



## PARKSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

### MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The Parkside Community College Health and Wellbeing at Work Policy has been developed to promote and encourage health and wellbeing at work. The Policy is endorsed and fully supported by the Governing Body.

The issue of staff health and wellbeing at work is recognised as part of a broader approach to health promotion that involves all stakeholders associated with the college community, including students, parents, community service providers and education support services.

Parkside Community College has a unique set of features including its organisational culture, structures, system of operation, management practices and workplace environment, which together with staff personal lifestyle factors play a key role in the health and wellbeing of individuals and that of the organisation.

Experience demonstrates that organisations which adopt an organisational approach to improving health and wellbeing in the organisation may achieve substantially reduced costs associated with:

- absenteeism
- staff turn over
- risk management

and increased:

- staff moral
- job enrichment
- quality of work life
- continuous improvement of educational achievement

leading to:

- improved productivity and overall organisational performance

Experience also shows that in order for sustainable gains to be achieved, work force health initiatives must be fully integrated into the organisations strategic planning processes. A healthy organisation recognises that people are its vital resource, and develops policies, systems and practices which optimise peoples ability to work together to achieve their full potential.



## 2. POLICY STATEMENT

The Parkside Community College recognises that mental health is an important as physical health. This policy applies to all staff employed at Parkside Community College and aims to ensure that staff feel supported in their work.

2.1 It is the policy of Parkside Community College to:

- a) promote health and wellbeing through its management policies, support services, information networks and health promotions, including alcohol awareness, diet, exercise, self management, and by liaising with external agencies;
- b) prevent, so far as is practicable, those circumstances detrimental to mental health and wellbeing;

2.2 The purpose of the Policy:

- a) supports the effectiveness of its staff in teaching and other associated duties which contributes to achieving the College objectives.
- b) Seeks to enhance the ability of staff to benefit from provisions
- c) Seeks to prevent unwanted development that, in responding to one individual's health difficulties, the College might also be significantly affecting others people's health and well being

2.3 Definitions and Terminologies

The term "mental health difficulties" is one which encompasses a wide range of experiences which affect an individual's ability to balance his/her life. The difficulties can range from stress and anxiety through to serious mental health conditions diagnosed and treated by the health services.

Although a difficult definition to give in precise terms, it is important to avoid the use of negative terms with stigma attached which may deter staff from accessing the support required. The inappropriate use of medical terms which might mislead and label unnecessarily must be avoided.

Staff will be encouraged to respond to individual needs rather than labels

2.4 Interactions with other policies

The Parkside Community College Health and Wellbeing Policy interacts with and refines several of its already established policies



The Colleges duty of care towards its staff is determined externally by legislation such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, Human Rights Act (1988), Data Protection Act (1988), Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and Disability Act (2001)

The College exercises that duty of care through this Policy and through the following related policies and notes for guidance:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Complaints and Grievance Procedures
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Capability Procedure (health)
- Stress Management Guidance
- Fitness to teach Guidance
- Occupational Health Guidance
- Job Share Policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- Disability Statement
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Whistleblowing Policy

## 2.5 This Policy and Confidentiality

While all dealings with staff are subject to the College policy on confidentiality it must be emphasised that this is often of paramount importance with regard to those experiencing mental health difficulties. However, it must also be emphasised that confidentiality may be necessarily breached in certain circumstances where the individual is deemed to be a risk either to him/herself or to other people. If there is a conflict between these two statements then it should be stressed that the safety of the individual and or the safety of other members of our community takes precedence over confidentiality.

## 2.6 This Policy and the College Disability Statement

The Disability Discrimination Act defines disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities” and defines “long-term” as “12 months or more”. Certain mental health difficulties may fall under this definition and will therefore qualify as disabilities.

If a member of staff declares a long term mental health difficulty (and therefore a disability) to a member of staff, this information must be passed on to the relevant



Head of Faculty in order to facilitate support. The College must make reasonable adjustments in order not to disadvantage the individual.

However, most cases are likely to be of shorter duration, in which case:

- the situation will be dealt with under the College sickness absence procedures

## 2.7 This Policy and the College Disciplinary Procedures

The behaviour of some individuals experiencing a mental health difficulty may be very disruptive and may contravene Disciplinary Codes and/or be detrimental to the wellbeing of other members of the College staff. Formal action may be suspended where an individual has declared to the College effects of the behaviour, and to seek to identify suitable support to moderate that behaviour.

