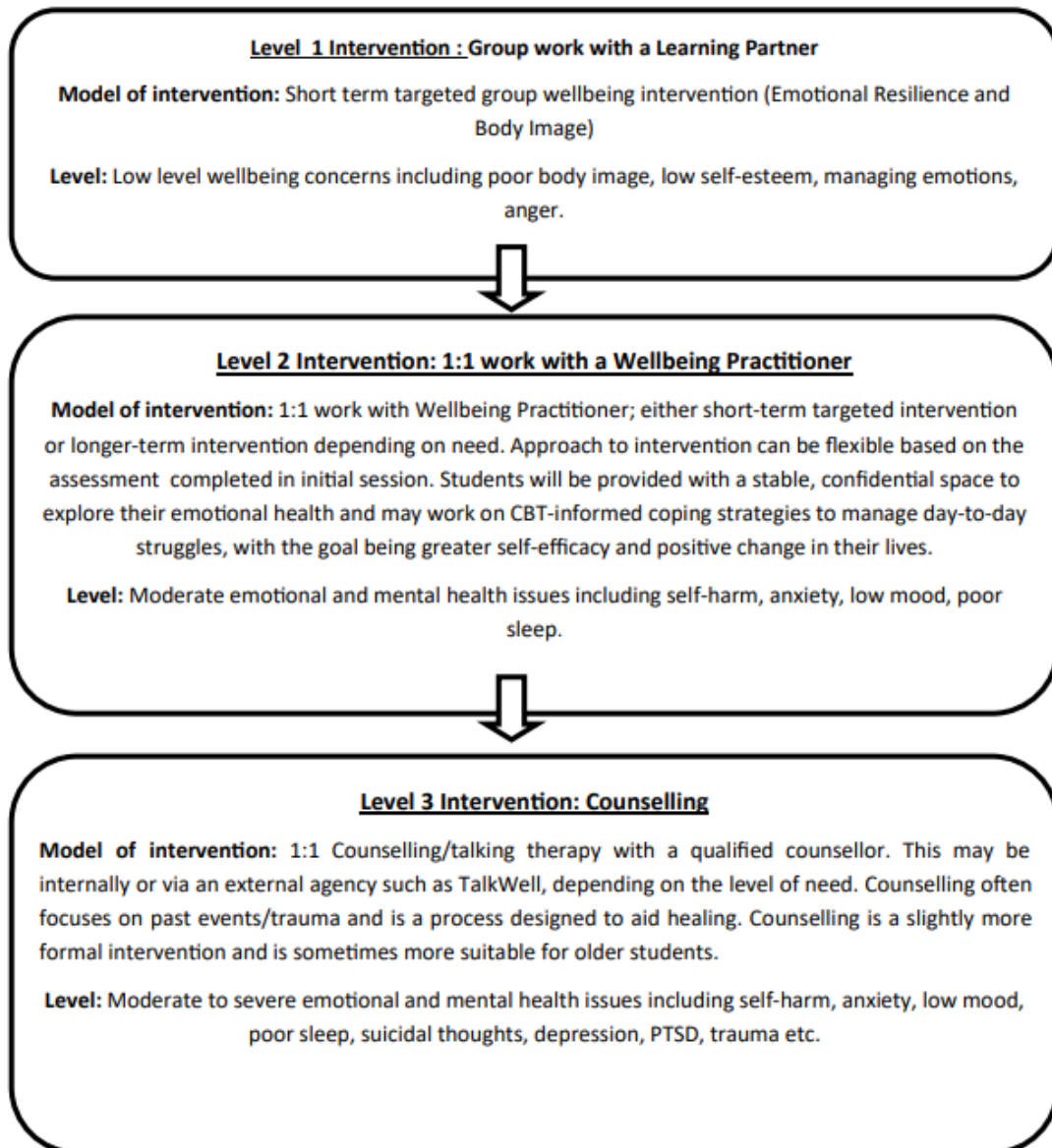
Year Group APC emails:

- Year 7** - APC7@severnvaleschool.com
- Year 8** - APC8@severnvaleschool.com
- Year 9** - APC9@severnvaleschool.com
- Year 10** - APC10@severnvaleschool.com
- Year 11** - APC11@severnvaleschool.com



