

Student Mental Health Policy and Procedures 2022

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Student Mental Health Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 The University of Buckingham (the University) is a diverse and inclusive community, committed to providing a welcoming, safe and supportive environment for its students and staff.

1.2 Attending university for many students represents a major transitional point in their lives. For most students, university is an enjoyable and life-changing experience. For a small number, including those who have a pre-existing mental health condition, the transition may be a difficult one to deal with. Living away from home or one's country with reduced family support - perhaps for the first time, coupled with the pressures arising from studying intensely as part of a degree can pose an additional strain on students, all factors acknowledged to contribute to a potential mental health risk.

1.3 Recognising legal obligations arising from the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, the Equality Act 2010 and the Mental Health Act 2007, the University is committed to supporting students experiencing mental health difficulties, safeguarding those at risk and taking positive steps to eliminate discrimination in its policies, practices and procedures.

1.4 Through the provision of the policy, the University seeks to promote a culture where individuals are noticed and supported, with disclosures of mental health conditions and or difficulties, responded to swiftly, sensitively and appropriately.

2. Aim

2.1 The aim of this policy is to highlight the areas that form the basis of the University's approach to supporting students reporting or experiencing staff and student responsibilities with respect to student mental health and wellbeing;

- University policies relating to student mental health;
- Mechanisms and procedures in place to care for and support students declaring or experiencing a mental health concern;
- Information handling, confidentiality and disclosure of mental health concerns or issues.

2.2 Academic issues and academic progression related to mental ill health are dealt with through local Fitness to Study processes.

2.3 For students enrolled on clinical programmes or courses leading to a clinical qualification, support will be provided through the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Student Support team and the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity Counsellors initially, with referral to relevant NHS or Occupational Health services as needed.

2.4 For students enrolled on education programmes, support is primarily provided through the educational establishments in which they work, with students subject to the staff welfare policies within their places of employment or School Centred Initial Teaching Training (SCITT) provider.

2.5 The policy also seeks to offer a practical framework which:

- provides a consistent and supportive approach for both current and prospective students experiencing or reporting a mental health difficulty, to assist them in achieving their fullest potential as part of their learning journey;
- provides procedural guidance to University staff to enable timely identification, intervention and support for dealing with issues relating to student mental health;

- facilitate the creation of a culture where individuals feel safe in disclosing mental health conditions and/or difficulties.

3. Terminology

3.1 For the purpose of this policy, working definitions of mental health and mental difficulty or distress as provided by Mind (a UK organisation promoting better mental health) have been used.

3.2 The following terminology has been adopted:

- “**Mental health**” is used to refer to a level of emotional wellbeing that allows an individual to function in society or an absence of a significant mental health concern, and extends beyond conditions which are medically diagnosed illnesses and any conditions which might also be legally defined as disabilities.
- “**Mental health condition**” is used to describe a clinically diagnosable mental health condition.
- “**Mental ill health**” is used to describe mental distress that may or may not be related to a diagnosable mental health condition.
- “**Mental difficulty or mental distress**” is used to refer to a range of experiences that can seriously limit an individual's ability to cope with day-to-day living.
- “**Wellbeing**” is used to refer to a person’s thoughts and feelings about their own quality of life.
- “**Disability**” as used to describe a physical or mental impairment which has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. (*Adapted from the Equality Act, 2010*).
- “**Vulnerable adult**” is used to refer to persons aged 18 or over: who are or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and/or persons who are or may be unable to take care of/ or unable to protect themselves against significant harm, abuse, exploitation or from radicalisation.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 As part of the University’s approach to creating a culture which contributes to the prevention and de-stigmatisation of mental health difficulties, individuals mentioned within this policy are expected to be aware of the policy and understand their responsibilities when supporting a student experiencing a mental health difficulty or concern.

4.2 All **students** are encouraged to declare a mental, physical health condition, difficulty or disability which may impact on their studies and or ability to fully partake in student life, as part of the Registration process. This facilitates specific interventions being put in place as soon as possible on joining the University

For students enrolling on clinical programmes, details of any disability will be requested. The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Occupational Health Service will advise in accordance with relevant regulatory body guidelines.

4.3 Whilst the University offers basic mental health awareness training to assist student facing staff in offering support to others experiencing a mental health difficulty, staff are not expected to assume responsibilities outside the parameters of their capabilities or professional role. Instead, University staff with designated roles connected to mental health are available to provide guidance and support in relation to this policy as noted below:

- The **Head of Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity** is the University Mental Health Lead, with responsibility for the policy and oversight of student mental health concerns across the institution.

University staff and students are encouraged to discuss any concerns under this policy with the Head of Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity who also has responsibility for the annual review of the policy, ensuring it is fit for purpose.

- **Lead Faculty Mentor** oversees the Faculty Mentor provision across the faculties of Business, Humanities and Social Sciences, Computing, Law and Psychology and Medicine and Health Sciences.
- **Faculty Mentors** reside within Faculties to support students with student centred pastoral care, practical advice and guidance for all students experiencing barriers to study.
- Within the **Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS)**, the **FMHS Student Support team** works with students on clinical programmes, providing support with pastoral or health concerns which may be affecting their ability to study. In some cases, this may require signposting to Occupational Health Services, to facilitate students in meeting the relevant regulatory body requirements.
- University **Mental Health First Aiders** reside within Faculties and departments throughout the University to support individuals developing or experiencing a worsening of a mental health concern or in a mental health crisis.
- The **University Inclusivity Adviser** is responsible for supporting students who disclose a mental health difficulty considered to be a disability, ensuring the University fulfils its legal obligations to signpost students to available specialist support.
- The **University Wellbeing and Drug Adviser** is responsible for supporting students dealing with a mental health concern related to drug, alcohol or substance misuse.
- University **Campus Security staff** act as the designated out of hours contact where a mental health concern is experienced with a student (see Appendix 2).

