Soham Village College

Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy

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Staploe Education Trust

Excellence through partnership

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Mental health is a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. *(World Health Organization, 2014)*

Aims and Objectives

It is the aim of the school to prepare all students for challenges in life by building their resilience and promoting positive metal health. However, some students will, permanently or from time to time, face problems with their mental health and wellbeing. The school is focused on the early identification and support for these students, signposting available support and promoting the concepts around students taking responsibility for improving their mental health. We believe that it is vital that we work with parents, carers, healthcare professionals and external agencies to ensure that the support offered is in the best interest of the student.

We aim to promote positive mental health in all staff and students to enable everyone to thrive. Following the school's PRIDE values, we encourage students to be positive and responsible for looking after their own mental health. Equally we hope that our students show empathy towards their peers who may be struggling. Building an understanding and awareness of common mental health issues helps to facilitate early intervention. This is achieved by ongoing training for staff and a dedicated mental health and wellbeing focus with the PSHE curriculum and wider school approach.

Scope

This policy should be read in conjunction with our 'safeguarding', 'students with medical conditions', and 'children with health needs who cannot attend school' policies Where a student has an identified special educational need, please also read the SEND policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Mental Health Lead	Joshua Blunt
Mental Health Advisory Body member	Lorraine Lofting

It is the responsibility of all staff to report any concerns about the mental health or wellbeing of a student to the Head of Year in the first instance. If there is a fear that the student is in danger of immediate harm then the normal child protection procedures should be followed with an immediate concern raised on MyConcern. 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. Safeguarding protocols should be followed.

Class teachers & Support staff:

- It is the responsibility for class teachers and support staff to be thoughtful of the pressures that are placed on students. Where possibly they should promote positive mental health strategies or signpost to the school website if they are unsure.
- They should be open to listening to students who may be in need of support to gain a better understanding of their needs.
- Teachers may be asked to deliver sessions on mental health and wellbeing as part of the PSHE curriculum.

Mental Health Lead and Wellbeing Team

- Oversee the school's mental health policy.
- Advise teachers on how to support students.
- Co-ordinates support for students.
- Make relevant referrals to external support providers and agencies.
- Liaise and work in partnership with the parents of children with mental health needs.
- Contribute to the training of staff and those in governance roles.
- Provide wellbeing interventions for individual students in school where appropriate.

Headteacher:

- Overall responsibility for management of the policy and keeping those in governance roles informed.
- Any formal complaints about general or specific provision will be referred to the Headteacher.

Students:

- To talk to someone and share their feelings
- To engage with self-help strategies and to be willing to help themselves
- Respect other students who are experiencing poor mental health and look to support them where possible
- To be proactive in seeking support by speaking to parents/staff, exploring the online resources found on the school website, arranging an appointment with a GP, self-referral to external support
- If in crisis, making use of non-face to face phone or web support such as *Childline*.

Parents:

- Making school aware of any emerging mental health needs.
- Working in partnership with the school to ensure support is appropriate and in the best interest of the student.
- Attend meetings in school to discuss needs of their child.

Teaching

All staff have a responsibility to support social and emotional development, to build resilience and promote wellbeing through the wider curriculum.

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 PSHE curriculum. The specific content of lessons will be determined by the specific needs of the cohort we're teaching but there will always be an emphasis on enabling students to develop the skills, knowledge, understanding, language and confidence to seek help, as needed, for themselves or others.

Any concerns raised/comments made by students during PSHE sessions will be referred to the Designated Person following safeguarding protocols.

Signposting

We will ensure that staff, students and parents are aware of sources of support within school and in the local community. Links to support can be found on the SVC website under Student Experience - Wellbeing. In most instances staff will refer students and staff to the websites listed on the website as the first stage in the support process. Our aim is to encourage students to take positive approach in helping to improve their mental health by following the advice and guidance found on these specific websites.

Warning Signs

School staff may become aware of warning signs which indicate a student is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. These warning signs should **always** be taken seriously and staff observing any of these warning signs should communicate their concerns by using the MyConcern platform and notifying the Head of Year (HoY). Please note that boys and girls may exhibit different warning signs.

