

 Procedure

Supporting students' mental health and wellbeing

Audience

All state schools

Implementation date: 05/10/2018

Version: 3.0

Purpose

This procedure outlines:

- the responsibilities of school staff when supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all students in state schools; and
- the processes that will enable schools to support students' mental health and social and emotional wellbeing across a continuum of support from promotion to specialised intervention and case management.

Overview

The department's [Student learning and wellbeing framework](#) (the Framework) guides schools as they develop a whole school approach to learning and wellbeing. The Framework assists schools to provide inclusive and supportive environments that nurture students so they become lifelong learners and healthy, confident and resilient young people.

This procedure, which supports the Framework, focuses specifically on students' mental health and social and emotional wellbeing and the responsibilities and actions associated with:

- **Mental health and wellbeing promotion** – developing a whole school approach to promoting mental health and wellbeing, including targeted curriculum activities, to create a supportive school environment that develops and sustains all students' social and emotional capabilities and promotes positive mental health and wellbeing.
- **Early intervention** – implementing strategies that help to identify and intervene early with students who may be at increased risk of developing social and emotional issues or mental health difficulties.
- **Specialised intervention and case management** – intervening when students may be at significant risk of developing mental health difficulties, present with suspected mental health difficulties or are diagnosed with mental illness and require case management or specialist intervention via a clinical care provider.

For general information about mental health and how to recognise and support students' mental health and wellbeing please see [Fact sheet – Mental health](#).

Responsibilities

All school staff

- Promote and support students' social and emotional development, mental health and wellbeing through all school activities.
- Inform the nominated officer when there is a reasonable suspicion a student may have a social and emotional issue or mental health difficulty that prevents them from engaging at school.
- Participate in the development, implementation and review of the *Personalised learning plan* in the [Student plan](#) on OneSchool (DoE employees only). Implement reasonable educational adjustments, as required.
- Immediately follow processes in the [Student protection procedure](#) and [Student protection guidelines](#) (DoE employees only) when there is suspicion that a student may harm themselves or others as a result of their mental health difficulties or may be at risk of harm from others.
- Immediately discuss concerns with the principal and follow the school's suicide prevention and/or postvention plan when a student may be at risk of suicide or has expressed suicidal thoughts. Refer to [Suicidal thoughts and behaviour](#) (DoE employees only) for more information.

Nominated officer

- Be the key contact for staff to discuss students' social and emotional issues and mental health difficulties.
- Assist the principal with adjustments to the curriculum, learning environment and attendance procedures.
- When required as part of an intervention or student plan, facilitate referrals to appropriate internal or external professionals or agencies with valid student or parent/carer consent and using the required referral form (see [Fact sheet – Obtaining valid student or parent/carer consent](#)).

Case manager/guidance officer

- Lead and implement the specialist intervention or [Complex case management](#) (DoE employees only) processes, as required.
- Participate in the development, implementation and periodic review of the *Student plan*.
- When required as part of an intervention or student plan, facilitate referrals to appropriate internal or external professionals or agencies with valid student or parent/carer consent and using the required referral form (see [Fact sheet – Obtaining valid student or parent/carer consent](#)).

Principal

- Foster a whole school approach to supporting students' mental health and wellbeing by implementing actions suggested in the [Student learning and wellbeing framework reflection and implementation tool](#) (DoE employees only).
- Ensure each student's individual mental health and wellbeing needs are identified and supported and reasonable adjustments are made so the student can continue to engage with their learning.
- Ensure valid student or parent/carer consent is obtained when referrals are made to internal or external professionals or agencies (see [Fact sheet – Obtaining valid student or parent/carer consent](#)).

- Designate an appropriate staff member as the nominated officer.
- Negotiate an appropriate case manager from within school staff when a complex case is identified and a guidance officer is unavailable.
- Build the capability of all school staff to support the mental health and social and emotional wellbeing of all students in the school community.
- Build capacity for mental health promotion and intervention by linking with local agencies and health providers including key local specialist mental health services such as the Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) and headspace centre.
- Ensure the school has clear processes in place for referrals to both internal and external agencies/ professionals and processes are documented and available to school staff.
- Ensure processes are in place to develop, implement and review students' Student plan.
- Ensure the school's suicide prevention and postvention response plans are published and available.