4.4 The University retains responsibility for the health, safety and wellbeing of enrolled students currently on placement or undertaking an apprenticeship with an employer, Trust education provider or external organisation.

4.5 Employers, Trust education providers and external organisations nonetheless have a duty of care to students on placement or undertaking an apprenticeship and to respond appropriately to incidents relating to a mental health difficulty or concern that takes place on their premises.

Whilst such education providers or organisations may have their own processes, it is the expectation that they should also be made aware of University processes (see Appendix 3).

4.6 The University will take all appropriate steps during the recruitment and admissions process to ensure students reporting a mental health difficulty are made aware of the policy, and the mechanisms in place to support them throughout their student journey.

4.7 Methods of contact in the event of any concerns or questions in relation to this policy can be found in Appendix 2.

4.8 Related policies which should be referred to in conjunction with this policy can be found in Appendix 1.

5. University's Safeguarding and Prevent Policies

5.1 In line with the University's safeguarding responsibilities, the University has a duty to protect vulnerable adults either employed or studying at the University from harm. This extends to protecting them from the risk of abuse or involvement in groups which set out to radicalise certain individuals.

5.2 'Radicalisation' refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. Guidance on the University's approach to addressing suspicions or allegations of abuse including concerns about a student being drawn into extremist or terrorist behaviour or at risk of harm, can be found within the University Safeguarding, Suicide Prevention and Response and Prevent policies.

5.3 Whilst the University expects staff and students to be willing to offer support to others where possible, the University advises students or staff concerned about a fellow student's mental wellbeing or behaviour to be aware of their personal limitations, encouraging the student to seek specialist support at the earliest opportunity. If this is difficult, advice should be sought in confidence from the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team or students on clinical programmes, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Student Support team.

6. Procedures

6.1 For individuals experiencing a mental health difficulty, early awareness is often key to signposting to appropriate support and putting reasonable adjustments in place. The University has a number of procedures, both formal and informal that are used in relation to students experiencing a mental health difficulty. Full details of such procedures can be found in Appendices 3, 5, 6 and 7.

6.2 For the majority of staff, no additional expertise will be required to support an individual in crisis. Instead, an awareness of some of the indicators of mental health difficulties, being able to respond sensitively to those who might be affected and ensuring they are signposted to appropriate support within the University is sufficient.

6.3 The University does not expect staff to exceed the boundaries of their knowledge and understanding when supporting students experiencing or reporting a mental health difficulty or crisis, advising staff to contact the Head of Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity or the University Lead Mentor for further guidance and support where needed.

7. Information handling, retention and storage of records

7.1 The Head of Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity is responsible for ensuring that appropriate records are reviewed, maintained and stored in compliance with data retention periods and the University Data Protection policy.

7.2 Personal data will only be kept for the length of time necessary to perform the processing for which it was collected. Guidelines outlining the University's approach to recording, retaining and storing mental health difficulties or concerns can be obtained by contacting the Head of Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity. Further information on the University data retention periods can be found via within the University Data Protection policy (see Appendix 1).

8. Related Policies and Procedures

8.1 Whilst this policy and guidance provided collectively underpins the University's provision of a safe and secure environment and supports the fulfilment of the University's statutory duties, the University is working towards further integrating the range of policies that contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of students.

8.2 The policy is intended to be part of an overarching framework which seeks to ensure that the University undertakes its statutory responsibilities in relation to students and staff, and responds to mental health related concerns appropriately.

Appendix 1

Related Policies and Procedures relating to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Safeguarding Policy
- Suicide Prevention and Response Policy
- Prevent Policy
- Drugs, Alcohol and Other Substances Policy
- Fitness to Study procedure
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- University Dignity at Work and Study policy and procedure

Related Policies and Procedures

Procedures

- [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Student Contract](#), section 12
- [Student Declaration](#), section 2.1b
- [Fitness to Practise Policy](#)
- [University Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Procedures](#)
- [MB ChB Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#)
- [General Regulations for Students of the University](#), section 7
- [General Regulations for First Degrees](#), section 11
- [Non-Academic-Misconduct-Policy-and-Disciplinary-Procedures](#)
- [Student Visa Compliance Policy](#)
- Student Mental Health Policy and Procedures, Appendices 2 to 9

Information Handling, Recording a mental health difficulty or concern, Retention and storage of records and Data Protection

- [University Data Protection Policy](#)
- [University Data Retention guidelines](#)
- [Student Declaration form](#), section 2.1b
- Student Mental Health Policy and Procedures, Appendix 9

Suspension of studies due to disruptive behaviour

- [Non Academic Misconduct Policy and Disciplinary Procedures](#)
- [Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
- [University Good Neighbour Guide](#)
- [Social Media Policy](#)
- [Use of University Computers and Data Networks](#)

Student-focused mental health and wellbeing resources and support

- **Report and Support** - <https://reportandsupport.buckingham.ac.uk/>
- [Mental Health resources and support for students in Crewe](#)
- [Samaritans](#), a national charity providing emotional support to individuals in emotional distress, struggling to cope or at risk of suicide
- [Papyrus](#), the national charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide
- [Student Minds](#), a UK student mental health charity, providing information for the higher education community

- [NHS, Counselling for student mental health](#)

Resources for healthcare students and NHS workers

- [University of Buckingham Medical School \(UBMS\), Student Support](#)

General Medical Council resources and information for medical students

- [Supporting Students with Mental Health conditions](#)
- [Supporting our NHS people: Managing your own mental health and wellbeing](#)

Appendix 2

Mental Health Support - Staff Contacts and Responsibilities

2.1 Whilst the University expects all staff to be willing to offer support to others who may be experiencing a mental health difficulty, staff are not expected to assume responsibilities outside the parameters of their capabilities or professional role.