Possible warning signs include:

- Physical signs of harm that are repeated or appear non-accidental.
- Changes in eating/sleeping habits.
- Increased isolation from friends or family, becoming socially withdrawn.
- Changes in activity and mood.
- A change in behaviour.
- Lowering of academic achievement.
- Talking or joking about self-harm or suicide.
- Abusing 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 secretively.
- Lateness to or absence from school.
- Repeated physical pain or nausea with no evident cause.
- An increase in lateness or absenteeism.
- Engagement in dangerous behaviours.

Talking to Students

A student may choose to discuss concerns about themselves or a friend to any member of staff so all staff need to know how to respond appropriately.

If a student chooses to discuss 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, non-judgemental and tries to avoid catastrophizing the situation.

Staff should listen, **rather than advise** and first thoughts should be of the student's emotional and physical safety rather than of exploring 'Why?'

If the discussion raises concerns over a student's safety, this should be recorded on MyConcern. Guidance about how to manage mental health disclosures sensitively can be found in Appendix A.

All disclosures should be recorded on MyConcern. This written record should include:

- Date.
- The name of the member of staff to whom the disclosure was made.
- Main points from the conversation.
- Agreed next steps.

This information will be shared with the Mental Health Lead and Head of Year who will provide support and advice about next steps.

Working with all Parents and Carers

Parents are often very welcoming of support and information from the school about supporting their children's emotional and mental health. In order to support parents, we will:

- Highlight sources of information, agencies, and how to access support about common mental health issues on our school website
- Ensure that all parents are aware of who to talk to, and how to get about this if they have concerns about their own child or a friend of their child
- Make our mental health policy easily accessible to parents

Referrals

Referrals for support should be made by the Head of Year in most instances. They have the holistic view of the student while at SVC and have the knowledge of mental health support to know when to escalate an issue. Parents should contact the HoY in the first instance. If a HoY feels additional support is necessary they will make a referral using the *SVC Wellbeing Referral Form* which is found in the General Shared > Wellbeing SVC folder. See Appendix B.

Support - Graduated Approach

Students will be at the forefront of decisions made about how to improve their mental health and wellbeing. For any support to be a success, students will need to want to help themselves and this often starts with them engaging with self-help strategies. The 3 stages of support follow the graduated approach of Universal, Targeted and Specialist support. See Appendix C.

Universal - School support for all

- Creating the right culture and environment
- Raising **awareness** and reducing stigma through PSHE curriculum, assemblies and PSHE days
- Self-help resources on school website
- Promoting staff wellbeing and knowledge
- Working with parents - sharing strategies for support at home

- Engaging students - buying into the support/ self-help work

Targeted- School support for some

- Wellbeing check-ins
- Conflict resolution- Restorative Justice
- School-based **individual** and **group interventions**
- Issuing of Time Out card
- Using behaviour and learning plans
- Family work / **parenting programmes**
- Further peer support (befriending and peer mentoring)
- **Attendance** monitoring and target setting

Specialist - School support for a few

- Centre 33 counselling
- CAMHS referral
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Team
- Involvement from healthcare professionals
- Alternative Provision – reduced timetable/ change to working environment
- EHCP needs assessment- SENCo involvement

Attendance and Mental Health

Mental health-based absence should be given the same importance as physical health. Students should always be encouraged to take responsibility for improving their own mental health and engage with support that is offered inside and outside of school. It is recommended that the parent or student seeks the support of their doctor if they are missing school due to mental health concerns. The school would ask that consent is given to discuss a student's needs with healthcare professionals to ensure that the school's approach is not at the detriment of the student's health. In the case where a student has been signed off from school we would require a GP signed letter. We would ask that a planning meeting is held with parents/carers and the child, if possible, to determine how to proceed.

