COLÁISTE CHEATHARLACH
NAOMH PÁDRAIG
CARLOW COLLEGE
ST. PATRICK'S

TITLE: LEARNER MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY

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Approved By	Academic Council		
Owner	Office of the Registrar		

Version Control		
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1. Purpose of Policy

Mental health and wellbeing is a fundamental component of overall health, which enables individuals to cope with the normal stresses of everyday life, realise their abilities, learn well, work productively and contribute to their community. It underpins our individual and collective abilities to think, engage, relate to others, enjoy life, be resourceful and to shape the environment in which we live.[1] Consequently, the mental health and wellbeing of learners is integral not only to their academic achievement and success but their ability to engage with the broader social and developmental experiences that College offers.

Carlow College, St Patrick's (hereafter Carlow College) seeks to implement a whole-of-institution approach to ensure that the College is responsive to the mental health needs of our learners; both those with diagnosed mental health disorders and those who experience

[1] WHO Factsheet No. 220. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response.

challenges to their mental health and wellbeing while undertaking their academic programme. The responsibility to assist learners to complete their studies is recognised by the College through the provision of appropriate academic, personal, pastoral and professional supports and the promotion of an environment that encourages the positive mental health and wellbeing of our learners.

This Policy and its associated documents have been developed to encourage and support positive mental health and wellbeing as part of a holistic approach to learner development and success within the College and to ensure that the promotion and protection of mental health and wellbeing is part of the overall college experience of our learners.

2. Definitions

Mental Health refers to how an individual thinks, feels and acts when faced with life's situations. It is more than the presence or absence of a mental health condition / mental disorder and is best thought of as being on a complex continuum that includes positive emotional wellbeing and positive functioning.[2] While all individuals exist on the continuum, their position is not fixed and can change throughout their lives.

Positive Mental Health describes a sense of wellbeing and implies that an individual has the resilience to deal with challenges that life and study present, and the capacity to live in a resourceful and fulfilling manner.[3]

Mental Health Difficulties / Issues are broad terms that describe mental distress and refer to the problems that affect a person's thoughts, body feelings, behaviour and ability to function. Mental health difficulties / issues are very common and may occur as a reaction to a painful event, arise due to internal or external pressures or come from within. These difficulties or issues may or may not be temporary and/or be related to a diagnosable mental health condition.[4]

Mental Health Condition / Mental Disorder / Mental Illness are terms describe a severe mental

[2] Department of Health, (2020) *Sharing the Vision: A Mental Health Policy for Everyone*. Dublin: Government Publications. Available at: https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/76770/b142b216-f2ca-48e6-a551-79c208f1a247.pdf#page=null.
[3] Fox, T. and Byrne, D. (2020) *National Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Framework*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority.
[4] *Ibid.*

health difficulty that is clinically diagnosable and characterised by a clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behaviour, which is persistent, and / or impacts on their ability to function. It may be severe or less so, and treatment pathways may vary. It is usually associated with distress or impairment in important areas of functioning and includes an array of conditions.[5]

Wellbeing is a broader, more subjective term that relates to the quality of life as experienced and perceived by an individual.

3. Scope of Policy

All registered learners of Carlow College are subject to this Policy. This also includes any learner visiting Carlow College for a period of study or research under the Study Abroad programme, or other similar programme from another domestic or international university or institution. Carlow College learners who visit another university or institution for a period of study or research are subject to the host institution's rules, policies and procedures for their visit. However, Carlow College will endeavour to support its learners whilst registered at another institution as part of their Carlow College programme, in association with the host institution, where possible and practicable.

While the College is cognisant of its duty to respect the rights and needs of learners who experience mental health difficulties, whether temporary or more long-term in nature, it seeks to do so within the confines of the supports available. As such, this Policy recognises that there are limits to the extent of the support which can be reasonably and suitably provided by the College. It is important that the Learner take responsibility for communicating with the College about their challenges, being familiar with and engaging as needed with the on-campus academic, pastoral and personal support available. There are appropriate external Health Service Executive (HSE), General Practitioner (GP) and community-based resources that can be accessed by our learners, and college-based supports are intended to complement these local and national resources, not replace them.