## 2.8 Responsibility of the College

- promote the emphasis towards good health and wellbeing and consideration of this goal within all relevant aspects of its operation
- provide central support and advisory services
- produce and disseminate guidance notes to the Policy to offer practical step by step procedures and guidance
- provide training to staff
- encourage a non-stigmatising community to enhance the effectiveness of its actions
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy through annual reporting

## 2.9 Responsibility of key role holders

- provide the external health services agencies with clear information on all aspects of work activity for members of staff in order that informed recommendation can be made
- advise external health service agencies with regard to the scope of the support services the College can offer to staff
- establish effective monitoring processes so as to be able evaluate the impact of the policy
- make recommendations on developments and improvements to the policy
- establish an ongoing effective communication with the colleges Human Resources Services provider
- ensure the promotion of the policy throughout the organisation

## 2.10 Responsibility of Staff

All staff are expected to:



1. maintain a non-stigmatising community
2. treat each member of staff with dignity and respect as an individual and not a problem or a condition
3. take advantage of training and information sources
4. uphold confidentiality (wherever safety is not at risk)
5. recognise the limits to what they can do

The College recognises that where individuals help a colleague experiencing mental health difficulties, each person has boundaries or limits to his/her knowledge, responsibilities and competence, and that these boundaries must be respected. The College will provide for its staff suitable advice and training on:

- Identifying mental health difficulties and making initial responsibilities
- Recognising the need to refer an individual to support services
- Accessing the Colleges support services

#### 2.11 Resources for College staff who provide support for others

The College will provide staff members with information on the support available within the College and will encourage them to access those services through a series of publicity and awareness campaigns and through staff induction procedures

2.12 The College support services have a limit on what they can offer in this regard and the College is committed to working closely with its Human Resources Service Provider, Occupational Health Consultant and Advisors, Health Services and other relevant bodies.

### 3. KEY INDICATORS

#### 3.1 Physical Health

Studies have shown that regular, daily light or moderate exercise is beneficial for the prevention of heart disease and other life threatening diseases. The provision of opportunities for physical activity is one way workplaces can contribute to promoting health and preventing illness:

- Existence and quality of fitness/exercise activities available for staff (suggested action – conduct a survey to gauge interest in a programme including staff interests)
- Availability of regular individual health assessment for staff (suggested action – consider networking with local health assessment service agencies, G.P.'s and other providers)



- Existence and quality of an ongoing staff health promotion/education programme covering physical health issues  
(suggested action develop a plan for dissemination of information and advice and develop a data base of useful contacts and available information - diet, alcohol and other drugs, communicable diseases, cancer, heart, smoking and others)
- Existence of other preventative initiatives in the area of physical health  
(suggested action develop a coordinated approach to conducting these activities – immunisation programme, injury prevention, personal physical safety, providing healthy food choices)

### 3.2 Personal Wellbeing

There are many psycho-social factors which influence personal health and wellbeing. Mental health promotion in the workplace can prevent stress as well as promoting an understanding of mental illness

- Existence and quality of an ongoing mental health promotion/education programme for staff  
(suggested action – develop programme covering life issues – life cycle changes and adjustments, managing change, stress management, assertive communication, problem solving, time management, loss and grieving, other – e.g. financial management)
- Existence and quality of flexible working arrangements to cater for family and other external responsibilities/demands  
(suggested action - review meeting times, frequency, college working patterns, timetable)
- Existence and quality of staff support systems/s in college  
(suggested action- develop data base of resource people, organisation and information)
- Tolerance of diversity among staff  
(suggested action – Ensure awareness of relevant legislation, codes of practice develop a process for implementation)
- Existence and quality of effective communication systems  
(suggested action- review lines of communication and delivery methods)

### 3.3 Organisational Health

Harmonious working relationships created by effective leadership and staff involvement in decision making, together with effective administration systems, are important contributors to staff health and wellbeing. Administrative and professional support can assist staff to undertake their designated role with organisational purpose and direction



- Is leadership considered to be supportive of staff needs?  
(suggested action – consider formal and informal communication processes – Well-being questionnaire: consider regularly/informally consulting staff for their input and feelings; consider means of recognising staff achievements formally and informally)
- Are staff supportive of each other?  
(suggested action – consider opportunities for good quality staff interaction e.g. opportunities for team teaching, mentor programs)
- Do staff have a clear understanding and acceptance of their roles and responsibilities in the school?  
(suggested actions – review perceptions and actual performance)
- Are the work demands on staff considered reasonable and realistic?

### 3.4 Community Relations

A strong and positive relationship existing between the school and the local community is important for staff support and development as well as for providing for cooperation and access to resources

- The existence and quality of parent involvement in the school  
(suggested action consider if there is a mechanism for parents' views about the school to be regularly obtained and made known to all staff)
- The existence and quality of the relationship between the school and local recreation and leisure agencies regarding access to resources and services for staff health and wellbeing  
(suggested action – make contact with agencies and local recreation agencies and present options to staff.)
- The existence and quality of the relationship between the school and local business industry  
(suggested action- develop a formal communication process- allocate responsibility to staff member(s))
- Does the school have arrangement with welfare and other community agencies regarding access to services and resources for staff health and wellbeing?  
Suggested action- ensure that local agencies are aware of the schools health and welfare policy – develop relationships and conduct regular communication



#### 4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

1. Governors Agree Policy	Consult with staff Health and Wellbeing Committee appointed Roles and responsibilities defined	Monitor, review and evaluate policy effectiveness
2. Resource Programme	Internal and external resources and programmes reviewed arrange staff participation.	Ensure staff are trained and resource is available monitor costs against added value.
3. Implement Programme	Trial in agreed key areas	Implement and review extended programme.
4. Evaluate Programme	Health and Wellbeing audit completed to assess key areas of programme	Evaluate extended programme

This Policy was approved at a meeting of the Full Governing Body on 6 July 2005.  
To be reviewed – July 2009.