- The **University Mental Health Lead** is the Head of Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity and is responsible for the policy and oversight of student mental health concerns across the institution.

For guidance in relation to this policy or a student mental health concern or issue, please contact dee.bunker@buckingham.ac.uk

2.2 The University also has a team of designated staff from a variety of backgrounds with specific mental health responsibilities. These staff undergo specific training and are available to provide support and guidance in relation to a mental health concern.

- **Faculty Mentors** can be found within Faculty Administrative Hubs (with the exception of Education) and provide support students with pastoral care, practical advice and guidance for students experiencing barriers to study.

Contacts:

Lead Faculty Mentor - karen.webb@buckingham.ac.uk

Faculty Mentor, Business, Humanities & Social Sciences - ellie.wilkins@buckingham.ac.uk

Faculty Mentor, Computing, Law and Psychology - cara.stubbings@buckingham.ac.uk

Faculty Mentor, Medicine and Health Sciences (Buckingham) - emma.metcalfe@buckingham.ac.uk

Students enrolled on clinical programmes within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) seeking advice or support in relation to a pastoral or health issue affecting their ability to study can also obtain guidance from the **FMHS Student Support** team. Bookings for a one-to-one meeting with a member of the FMHS Student Support team can be made via the [FMHS Student Support team booking page](#).

- The University provides a team of designated [Mental Health First Aiders \(MHFAs\)](#) for staff and students to talk to in the event of a mental health concern or issue.
- The **University Inclusivity Adviser** supports students who disclose a mental health difficulty considered to be a disability, ensuring the University fulfils its legal obligations to signpost students to available specialist support.
Contact: Sarah.mcdonald@buckingham.ac.uk
- The **University Wellbeing and Drug Adviser** supports students who disclose or experience a mental health concern related to drug, alcohol or substance misuse.
Contact: Sharon.deaker@buckingham.ac.uk
- University **Campus Security staff** are the designated out of hours contact where a mental health concern is experienced with a student.
Contact: Campus Security at Buckingham 07860 834 802
Contact: Campus Security at Crewe 01270 323 545, ext 202 between 7am to 7pm. Outside of these hours call 01270 323 545 ext. 203 or 204. Alternatively contact Booth Hall Reception on 01270 353 232

2.3 As well as reaching out to designated University staff, students are also able to obtain free confidential advice and support through the **Student Assistance Programme** on 0800 282 3766.

2.4 As an alternative to above options, incidents and concerns of a non-urgent nature can also be reported through **Report and Support** via <https://reportandsupport.buckingham.ac.uk/>

Appendix 3

Identifying and dealing with a potential mental health crisis

3.1 Potential signs which indicate a student may be experiencing a mental health crisis might include, but is not restricted to the following:

- out-of-character behaviour;
- expression of thoughts of harm;
- incoherent thinking or speech;
- changes in eating, sleeping or self-care habits;
- bouts of anger or aggression;
- self-isolation;
- Increased nervousness or anxiety.

3.2 Where an individual is suspected to be in immediate danger of harming others, themselves or attempting suicide, an ambulance should be requested by dialling 999.

3.3 Where the individual of concern is on university campus, the Campus Security team should also be informed to ensure the ambulance is directed to the specific location on arrival.

3.4 In the event that it is unclear whether the concern is a genuine emergency, dialling 111 (NHS) or 101 (Police) for advice will ensure the concern is transferred directly to 999 if necessary.

Further information on what to do in the event of a mental health concern or emergency can be found in Appendix 4 of the Student Mental Health policy.

3.5 It is important to remember crisis situations are very rare and people experiencing mental health difficulties are rarely violent towards others. For the majority of staff, no additional expertise will be required to support an individual in crisis. Instead, an awareness of some of the indicators of mental health difficulties, being able to respond sensitively to those who might be affected and ensuring they are signposted to appropriate support within the University is sufficient.

3.6 The University recognises its duty of care to both the individual experiencing the crisis or difficulty as well as the individual who is made aware of the crisis or difficulty.

3.7 The University does not expect staff to exceed the boundaries of their knowledge and understanding when supporting students experiencing or reporting a mental health difficulty or crisis.