4. Policy Statement

Carlow College seeks to be responsive to the mental health needs of learners, particularly those who experience a period of mental distress or a mental health condition.

[5] *Ibid*.

4.1 Principles

The principles underpinning the *Learner Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy* are as follows:

- To promote a College environment which encourages positive mental health and wellbeing and in which mental health difficulties are openly acknowledged and supported;
- To encourage learners who experience mental health difficulties to disclose this and to actively seek support from campus-based support services;
- To direct learners with diagnosed mental health difficulties and learners with concerns about their mental health, to advice and information on the College supports available and how to access them;
- To direct learners, particularly those in learner representative roles, to procedures that should be followed if they encounter an emergency arising from another learner's mental health difficulties or where they suspect that a learner has mental health difficulties but where there is no apparent emergency;
- To direct staff to procedures that should be followed if they encounter an emergency arising from a learner's mental health difficulties or where they suspect that a learner has mental health difficulties but where there is no apparent emergency.

4.2 Learners with Diagnosed Mental Health Conditions

The College is committed to creating an environment where learners are comfortable in disclosing a disability, learning difference or long-term health condition. There is a dedicated Disability Service within the Academic Resource Office to provide prospective and current learners with appropriate information relating to the supports and resources available to them, and following an assessment of needs, to make individual support recommendations based on the assessed need and College access to resources. Learners with a diagnosed mental health condition are encouraged to contact the Academic Resource Office to seek support where their mental health condition could affect their ability to participate fully in any or all aspects of their programme. Learners may disclose on commencement of their studies or at any point while they are a registered learner at the College. Early disclosure is encouraged so that the Academic Resource Office can work with the learner to ensure that any reasonable accommodation required is identified and facilitated. Further information on guidelines, procedures and the Code of Practice for Learners with Disabilities, Learning Differences and Long-term Health Conditions is in the *Learner Disability Policy* available on the staff and student portals.

4.3 Disclosure of a Mental Health Condition

Learners are strongly encouraged to disclose if they experience a mental health difficulty to the appropriate office or staff member at the earliest opportunity. Without such disclosure, the College cannot provide appropriate supports or make appropriate referrals to assist the learner in the course of completing their studies.

Learners may disclose on commencement of their studies or at any point while they are a registered learner at the College. Early disclosure is encouraged so that the Disability Service in the Academic Resource Office can work with the learner to ensure that any reasonable accommodation required is identified and facilitated.

4.4 Fitness to Continue in Study

The College has a responsibility to balance its duty of care for learners who experience mental health conditions with its duty towards the entire College community. While every effort will be made to ensure that learners with mental health difficulties can complete their studies with appropriate and reasonable supports, there may be occasions when the withdrawal of a learner from a programme, either temporarily or permanently, may be deemed to be in the best interest of the learner or the College. While the Leaner may decide to withdraw from their programme themselves, the *Fitness to Continue in Study Policy* sets out the appropriate procedure in this regard and is available on the staff and student portals.

4.5 Fitness to Practice

Mental health difficulties do not preclude applications for programmes which lead directly to professional occupations. However, learners who undertake programmes of study recognised, regulated and accredited by a Professional, Statutory, or Regulatory Body (PSRB) for the purpose of attaining a professional qualification; future registration with the PRSB; and for the entitlement to practice the profession, are required to comply with fitness to practice policies of the bodies which govern these professions. This applies to programmes that require learners to undertake practical training in professional environments, which involve interaction with patients / clients and service users including those that lead to registration with a professional body. The College will ensure that learners with a diagnosed mental health condition or those who experience mental health challenges while undertaking their programme have access to appropriate and reasonable supports. However, where there is a mental health-related impact on the learner's ability to practice to the required standard, the College will follow the procedures set out in the *Fitness to Practice Policy* available on the Staff and Student Portals.