Failure to engage with support to improve mental health could lead to unauthorised absence. It is at the discretion of the Headteacher or Attendance Lead whether absence is authorised or not. *For further details please see the Attendance Policy document*

Training for Staff

In order for students to have the best *Universal Support* from staff at the school, opportunities for mental health and wellbeing training should be available to all staff. Trained staff can deliver in-house CPD to staff who require it or as part of a bigger, school-wide approach. Additionally, staff in a pastoral position should make it a priority to seek appropriate training for their level and role.

Complaints

Should students or parents/carers be unhappy with any aspect of provision they should discuss the problem with the member of staff directly involved in the first instance. Anyone who feels unable to talk to the teacher, or is not satisfied with the teacher's comments, should ask to speak to a member of senior leadership team or the senior mental health lead.

In the event of a formal complaint parents should follow the Trust's Complaint Policy which is available on the school's website. The Parent Partnership Service is available to offer advice.

Evaluation of Success

The members will evaluate the success of this policy of the school by enquiring how effectively students with poor mental health do not lose the opportunity to succeed at Soham Village College.

The members will come to judgements about:

- the views of parents and students on the support that has been offered.
- the effectiveness of the graduated response in meeting needs by reviewing the timing of appropriate support.
- the quality of the PSHE delivered to students.
- mental health-based absence.
- how resources and support have been allocated.
- details of how many referrals have been made, actions taken and outcomes recorded.

Policy Review

Policies will normally be reviewed on a 3-year cycle unless otherwise stated. This review may be brought forward as required by the Trust to reflect changes in supporting advice/guidance.

Appendix A: Disclosure of Risk Flowchart

Disclosure of Risk
(suicide or deliberate self-harm)

Current and active plans:

- Eg: Ligature, Overdose, cutting to the point of needing medical attention, other risk behaviours
- Taking steps to enact the plans
- Having specific details and plans on how or when they might do this
- Evidence of research and interest in suicide/ death

Intrusive thoughts and feeling unsafe:

Unable to stop thinking about hurting them self
Feels they cannot keep

Previously undisclosed acts and intrusive thoughts

What to think:

- Don't assume anything
- Take all risk seriously
- Be compassionate and non- judgmental
- Be honest if you don't know what the answer is

What to do:

Explain what you will do with the information (in accordance with your guidelines about confidentiality)
Collate information. Get details about the disclosure by asking open questions:

- When did you start feeling like this?
- How often?
- How distressing is this for you? (scale 1-10)
- Do you feel able to keep yourself safe?
- What keeps you safe?
- Who have you talked to about this?
- What might have triggered this?
- Is there a pattern?
- What help do you think you need?
- Are your parents / carers aware?

IN SCHOOL:

- Discuss with designated person
- Log Concern
- Contact appropriate external agency

EXTERNAL AGENCY REFERRAL:

- CAMHS on-call: **(Brookside: 01223 465100)** during office hours if needing to be seen within 24-48 hours
- Single Point of Access **(SPA- 01480 428115)** during office hours for advice
- GP Surgery / Walk in Centre: Bloods and appointments.
- First Response Service **(FRS 111#2):** 24 hour service
- Local A&E for emergency help / treatment

Follow up:

- Meeting with designated staff
- Debrief and next steps
- Safety planning
- Support for affected students
- Review, amend and share any changes

Appendix B: SVC Wellbeing Referral Form

Wellbeing
Soham VC

Referral Form

Once complete, please send to wellbeing@soham-college.org.uk

Student's Name		**Today's Date**	
Referrer's Name			

What have they tried? *(if none of the support below has been tried, please signpost)*