APPENDIX B – Wellbeing Support available at SVS

Internal Wellbeing Provision at SVS



We also refer onwards to external agencies when appropriate. These include:

- Young Minds Matter (NHS)
- CAMHS (NHS)
- Young Gloucestershire
- TalkWell (Previously TIC+)
- Winston's Wish
- Sunflowers Suicide Support

APPENDIX C – WELLBEING REFERRAL FORM

1. Consent

Consent obtained from student for referral*	
Parent/guardian aware of referral	

2. Referrer details

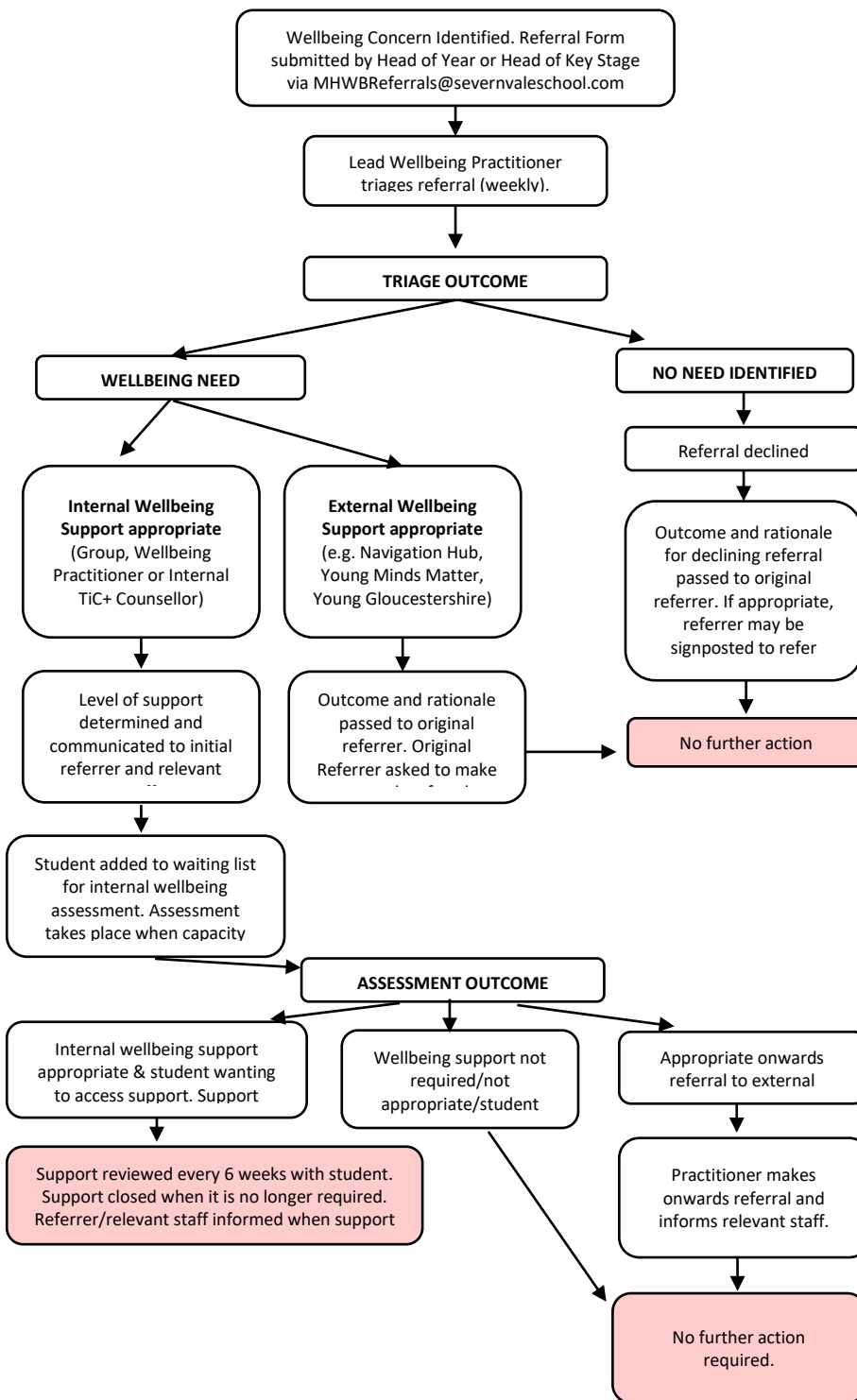
Name*	
Date of Referral	
Have any other referrals been submitted? (E.g. Navigation Hub)	