4.6 Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy

To facilitate the maintenance of a safe, productive and supportive environment for all members of the Carlow College community, the Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy sets out and upholds what are acceptable standards of behavior within the College. All learners are subject to this Policy both on-campus and when representing the College at external events where they are identifiable as learners of the College. The Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy is available on the Staff and Student Portals. The rights of a learner with mental health difficulties must be balanced with the College's duty of care to the entire College community. It is recognised that, in a small number of cases, inappropriate behavior which breaches the Learner Code of Conduct may arise as a result of the mental health difficulties experienced by a learner. In such instances, care will be taken to ensure that inappropriate disciplinary action is not taken against the learner and that supportive measures are taken to ensure that the learner has access to relevant support or referrals. The Fitness to Continue in Study Policy may be invoked in such instances.

4.7 Data Protection and Confidentiality

Information regarding a learner's mental health status is special category personal data and will be processed by the College in compliance with the *Data Protection Policy* and data protection laws. Detailed information about how Carlow College uses learner data and learner data protection rights is available in the Privacy Notice for Learners.

Further, healthcare professionals employed in a therapeutic role with learners on behalf of the College, such as the Counsellor or Nurse, are obliged to maintain levels of confidentiality in accordance with their own Professional Codes of Practice such as the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP), the Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland (PCHEI) and the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO).

These healthcare professionals also adhere to their reporting responsibilities under the *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017).

Please refer to Appendix 4 for full information on data protection and confidentiality.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Learner Responsibilities

- To familiarise themselves with this Policy and all other relevant College polices and regulations available on the Student Portal.
- To proactively identify themselves as a learner with a diagnosed mental health

condition when seeking reasonable accommodations such as exam accommodations, in-class supports, or where a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is required.

- To take responsibility for communicating with the College about their challenges, being familiar with and engaging as needed with the on-campus academic, pastoral and personal support available.

- To take care of their own mental health and wellbeing as much as possible by getting adequate rest and exercise, taking prescribed medication as directed, and seeking or maintaining contact with appropriate on-campus or external supports and resources, where necessary.

- To keep abreast of any subsequent amendments to this Policy and its practices and procedures.

5.2 Office of the Registrar Responsibilities

- To ensure that all staff and learners are made aware of this Policy and its subsequent practices and procedures.

- To embed a learning and assessment culture within the College that is inclusive and recognises the importance of positive mental health and wellbeing to the academic success and holistic development of learners.

- To ensure staff with key learner-facing roles and responsibilities have access to appropriate information and training to assist learners with mental health challenges and learners who are in immediate distress.

5.3 Staff

- To be aware of and fully conversant with this Policy and adhere to its procedures. Often, a learner discloses a mental health condition to a staff member in the first instance.[6]

- To engage with additional information and CPD opportunities provided on mental health supports for learners within the College.

[6] Where a learner discloses a disability to a staff member, Carlow College is deemed to be aware of this disclosure. Therefore, it is imperative that staff of the college direct learners to the Disability Service in the Academic Resource Office following disclosure of a disability, to ensure a needs assessment is completed and the appropriate supports agreed. This information should remain confidential.

- To adopt an open and flexible approach in their interactions with learners.
- Where applicable, to assist in the promotion of a learning and assessment culture within the College that is inclusive in scope and attends to the support needs of the diversity of learners.
- Where applicable, to help implement universal design for learning approaches and reasonable accommodations for individual learners as appropriate.
- To adopt appropriate 'right support' signposting practices to on-campus support particularly where the staff member has a defined learner-facing or support role such as Lecturer, Academic Advisor, Examinations Officer, Library staff , LIRO, Programme Administrator, Students' Union President and so on (this list is not exhaustive).[7]

6. Associated Documentation

Appendix 1	List of College Supports for Learners with Mental Health Concerns
Appendix 2	Procedures for Directing Learners to the Student Counselling Service
Appendix 3	Guidance for Staff and Learners – Responding to Learners in Distress
Appendix 4	Information Regarding Data Protection
Appendix 5	List of Other Supports and Emergency Contacts

7. Referenced Policies

Carlow College has a number of other policies which should be read in conjunction with this Policy. These include:

- *Critical Incident Policy*
- *Data Protection Policy*

[7] With the consent of the learner the staff member may contact the appropriate service, such as Counselling Service or the Disability Service on behalf of the learner to assist them in making an appointment.