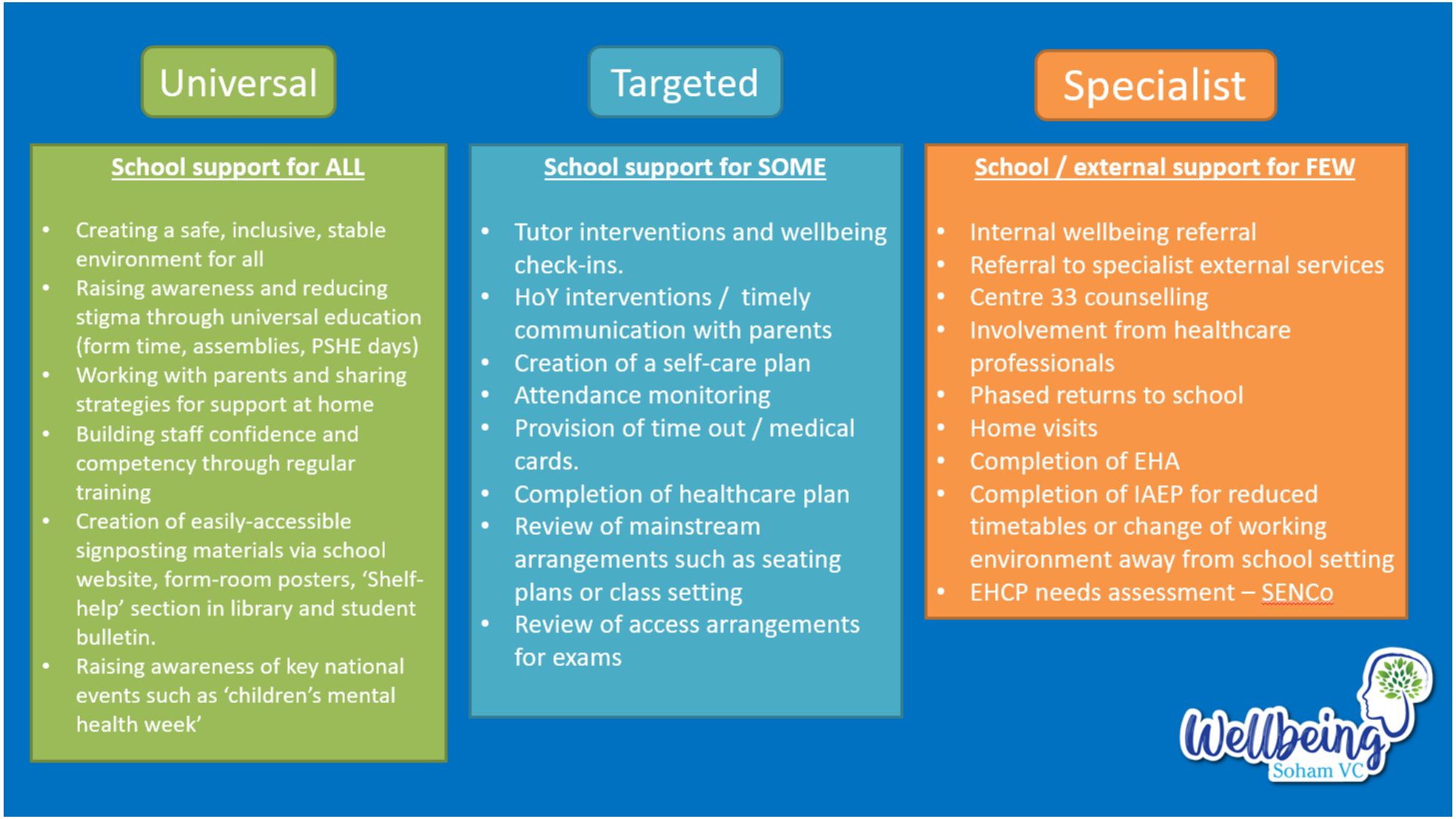
Student
Accessed outside services ☐
Seen a doctor ☐
Spoken to parents ☐
Used self-help services ☐
Produced a self-care plan ☐
(attach copy if relevant)