Principal's supervisor

- Support the school based implementation of policies that promote and enhance all students' mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.

Regional Director

- Receive applications for supplementary funding when a student's educational adjustments, as documented in the Student plan, cannot be accommodated from within existing school resources.
- Ensure applications for supplementary funding are assessed and the school informed of the outcome.

Process

Promoting mental health and wellbeing

1. The principal works with the nominated officer and guidance officer to embed programs and activities into whole school practices that promote and support students' social and emotional development. Refer to the [Mental health resource hub](#) (DoE employees only) for a range of educational resources for school staff.
2. The principal supports the nominated officer to make reasonable adjustments to school procedures related to curriculum, learning environment, attendance and discipline in order to promote positive mental health.

Early intervention

1. A staff member identifies factors that may indicate a student is at increased risk of developing a social and emotional issue or mental health difficulty.
2. The staff member and the nominated officer discuss the identified risk factors.
3. The nominated officer consults with the guidance officer, senior guidance officer, regional mental health coach and/or other appropriate regional staff (refer to resources on the [Mental health difficulties](#) webpage – DoE employees only).
4. The nominated officer and staff member meet with the parents/carers, relevant staff and, where appropriate, the student to:

- discuss the student's social and emotional wellbeing and mental health;
 - negotiate reasonable educational adjustments; and
 - identify supports or strategies to escalate if necessary.
5. The nominated officer ensures consent is obtained from the student or parent/carer prior to sharing personal information or making referrals to other professionals or agencies (see [Fact sheet – Obtaining valid student or parent/carer consent](#)).
 6. The nominated officer, staff member and other relevant staff develop, implement and periodically review the *Personalised learning plan* in the *Student plan*, including implementing reasonable adjustments.
 7. The nominated officer ensures the principal is informed of any wellbeing issues or mental health difficulties that may affect a student's attendance or participation.
 8. Relevant staff continue to monitor and support the student's mental health and wellbeing.
 9. The nominated officer ensures the Student plan is updated to reflect current supports and reasonable adjustments and relevant forms, plans and reports are uploaded to OneSchool with appropriate access restrictions.
 10. The nominated officer advises the principal when a student has more complex and significant support needs requiring specialist intervention or [Complex case management \(DoE employees only\)](#).

To enact specialised intervention and case management

1. The nominated officer informs the principal that a student has complex and significant support needs.
2. The principal selects an appropriate case manager.
3. The case manager reviews available information in relation to the student's social and emotional wellbeing and mental health, as well as current supports and educational adjustments recorded in the *Student plan*.
4. The case manager meets with the parents/carers, relevant staff and, where appropriate, the student to discuss the student's social and emotional needs and mental health difficulties and to identify if specialist intervention or case management is required.
5. When the student requires complex case management, the case manager will commence a [Complex case management](#) (DoE employees only) process including developing and implementing a complex case management plan.
6. When the student requires specialist intervention, the case manager will:
 - obtain valid consent from the student or parent/carer to share personal information using the [SSMH1 Form – Consent form](#) (see [Fact sheet – Obtaining valid student or parent/carer consent](#));
 - complete the [SSMH2 Form – Request for information from clinical care provider](#) and seek information and advice from the student's existing clinical care provider;
 - use the [SSMH3 Form – Student referral to clinical care provider](#) to refer the student to a clinical care provider when the student does not have a current clinical care provider;
 - include any clinical care provider/s in the *Student plan*;
 - develop, implement and periodically review the *Personalised learning plan* in the *Student plan* (refer to the [Mental health difficulties](#) webpage – DoE employees only);

- consult, where relevant, with recognised Indigenous agencies or transcultural mental health providers; and
- upload all forms, plans and reports onto OneSchool and apply the appropriate level of restrictions.

When a student requires additional resources, the case manager can apply to the Regional Director for further funding using the [SSMH4 Form – Application for supplementary funding to support students with mental health difficulties](#).

When a student is admitted to a child and adolescent inpatient or day facility, on discharge the case manager may develop a supported re-entry to school program, including additional educational support.