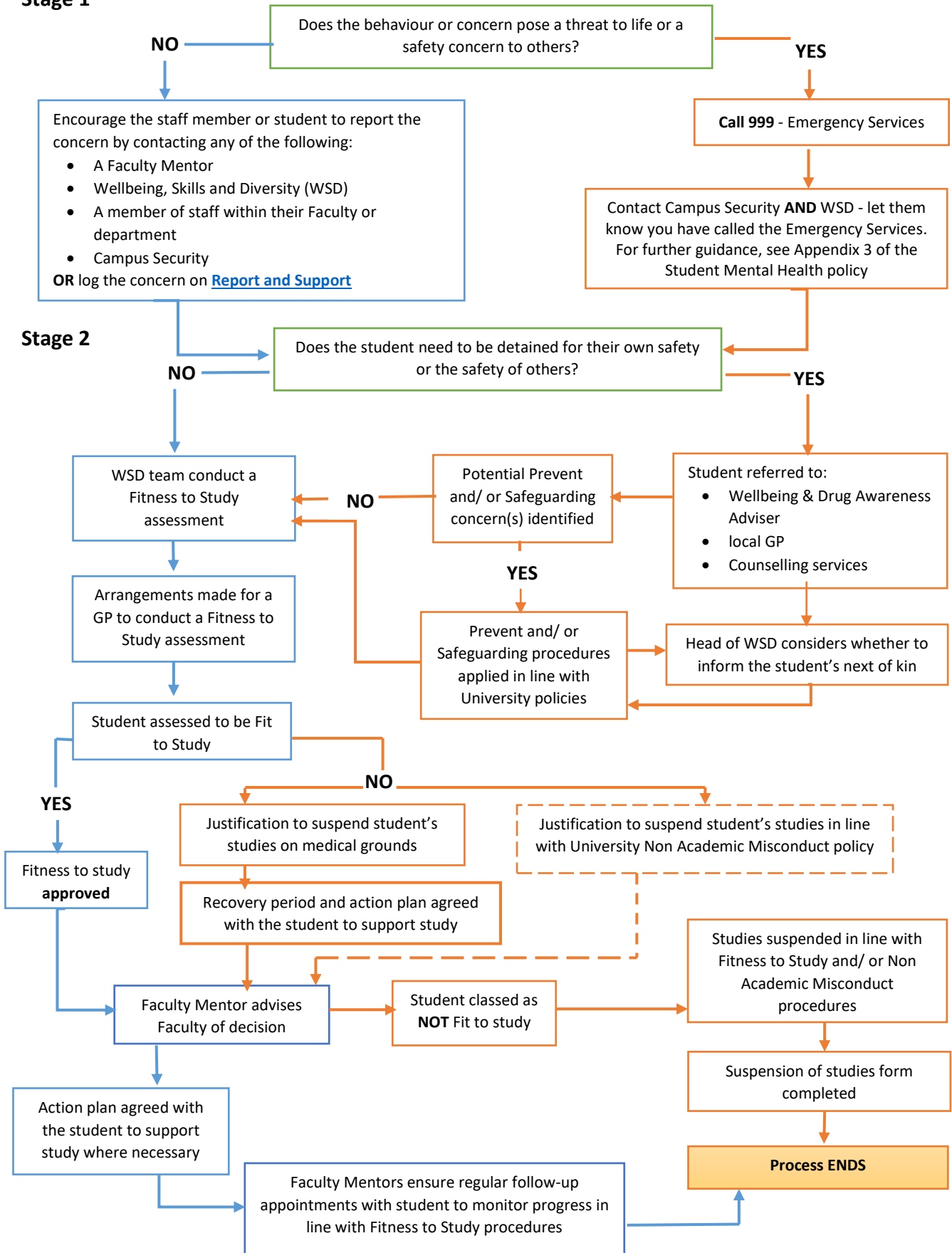
3.8 Trying to understand feelings and thoughts connected to a mental health crisis or difficulty can be both difficult and daunting. For staff requiring further support and guidance, please contact the Head of Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity or the University Lead Mentor.

3.9 Advice and support is also available to staff through the Employee Assistance Programme. For students, advice and support is also available through the Student Assistance Programme.