Staff
Spoken to student ☐
Referred to self-help Services ☐
Spoken to parents ☐

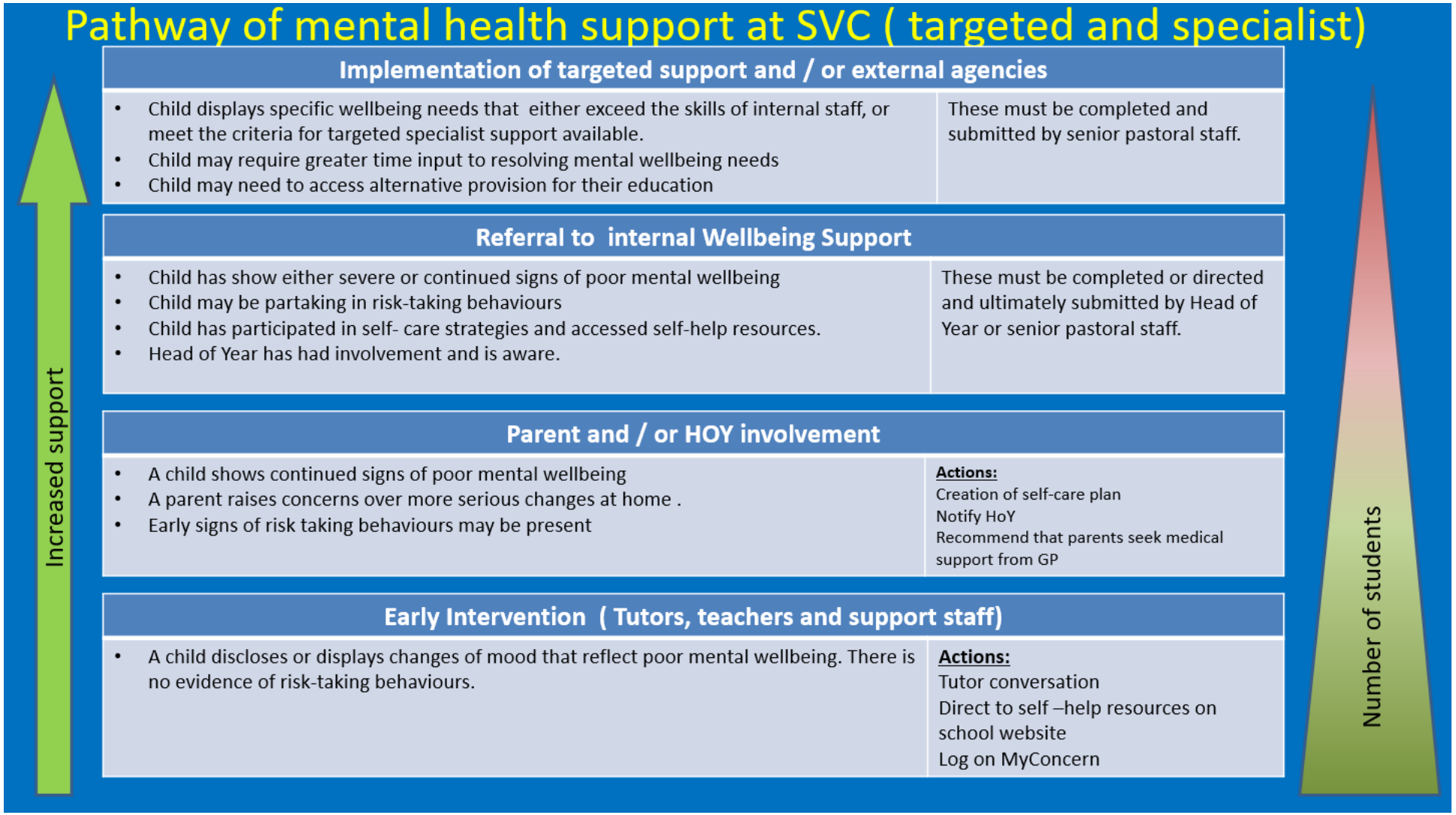
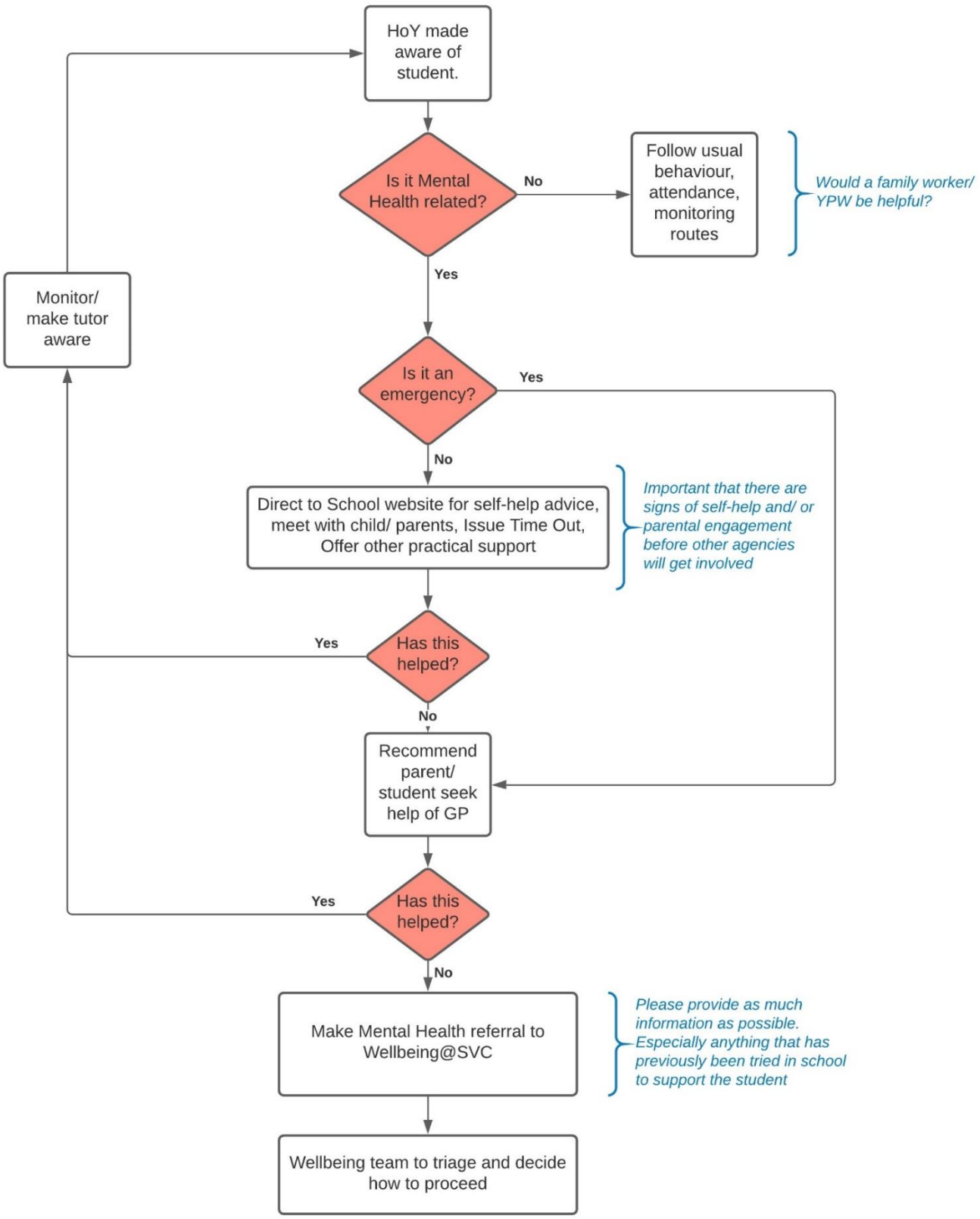
Summary	Anxiety ☐ Low Mood/ Depression ☐ Self-harm ☐ Exam Stress ☐ Self-esteem ☐ Eating Disorder ☐ Suicidal Thoughts ☐ Suicidal Attempt ☐ Bereavement ☐ Family Issues ☐ Anger Issues ☐ Other (add to details) ☐
Details and background information:	
What other agencies are or have been involved?	
Lives with (e.g. parents):	
What involvement have those with PR had?	
Have you logged this on MyConcern?	Yes ☐

Further Information:

Appendix C: The Graduated Approach



Appendix D: Pathway of Mental Health Support (Targeted and Specialist Provision)



Appendix E: SVC Mental Health Flow Diagram