

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

## Purpose

This policy provides a framework for promoting positive mental health at Marjon, and how we respond to mental health difficulties. It fits within an umbrella of mental, physical, nutritional, social and spiritual health and wellbeing. It's for everyone.

## Principles

- Plymouth Marjon University is centred on student success – in their degree, in their wider university experience and in their life after graduation. We recognise that supporting our community to manage mental health can support student success.
- We recognise that mental health and wellbeing is a continuum and needs to be considered for everyone. Mental ill health can be long-lasting or short-term. It can be a declared and managed disability, or can be undiagnosed or undeclared. It can impact on people at any life stage, and people manage mental ill health in different ways. It is complex and individual. Not all people wish to disclose to others. Some people are aware of periods of mental ill health but consider it something they can manage without wishing to disclose information.
- We will use non-discriminatory language., but we recognise that people may have their own ways to describe their mental health and wellbeing:
  - Mental Health: A level of emotional wellbeing that allows an individual to function in society, or an absence of significant mental health problems.
  - Mental difficulty, or mental ill health: A range of experiences that can seriously limit an individual's ability to cope with day-to-day living.

- We will promote a culture that:
  - is informed and open about mental ill health and actively encourages positive discussion
  - finds effective ways to embed positive mental health practices and wellbeing into university life
  - takes a whole university approach to good mental health, developing inclusive, supportive and compassionate learning communities across staff and students
  - takes a holistic leadership approach, involving external partners and working with the community to support student mental health
  - treats students and staff with mental ill health with humanity, consistency, clarity, confidentiality and fairness. For example, we will consider these attributes when we consider ways to support students in their studies, or staff in their jobs, and when mental ill health is disclosed for the first time.
  - considers our values in our approach to mental health, and embeds a consideration of mental wellbeing across all of our policies and practices.
- We will consider how the whole community – both staff and students - needs to feel ready and capable to step in and support others. This covers a variety of desired behaviours from simple steps such as allowing time to ask others if they are OK; to ensuring everyone knows how to signpost others to extra support; and ensuring we support people in our community to provide that help.
- We recognise that finding ways to live with mental ill health can mean very successful outcomes for students and staff.
- We will assume students and staff are fit to study or work, unless we are told otherwise or unless evidence demonstrates otherwise. If we have concerns, we will always be prepared start a conversation.
- Whilst recognising some people may not require support, we will promote a community that responds with purpose when action is required and always considers safety.
- We recognise that effective mental health support often involves professionals external to the community and we will work with them to share best practice and

improve our network of support.

- We will maintain knowledge of sector best practice and guidance.
- We will monitor and record incidents and share trends in mental-health related events, without disclosing personal information, to ensure we learn from activities and are ready to respond.
- We recognise that effective systems and processes are fundamental to supporting people with mental ill health, and we will endeavour to provide clear direction at all times on how we can or cannot support staff and students.

**The University has legal obligations and must:**

- Recognise that where mental ill health is long term it is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010
- eliminate discrimination and make reasonable adjustments to support staff and students' mental health.
- Adhere to the GDPR and Data Protection Act.
- Follow our legal duty to keep individuals safe, which may mean there will be rare occasions when we have to exercise our 'duty of care without consent.
- Use Equality Impact assessments to assess relevant changes to policies.

**Students and staff must:**

- Consider their needs and the implications of not keeping the university informed of mental health issues which may affect their study or their work.
- Recognise that if mental ill health is not disclosed, the University cannot provide appropriate individual support arrangements.
- Be aware that on occasion, the University will seek an individual's permission to share information with relevant people, in order to get appropriate support.
- Recognise their own personal limits in supporting friends, peers or colleagues with mental ill health and ask for help and advice when needed, anonymously if

appropriate.

- Recognise the limitations of the University in being an educational institution or place of work, and not a medical or therapeutic institution.
- Staff must exercise duty of care with students, recognising the boundaries of their role and responsibilities, and asking for help and advice to ensure that both they and students are properly supported.
- Promote a positive mental health environment.

## Document Details:

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## Appendix 1 – Relevant policies

- Fitness to Study protocol found in Section 9 of the Student Regulations Framework
- Data protection policy and data protection statement for students.

## Appendix 2 – relevant procedures

1. Student Support – How we work with students – copied below
2. Guidance for members of staff concerned about a student - copied below
3. Mental and emotional wellbeing guidelines for students – (A5 leaflet available at Student Support and at Information Hub, and available in Student Handbook online)

## 1. How we work with students:

Also available on staff intranet and student handbook

## How we work with students

We will provide you with information, advice, guidance and support services to help you succeed in your studies.

We will work with you to help you learn effective strategies and life skills and make informed choices. We want you to develop your independence and self-awareness and play an active part in managing your own issues and be proactive in seeking support as soon as you need it.

In order to support and work with you effectively, we need you to be honest about your needs and sometimes give consent for us to share your information with relevant people.

We assume you are an adult who can make decisions for yourself unless we are told otherwise. We assume that you are fit to study - this means that you can take part in study and fully engage, appropriately, with the broader aspects of student life (with reasonable adjustments where appropriate), without putting yourself or others at risk. If we are concerned that this is not the case, we and other university staff will do our best to support and guide you in line with our Fitness to Continue to Study procedure.



We will take care of any personal data you trust us with and follow the Data Protection Act (2018). We may share information about you with relevant people within Student Support and, with your consent, other relevant University staff or external support. This is to keep you safe and well and to help ensure you have the most appropriate support. We are open and honest about what information we share and who we share it with. Wherever possible, we will respect your wishes about the use, storage and sharing of information about you. However, we may not ask for consent in some situations, these include circumstances where:

- we have a legal duty to share information because you or others are at risk
- getting consent would cause an unjustifiable delay in acting (e.g. investigating an allegation or risk of significant harm).

Please see our Statement of Service and Confidentiality statements for further information.

## 2. Concerned about a student's behaviour? Flowchart

Also available on staff intranet student support

**Meet the student and calmly talk to them about your concerns**

Will Accept Help	EMERGENCY	Refuses Help
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct the student to appropriate sources of help</li> <li>• Refer student to Student Welfare Concern Group if appropriate</li> <li>• Note your concerns</li> </ul>	<p><b>Immediate risk of harm to self or others.</b> (‘Duty of care’ overrides confidentiality)</p> <p>Call Student Support for one of the Student Welfare Concern Group <b>immediately: 2091</b> Call Security: 2222</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide the student with relevant sources of help</li> <li>• Explain limitations to confidentiality/ ‘duty of care’.</li> <li>• Note your concerns on their file</li> </ul>

### EMERGENCY

Immediate risk of harm to self or others

### URGENT

Suicide threats / persistent suicidal thoughts  
Serious / persistent self-harm

### ATTENTION NEEDED

Loud / aggressive / withdrawn / unpredictable behaviour  
Poor self-care, significant weight changes  
Signs of self-harm  
Substance / alcohol misuse