Appendix 4

What to do in the event of a mental health concern

Stage 1



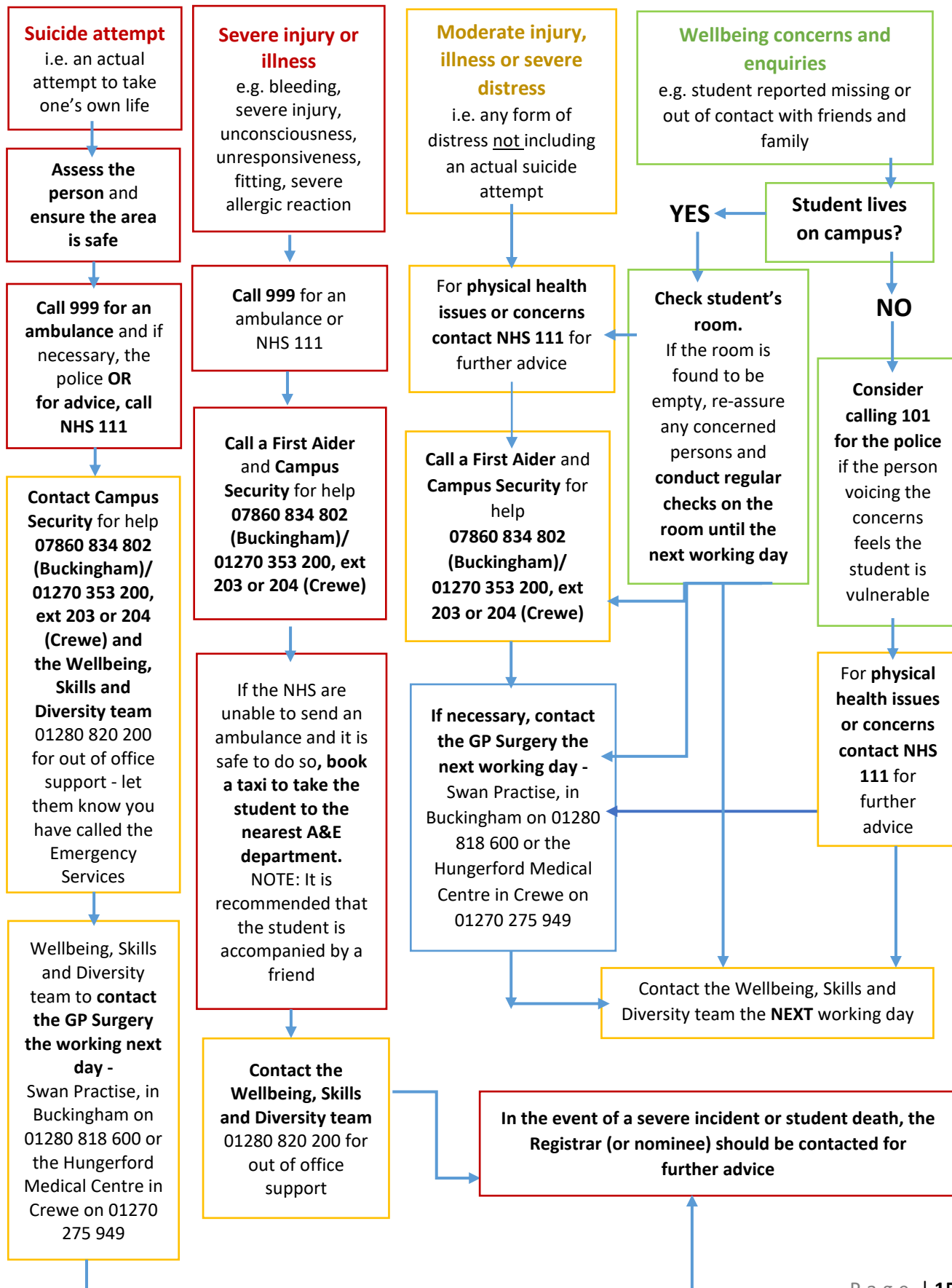
Appendix 4A

Handling a mental health concern: Emergency Contacts for Student Wellbeing Issues (normal working hours procedures)



Appendix 4B

Handling a mental health concern: Emergency Contacts for Student Wellbeing Issues (out of hours procedures)



Appendix 5

5.1 Procedures: Supporting and signposting students reporting or experiencing a mental health difficulty – on Admissions and Entry

5.1.1 For individuals experiencing a mental health difficulty, early awareness is often key to signposting to appropriate support and putting reasonable adjustments in place. The University has a number of procedures and practices, both formal and informal that are used in relation to students experiencing a mental health difficulty.

5.1.2 As part of the University's early intervention approach, the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team support Faculties to work with schools, colleges, and other universities to ensure a smooth transition between educational settings.

5.1.3 Whilst students enrolling at the University are encouraged to declare a mental, physical health condition or difficulty at the start of their University journey via the Student Declaration form, it is recognised that some students may choose not to or feel no need to do so. The University therefore has a number of mechanisms in place to support and signpost students at the following key points of their university journey:

- on admission and entry;
- during their studies and examinations;
- whilst studying away from campus

5.1.4 Such mechanisms form part of the University's approach to creating an environment where individuals feel safe in disclosing a mental health condition and/ or difficulty, providing consistency of provision to ensure students who do disclose a mental health concern or issue are supported to participate as fully as possible in both their studies and university life. These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the University Student Mental Health policy.

5.2 Admissions and Entry

5.2.1 The University's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive working and learning environment is embedded in its Royal Charter, with Article 20 stating *"there shall be no discrimination on the grounds of any person's origin, belief, gender or disability such as to prevent him, her [or them] being admitted as a Member, Professor, teacher, other employee or student of the University."*

5.2.2 Whilst the University acknowledges that not all mental health difficulties may be classified as a disability, it seeks to promote an inclusive culture, where students reporting a mental health difficulty are treated with dignity, regardless of whether the difficulty is classified as a long term mental illness, an emerging mental health problem or a temporary emotional difficulty likely to impact on their ability to study.

5.2.3 Early disclosure of additional needs is encouraged and internal assessments arranged with specific interventions put in place as soon as possible after the student joins the University.

5.2.4 For students applying for clinical programmes, details of any disability will be requested. The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Occupational Health Service will advise in accordance with the admissions process and regulatory body guidelines. Where appropriate, adjustments will be provided.

5.2.5 Students are also made aware of the University Mental Health and Safeguarding policies and the provisions in place to support them should they classify themselves as vulnerable due to a mental health condition or encounter a mental health difficulty whilst studying at the University.

5.2.6 For students who declare a previous or existing mental health condition or episode as part of the admissions process, mental health mentoring is put in place on commencement of their studies, with progress closely monitored.

5.2.7 Further guidance on how the University responds to disclosures of mental difficulties which are or could be a disability can be obtained from the University Inclusivity Adviser.

5.3 Student Accommodation

5.3.1 The University recognises that for some students, living away from home can be a source of stress with living in student accommodation seeming potentially quite daunting. To support the positive transition and integration of students into University life, all students starting their first year at Buckingham are offered accommodation on campus, allocated rooms where possible in a designated Freshers' block.

5.3.2 The University also appoints Residential Assistants (RAs) to aid social connectedness and belonging amongst students in residential accommodation. Alongside staff within the Accommodation Office, RAs are Mental Health First Aid trained and able to assist and signpost students, including those experiencing mental distress.

5.3.3 To reduce barriers to participation in student life, students reporting mental health difficulties with specific accommodation needs will be given particular consideration where this is indicated on their application form. Students reporting mental health difficulties in the course of their studies may also report this to the Accommodation Office, requesting consideration to be given to their accommodation needs.