- *Dignity and Respect Policy*
- *Fitness to Continue in Study Policy*
- *Fitness to Practice Policy*
- *Health and Safety Policy*
- *Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy*
- *Learner Death Protocol Policy*
- *Learner Disability Policy*

8. Monitoring and Review

The Policy will be monitored annually by the Office of the Registrar and Director of Student Services & Learner Supports; it will be formally reviewed in three years

Appendix 1: List of College Supports for Learners with Mental Health Concerns

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List of College Supports for Learners with Mental Health Concerns

Service:	**Location:**	**Contact:**
Student Counselling Service	Student Resource Building	counsellor@carlowcollege.ie 059 9153225 085 7564441
Health Service **On-campus nurse and off campus GP service**	Student Resource Building	nurse@carlowcollege.ie 059 9153237
Chaplaincy	Room S25, South Wing	chaplaincy@carlowcollege.ie 059 9153245

Below are some key points:

- All College-based services are free to registered learners.
- Appointments with the GP service are made through the Nurse's Office. The cost for a standard GP visit is at a subsidised rate of €30, however, some appointments might cost more. The College pays the balance of the regular GP visit fee.
- Appointments with the GP service are free for out-of-town GMS Medical Card, GP Visit and Erasmus EHIC cardholders.
- Carlow town GMS and GP Visit cardholders will be referred to their own GP practice.

Appendix 2: Procedures for Directing Learners to the Student Counselling Service

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Procedures for Directing Learners to the Student Counselling Service

Education is about development of the whole person; personally, socially, and academically. While attending Carlow College, St. Patrick's, learners may seek advice and guidance on issues through contact with staff such as Lecturers, Academic Advisors, Programme Directors, the Nurse, Chaplain, Learner Information and Retention Officer (LIRO) or alternatively a Students' Union Officer or Class Representative. They may also seek help from College friends or classmates. However, there are times when it is right to seek help in an environment that is separate from the above. The College Counselling Service provides a free professional and confidential service to all Carlow College learners.

Many learners seeking counselling do so by contacting the service directly for an appointment. However, when a learner is facing difficulties, it is often their friends, the Academic Advisor, individual lecturers and tutors, or those in pastoral care or information roles who are the 'first port of call'. The first signs of personal distress may often be that the quality of a learner's work is suffering and/or that the learner is displaying unusual behaviour. Consequently, the Lecturer, Tutor, Academic Advisor, LIRO, Students' Union Officer, Class Rep or friend are often in a very good position to notice when a learner is in need of help and to suggest that they arrange an appointment with the Counselling Service.

The following guidelines have been established to provide staff members, Students' Union Officers, Class Reps and concerned classmates or friends with guidance on how to direct learners to avail of the College Counselling Service:

1. DIRECTING LEARNERS TO THE STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICE[8]

It is appropriate to direct a learner to the Counselling Service when:

- there are concerns about the learner's safety;
- there has been an uncharacteristic drop in academic performance;
- the learner appears withdrawn, low in mood, tearful or unduly anxious;
- the learner displays unusual behaviour (e.g. obsessive thoughts / substance misuse);
- the learner has experienced significant life changes and crises (e.g. bereavement / relationship issues);
- the staff member, Students' Union Officer, Class Rep or friend is unsure of what to do or how to respond;
- the situation is depleting the staff member, Student' Union Officer, Class Rep or friend of their own emotional responses.

Note that this is not an exhaustive list.

It is suggested that learners be directed to the Counselling Service by:

- talking to the learner in a straightforward manner and pointing out the specific behaviour that has led to the concern;
- making it clear that directing the learner to the service represents your best judgement about how they can get help;
- explaining to the learner that their difficulties are outside of your area of expertise;
- reminding the learner that it is a free, professional and confidential service.