Definitions

Case management	Case management is a collaborative planning process that is essential to the delivery of quality support to students with mental health difficulties.
Case manager	The case manager, who is an appropriately qualified member of staff nominated by the principal, will ensure students with complex social and emotional issues or mental health difficulties can continue to access curriculum activities, achieve learning outcomes and participate in school life. The case manager will coordinate the implementation of actions to support students, including facilitating access to internal and external support services. In some cases the case manager and nominated officer may be the same member of staff.
Clinical care provider	A clinical care provider may be (but is not limited to): a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, general practitioner, case manager from a public mental health service, mental health professional registered under the Medicare Access Scheme, nurse working in general practice and psychiatry, or an allied health professional (working in a division of general practice, Queensland Health or an Aboriginal community controlled health service). For the purposes of this procedure, a clinical care provider may also be an external support agency.
Complex case management	The department's Complex case management (DoE employees only) process outlines the actions to be taken by school staff to assist students with complex and significant support needs.
Confidentiality	Communication with staff, parents/carers, clinical care providers or external agencies must comply with confidentiality requirements in relation to the sharing of students' personal information. Section 426 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) outlines the requirements in relation to the recording, use and disclosure of personal information about past, present and prospective state school students.
Educational adjustments	Educational adjustments are modifications made to curriculum activities, attendance and participation requirements to allow students to achieve optimum educational outcomes and ensure students with mental health difficulties have equal access to participation in education. Educational adjustments for students with mental health difficulties are documented in the <i>Personalised learning plan</i> in the <i>Student plan</i> on OneSchool.

Mental health	Refer to information available on the Mental health resource hub on Understanding mental health (DoE employees only) and Fact sheet – Mental health .
Mental health difficulties	<p>Students with mental health difficulties, including diagnosed mental illness, generally demonstrate behavioural and/or emotional responses of a frequency, duration and intensity that is different from appropriate age, cultural or ethnic norms and which adversely affect the student's educational performance and participation in school life.</p> <p>Students generally present with behavioural and/or emotional responses that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more than a temporary, expected response to stressful events in the environment; • frequent or severe enough to impact on the classroom learning environment or the student's personal or social adjustment; and • consistently exhibited and unresponsive to support provided through regular classroom strategies or educational interventions alone.
Nominated officer	A nominated officer is a member of staff, such as a guidance officer, year level coordinator or deputy principal, who is nominated by the principal to be the contact person in the school for staff to discuss concerns about a student's mental health and wellbeing. This officer will also oversee the day-to-day responses to students' non-complex mental health issues. The nominated officer should be available on a daily basis throughout the week.
Personal information	Section 426(4) of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 defines personal information, in the context of students' confidentiality requirements, as information or opinion, whether true or not, about an individual whose identity is apparent, or can reasonably be ascertained, from the information or opinion. Students' personal information may be included in written records, photographs, images or information that is not in writing but which is in the possession or control of the department.
Personalised learning plan	The <i>Personalised learning plan</i> , in the Student plan on OneSchool (DoE employees only), captures information about the student's personalised learning needs, including key characteristics, impacts and adjustments, strategies and skill development. Further information can be found on the Learning Place (DoE employees only).
Regional Mental Health Coaches	Regional Mental Health Coaches (RMHCs) coordinate the development of local communication networks that support the dissemination of relevant materials and resources and the provision of professional development for teachers, school leaders, guidance officers and other staff. RMHCs can be a resource for staff seeking guidance on mental health support services available for students.
Student plan	The Student plan (DoE employees only) documents the school's actions and strategies to support a student at school. Depending on the student's individual needs and the plan's intent, a student plan may include the following: Personalised learning plan, Individual curriculum plan, Health management plan; and/or Support provisions.

Legislation

- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#)

Delegations/Authorisations

- Nil

Related policies

- [Student learning and wellbeing framework](#)
- [Inclusive education](#)

Related procedures

- [Student protection](#)
- [Information privacy and right to information](#)

Guidelines

- Nil

Supporting information/websites

Forms/templates

- [SSMH1 Form – Consent form](#)
- [SSMH2 Form – Request for information from clinical care provider](#)
- [SSMH3 Form – Student referral to clinical care provider](#)
- [SSMH4 Form – Application for supplementary funding to support students with mental health difficulties](#)

Related information

- [Fact sheet – Mental health](#)
- [Fact sheet – Obtaining valid student or parent/carer consent](#)
- [Managing access to guidance files](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Mental health resource hub](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Complex case management](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Suicidal thoughts and behaviour](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Regional Mental Health Coach contact details](#) (DoE employees only)

Contact

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Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

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