5.3.4 Such interventions are intended to provide a safe, supportive environment with access to appropriate support within the University in a timely manner.

5.4 Fitness to Study and Practise

5.4.1 University Fitness to Study procedures outline the University's approach to supporting students reporting or experiencing a mental health difficulty or condition, impacting on their ability to engage or progress with their studies.

5.4.2 Prospective students living with a mental health difficulty or concern are encouraged to disclose such difficulties or concerns at the point of application to support adjustments being put in place. See section 5.2 for further details of the procedures applied in such cases.

5.4.3 Students applying to study on professional programmes (e.g. Medical, Psychology or Education), are required to disclose any serious mental health concern at the point of application, in line with professional body guidance. Failure to do so may result in a student being subject to a Fitness to Practise concern or Termination of Training proceedings.

Whilst most mental health conditions can normally be accommodated, such programmes may have specific requirements in relation to Fitness to Practise and or health clearance which may be affected by the diagnosis of a mental difficulty or condition, preventing a student from practising the profession concerned at least until the condition is treated and or stabilised.

5.4.4 For students enrolling on clinical programmes, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Student Support team will contact the student to discuss their support needs and advise of the relevant support and services available in line with health clearance requirements.

5.4.5 The Occupational Health Service will also assess the impact of the reported difficulty or condition in relation to the relevant professional body, recommending adjustments where appropriate. Whilst the University, will provide support and put in place recommended adjustments, the University is unable to deviate from the competency requirements of professional programmes.

Appendix 6

6.1 Procedures: Supporting and signposting students reporting or experiencing a mental health difficulty - during the course of study

6.1.1. It is widely recognised that attending university for many students represents a major transitional point in their lives. These changes can be exciting and managing them successfully is an intrinsic part of the university experience.

6.1.2 Dealing with so much change however, can be stressful for many students and may contribute to feelings of anxiety. In such circumstances, students are encouraged to seek advice and support from the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team, their Faculty Mentor, Personal Tutor or Faculty support teams.

6.1.3 Equally, Programme Directors are tasked with identifying weaker students (and providing guidance, encouragement and support on progression); this is particularly relevant for students who may not have formally disclosed a disability but are experiencing difficulties.

6.1.4 Students enrolled on clinical programmes should seek advice and support from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Student Support team.

6.2 Suspension of studies due to mental health difficulties

6.2.1 Where a student finds a mental health difficulty is starting to impact on their academic progress or ability to engage with their studies, their Personal Tutor or Faculty Mentor may encourage them to consider interrupting their studies for a short period in order to regain health or arrive at situation where they are more able to manage their mental health.

6.2.2 Students within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences with a mental health difficulty impacting on their studies are encouraged to speak to a member of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Student Support Services team.

6.2.3 In addition, students are advised to seek advice from the Student Fees team on the financial implications before making a decision to submit a request to suspend their studies.

6.2.4 International students are also advised to contact the Visa Officer to seek advice on how suspending their studies may affect their immigration status.

6.2.5 Should a student decide a suspension of study may be helpful to their mental health, the University will work with the student through their School of study to negotiate an appropriate period of recovery. Medical evidence may however be required to confirm that the student is fit and able to cope with the academic demands of their course of study.

6.2.6 The University seeks to ensure students encouraged to request time out from studies due to mental health difficulties, face minimal disruption to their progression on resumption of studies. Degree regulations however stipulate the maximum amount of time allowed for completion of a programme of study, hence where the mental health difficulty is of a serious or long term nature, requiring frequent suspensions or a suspension of studies which goes beyond one academic year, a permanent withdrawal from studies will usually be advised to the best option.

6.2.7 For students enrolled on clinical programmes, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences will decide on the suspension of studies in accordance with regulatory body guidance and an Occupational Health Service assessment.

6.2.8 Where suicidal thoughts are expressed, the University will treat a concern of this nature like any other health emergency. Further guidance on the University's approach to handling a Safeguarding or Suicide related concern can be found within the respective University Safeguarding and Suicide Prevention and Response policies (see Section 5).

6.3 Mitigating Circumstances

6.3.1 The University uses the procedures as outlined in the Mitigating Circumstances policy (see Appendix 1), to allow students who may not have advised the University at the point of admission of a mental health difficulty or condition which may impact on their performance in a piece of work or examination.

6.3.2 For students enrolled on clinical programmes, the Mb ChB Mitigating Circumstances Policy (see Appendix 1) provides further information on how such cases are assessed.

6.4 Examination Arrangements

6.4.1 The University will put in place appropriate individual exam arrangements for students who provide medical evidence that they have a mental health difficulty, to ensure that such students are not placed at an unfair disadvantage to fellow students when undertaking examinations.

6.4.2 As the needs and circumstances of each student is different, a request for adjustment will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

6.4.3 Medical students will have an assessment of their condition on commencement of their studies, with reasonable adjustments put in place near the start of their studies. Modifications can be discussed and requested by contacting the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Student Support team.

6.4.4 It is necessary to stress however, that whilst the University is obliged to provide reasonable adjustments, not all adjustments can be considered reasonable.

6.4.5 In considering whether an adjustment is reasonable, the University will take a number of factors into account. These include, but are not limited to whether or not:

- it will affect the interests of other students in any group;
- it will deviate from the competency standards demanded by professional and or regulatory bodies;
- it will undermine academic standards.

6.5 Suspension of studies due to disruptive behaviour: Disciplinary procedures

6.5.1 All students are bound by the University's Code of Conduct. It is hoped that most concerns regarding a student's conduct can be raised informally in the first instance.