Student Name*		Tutor Group	
Is the student in care/special guardianship?*			
Any safeguarding concerns? <i>If YES, please outline details (e.g. current or historic level of Children's Social Care input, current safeguarding team input)</i>			

<p>Reason for Referral* <i>Please let us know why you are making this referral, including details of any previous or current mental health concerns. The more information you include, the better we can decide on how to support the student.</i></p>	
<p>How long has this been affecting the student?</p>	
<p>What impact is this having on the student (e.g. on their home life, education, friendships)?</p>	
<p>What are the student's strengths / interests?*</p>	
<p>What are the student's expectations of Mental Health & Wellbeing support?*</p>	
<p>Is the student currently receiving, or have they previously received, any other forms of support? If YES, please provide details. <i>E.g. TIC+, MH&WB Practitioner, Young Minds Matter, CAMHS, Eating Disorder Team, Mentoring, Counselling etc.</i></p>	

APPENDIX D – Wellbeing Referral Process

Wellbeing Referral Process



APPENDIX E – Useful Numbers & Contacts

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS):

CAMHS are currently accepting and providing care to children or young people presenting with priority and urgent needs. Referrals can be made by professionals.

<https://www.ghc.nhs.uk/our-teams-and-services/children-and-young-people/camhs/>

If there is an immediate danger to life, please dial 999 or go to your nearest Accident and Emergency Department.

If you live in Gloucestershire and someone you know needs help in a mental health crisis, call our crisis teams.

Tel: **0800 169 0398**.

Parents and young people can self-refer to appropriate services through **On Your Mind Gloucestershire:**

<https://www.onyourmindglos.nhs.uk/>

Let's Talk Well:

Let's Talk Well provide free counselling and support for 9-25 year olds in Gloucestershire. A parent support and advice line is also available online. Young people can self-refer.

<https://www.letstalkwell.org.uk/>

Tel: **01594 372777**

Text: **07520 634063**

PARENT SUPPORT LINE: **0800 6525675**

PARENT SUPPORT WEB CHAT: <https://www.letstalkwell.org.uk/parents-carers/support-and-advice-line>

Childline:

Online support for under 19s, resources and phone counselling. Calls are free and won't show up on a phone bill. Available 7 days a week from 9.00am to midnight.

www.childline.org.uk

Helpline for children: **0800 1111**

Young Minds Matter:

YMM Chat and Self-referral (Secondary school students only)

We have a friendly team of YMM professionals who are available to chat on text message during the school day (between 9am until 4:30pm) Monday- Friday (except bank holidays). The team will aim to respond either the same day or the next working day.

Young people can contact us by text if they want to share something that is worrying them, to get some advice or to self-refer and get an appointment.

Young Minds Matter Chat:

Text for Support: **07480 635723**

Chat Health:

A confidential text messaging service for 11-19 year olds to get in touch with a school nurse for advice and support on physical and mental health issues.

Text: 07507 333351

Available Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 4.30pm excluding bank holidays.

Young Minds:

The children and young people's mental health charity, Young Minds has lots of resources, advice and toolkits for young people and professionals, and a parents' helpline.

www.youngminds.org.uk

Tel: 0808 802 5544 Available Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 4.00pm

Young Gloucestershire:

Counselling by phone and via online chat for 16 to 25 year olds facing challenges with their mental and emotional wellbeing. Young people can be referred or can refer themselves. www.youngglos.org.uk/young-people/mental-health/linked-up-project

Parenting Support Line:

A free confidential advice line providing guidance and emotional support on any aspect of parenting and family life.

Tel: 0800 542 0202

Email: familyinfo@gloucestershire.gov.uk or message on Facebook.

Available Monday to Friday 9.00am to 8.00pm and Saturday 10.00am to 6.00pm

Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning:

Provides support around the PSHE curriculum to teachers and advice for parents. There are resources, as well links to partner organisations to support the emotional health and wellbeing of all children and young people.

www.ghll.org.uk/mental-health

Shout:

Shout is the UK's first 24/7 text service for all ages, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need immediate help. Text: 85258