6.5.2 Where a disability or mental health difficulty is a contributing issue, staff dealing with informal stages should seek advice from the Lead Mentor.

6.5.3 If a breach of discipline is to be considered through formal proceedings, the Lead Mentor will ensure that the Student Conduct Manager is made aware of any relevant mental health difficulties where appropriate.

6.5.4 [University Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and procedures](#) set out the procedures relating to disciplinary action arising from misconduct.

6.5.5 A suspension or exclusion may have conditions attached in relation to reinstatement. If the offending conduct relates to the effects of a mental health difficulty, then a condition may be that professional evidence is required to assist the University to determine whether that student's conduct is likely to be within acceptable limits if they return. Conditions may include a provision that the student engages with effective internal and external support/ medical services.

Appendix 7

7.1 Procedures: Supporting and signposting students reporting or experiencing a mental health difficulty - Care and Support

7.1.1 As part of the University's approach to facilitating the creation of a culture where individuals are noticed, supported and feel safe in disclosing mental health conditions and/or difficulties, destigmatising the issue of mental health, University staff are offered mental health awareness training to ensure they know what to do in the event of a student experiencing or reporting a mental health crisis.

7.1.2 The University offers students the following care and support through the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team:

- Faculty Mentors
- Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs)
- Residential Assistants (RAs)
- Counselling
- Wellbeing and Drug Adviser
- Inclusivity Adviser

7.1.3 The Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team works closely with students, Faculties and other departments around the University, providing a person centred approach to ensure all students have the best chance to complete their studies successfully and barriers to participation in student life are minimised.

7.1.4 Working closely with the University medical doctor, the local NHS, Community and mental health services in Aylesbury and Crewe, mechanisms are in place to ensure any student requiring urgent medical intervention is seen in a timely manner. The University also offers face to face confidential appointments, telephone assessments and virtual Teams calls.

7.2 Faculty Mentors

Faculty Mentors reside within the Faculties of Business, Humanities and Social Sciences, Computing, Law and Psychology and Medicine and Health Sciences to support students with pastoral care, practical advice and guidance for all students experiencing barriers to study. Faculty Mentors may also provide supporting statements to support a case for mitigating circumstances.

7.3 Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs)

University Mental Health First Aiders offer support to students reporting a diagnosed mental health condition, requiring support to help manage their emotional and mental health whilst studying.

7.4 Residential Assistants (RAs)

The University appoints Residential Assistants (RAs) to aid social connectedness and belonging amongst students in residential accommodation. RAs are also Mental Health First Aid trained and are an additional point of contact for students in University accommodation, including those with a mental health concern or experiencing mental distress.

7.5 Counselling

7.5.1 The University employs professionally trained counsellors within the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team to offer confidential support to students on any matters causing a potential mental health concern. This is a free service to which all students are encouraged to self-refer for.

Counselling can be short or long-term depending on the needs of the individual.

7.5.2 The University may also signpost students to the University Surgery for additional support. Appointments can be made online, by contacting The Swan Practice (01280 818 600) or the University Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team.

7.5.3 Students can be assured confidentiality when making appointments and dealing with these services. Further details on how the University handles such information, can be found in Appendix 9 of the Student Mental Health policy.

7.5.4 For students experiencing mental health difficulties out of University hours, students are asked to contact their GP. Alternatively, students can contact the Student Assistance Programme confidential helpline by calling 0800 028 3766.

7.6 Wellbeing and Drug Adviser

The University Wellbeing and Drug Adviser offers support to students dealing with a mental health concern related to drug or substance misuse. Such support is intended to provide a safe, supportive environment, providing access to appropriate assistance both within the University and externally, through links with the NHS and local council social support services in both Buckingham and Crewe.

7.7 Inclusivity Adviser

In addition to the University Counselling team, Faculty Mentors, the Wellbeing and Drug Adviser and the University Inclusivity Adviser provides staff with advice and guidelines on supporting students with mental health difficulties to ensure compliance with the University's legal obligations in the area of disability and inclusivity. Such guidance is key to supporting students appropriately to participate fully in their university journey and fulfil their potential.

Further details of how the University deals with disclosures of mental health difficulties which are or could be a disability can be found in Appendix 8 of the Student Mental Health policy.

7.8 Supporting students studying away from the University

7.8.1 Although distance from campus can place constraints on the level of face-to-face contact possible, the University's Student Support Services teams are available to all students, whether studying on campus or away from the University.

7.8.2 All the specialist support services offer face-to-face, telephone and online consultations where required. The [Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity SharePoint site](#) also offers extensive resources, advice and information for students to support mental health and wellbeing.

7.8.3 University staff with concerns about a student's fitness to undertake a placement, field trip or period of study away from the University, should contact the appropriate Faculty Mentor or Lead Mentor to discuss these concerns.

7.8.4 Appropriate contacts along with other support networks available to both staff and students can be found in Appendix 2 of the Student Mental Health policy.

7.9 Working with families where a student reports a mental and/ or physical health difficulty

7.9.1 Where a student reports a mental and/ or physical health difficulty, the University may in some cases, be required to consult with the student's family or guardian. As part of the Registration process, students are asked to provide consent for parental or an emergency contact involvement or consultation when experiencing mental and/ or physical health difficulties.

7.9.2 Where consent has been provided, this will be indicated within the student's Student Information Console (SIC) record. The University will only contact a next of kin or guardian where the appropriate consent has been provided.

7.9.3 In the event of a serious mental health concern or crisis however, e.g. an attempted, suspected or completed suicide, the University will inform the next of kin, even where consent has not been granted. The only exception to this will be where there is compelling evidence to show that it would not be in the student's best interest.

7.9.4 The University acknowledges a student's right to withdraw consent at any time and will ensure students are made aware of this. If consent is withdrawn, University records will be updated to reflect this in compliance with the University's Equality and Diversity and Data Protection policies (see Appendix 1).

Appendix 8

Disclosure of mental health difficulties which are or could be a disability

8.1 Under the Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005 and Disability and Equality Act 2010, some mental health difficulties may constitute a disability.

8.2 Where a disability is disclosed (even if the term 'disability' is not used), a set of legal obligations are activated and a range of specialist disability support becomes potentially available. It is therefore important that the University is able to establish whether the disclosed mental health difficulty is considered a disability.

8.3 Students are positively encouraged at the point of registration and throughout their university journey to make contact with their Faculty Mentor or the Inclusivity Adviser to ensure suitable adjustments and support can be accessed to enable the student to have the best possible experience at university.

8.4 If a student does declare that they have mental health difficulties, it is in the student's and the University's interests to consult with the Inclusivity Adviser in the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team. If a student wishes, this can be done initially by a member of staff without the need to identify the student.

For students within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS), the FMHS Student Support team is the first point of contact.

8.5 If the mental health difficulty is regarded as a disability, the disclosure to the member of staff is regarded in law as a disclosure to the University. The University is then required to fulfil its legal obligations, with support arrangements reviewed in line with the type of disability disclosed.

8.6 Students experiencing a mental health difficulty regarded as a disability, can be supported in a number of ways. The Inclusivity Adviser or FMHS Student Support team (if appropriate) should be consulted in the first instance if assessment arrangements need to be adjusted.

The following scenarios however are exceptions to this:

- Where a disclosure of a disability is made during counselling, or
- Where a student expressly wishes other members of the University to not know.

8.7 It is necessary to stress however, that whilst the University is obliged to offer reasonable adjustments, not all adjustments can be considered reasonable.

8.8 The University will take a number of factors into account when considering whether an adjustment is reasonable. See Appendix 6, section 6.4 of the Student Mental Health policy.

8.9 In counselling, students are informed that their disclosures are not going to be made known outside of the counselling context. Where a student expressly wishes the wider-university to not know about their disability, the student is asked to confirm this by completing and signing a disclosure form.

8.10 Students cannot however require a member of staff to limit the disclosure of a disability if the limitation would put the student or anyone else's life or safety at risk. In such cases, confidentiality will be respected with information only shared on a need to know basis in the interests of protecting the individuals concerned.

8.11 Further information on how the University shares and records disclosures of mental health difficulties can be found in Appendix 9 of the Student Mental Health policy. Such procedures are in line with its obligations under UK GDPR.

Appendix 9

9.1 Information Handling

9.1.1 The University aims to create an environment where students feel at ease to disclose past or current mental health difficulties whilst respecting an individual's right to privacy.

9.1.2 The University also recognises that accurate, timely recording, retention and storage of student records is key to providing an integrated, cohesive response to supporting students reporting a mental health difficulty or concern.

9.1.3 Information relating to a person's mental health difficulty however is classed as sensitive, personal data. In accordance with the University's Data Protection policy, UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), all information disclosed concerning an individual's mental health will be treated with appropriate confidentiality.

9.1.4 Where a student wishes to keep the existence or nature of their mental health condition confidential or partially confidential, the University will respect this decision to the extent that it can do so, without jeopardizing the health and safety of the student or others. The University will only share information about a student's mental and/ or physical health when it considers this to be in the best interest of the student.

9.1.5 For students enrolling on clinical programmes, details of any disability will be requested and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and the Occupational Health Service, will advise in accordance with the regulatory body guidelines.

9.1.6 Once accepted on a course, or at any time during their studies, a student may change their mind and wish to disclose. This can be done by informing the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity team, a Personal Tutor, a Faculty Mentor or an appropriate member of staff within the Faculty.

9.2 Recording a mental health difficulty or concern

9.2.1 The University will create records, share and store information in line with its obligations under UK GDPR. In relation to the welfare or safety of a student (e.g. concern about a physical injury, mental ill health or potential radicalisation) or concerns about the behaviour of a student, an employee or volunteer, all relevant details will be recorded regardless of whether or not the concerns are shared with an external agency.

9.2.2 Records will be kept of all concerns, incidents and their outcomes by the Head of Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity in accordance with the University Data Protection and Safeguarding policies, the Data Protection Act, 2018 and other relevant legislation.

9.2.3 Confidentiality will be respected with information only shared on a need to know basis in the interests of protecting the individuals concerned.

9.3 Data Protection

9.3.1 Under UK GDPR and DPA, individuals have a right of access to personal data which relates to them. This right of access may include a right to request access to records (in whole or in part), relating to a mental health difficulty or condition involving the person making the request.

9.3.2 If it is deemed necessary within a Faculty or University department to process the personal data of a student reporting a mental health difficulty or condition, the Data Protection Officer should be consulted in

the first instance to ensure appropriate steps are taken to process this data in accordance with the GDPR and DPA.

9.3.3 If a staff member receives a request from a person for access to personal data held either about themselves or another individual in relation to a mental health difficulty or condition, the request should be forwarded to the Head of Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity for consultation with the Data Protection Officer.

9.3.4 Further information on the University Data Protection policy can be obtained via <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/policies/data-protection>.