If the learner is reluctant to accept a referral, it may be helpful to explore the reluctance with them in order to resolve their concern or to encourage them to schedule 'just one' appointment with the Counselling Service. In some instances, the learner may agree to see the Nurse, Learner

[8] Learners who are under 18 can be directed to the Counselling Service at any time. The Counselling service may be contacted on behalf of the learner with their permission. Once contact has been made, the Counselling Service will adhere to their specific professional protocols for learners who are under 18. Please consult the College's *Child Protection Policy* for any queries in relation to Child Protection or alternatively contact the College's Designated Liaison Person dlp@carlowcollege.ie (086 780 3058).

Information and Retention Officer (LIRO) or Chaplain instead of the Counsellor.

However, **the decision to engage with the Counselling Service rests solely with the learner**. If they choose not to engage with the Counselling Service, then their wishes should be respected, unless you have concerns for their safety. Refer to Appendix 3 for *Guidance on Responding to a Learner in Distress*.

No further action is required at this point. You might consider arranging a follow-up contact or appointment with the learner to keep lines of communication open and to revisit the situation. The learner may choose to engage with the service at a later stage.

2. **APPOINTMENTS CAN BE MADE WITH THE STUDENT COUNSELLING SERVICE IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:**

During office hours (Monday – Friday between 9am – 5pm):

(i) the learner can contact the service directly by phone (059 9153225), text (085 7564441), email (counsellor@carlowcollege.ie) or in person (Learner Resource Building);

(ii) the learner can be directed to the service by a staff member, Students' Union Officer, Class Rep, or any concerned learner or friend. In the event of an external third party (e.g. a parent or spouse) expressing concern for a learner, staff should direct the third party to contact the learner directly to encourage contact with relevant services.

(iii) **while the learner is in the presence of a staff member, Students' Union Officer, Class Rep or another learner or with the learner's permission,** a call (059 9153225) or email (counsellor@carlowcollege.ie) on behalf of the learner to arrange an appointment with the Counselling Service may be made.

- the Counsellor should be advised of the learner's name, programme, stage and contact number;
- while confirmation of attendance cannot be divulged by the Counselling Service, learners who engage with the service are encouraged to contact the staff member, Students' Union Officer, Class Rep or other learner who arranged the appointment to let them know that they have attended;
- if the learner does not attend the scheduled appointment or contact the service, the Counsellor will contact the learner directly to reschedule;
- No further action is required on the part of the staff member, Students' Union

Officer, Class Rep or other learner.

Consultation

Where a learner presents with difficulties and a staff member, Students' Union Officer, Class Rep or other learner is unsure of what to suggest or how to respond, a brief phone consultation (059 9153225) with a Counsellor during office hours may be helpful. The name of the learner must not be disclosed. All consultations are in confidence.

3. OUT-OF-HOURS EMERGENCY

The Student Counselling Service, including phones and email, operate from Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm.

If urgent emotional support is required outside of these times, the following services can be contacted:

- Learner's own local GP service
- Caredoc out-of-hour GP service
    - 6pm to 9am Monday to Friday;
    - 24 hours Saturday, Sunday and all Public Holidays.
    - Call 0818 300 365
- Request Ambulance 999 or 112
- The Samaritans 24 hours Freephone listening service. Call 116123
- Text CCSP to 50808 (free, 24/7 text service)
- Pieta House 24/7 freephone and text support service. Call 1800 247 247 or Text HELP to 51444.
- Rape Crisis Helpline: 24/7 Freephone 1800 77 8888
- Jigsaw Online services for young people aged 12-25. www.jigsaw.ie.
- AWARE Freephone support line, 7 days/week, 10am - 10pm. Call 1800 804 848
- Carlow Garda Station 059 9131505

4. ***Confidentiality***

The principle of confidentiality is paramount to the process of counselling. It enables learners to speak freely about personal concerns in a safe and private environment. The Counselling Service is bound by Psychological Counselling in Higher Education Ireland (PCHEI) and the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) professional Codes of Ethics to maintain confidentiality except in the rare circumstances where (i) a learner is a risk to themselves, or to another person or (ii) where disclosure is required as part of a legal process or Garda investigation.

Any discussions that take place between the learner and the Counsellor will not be divulged to a third party, such as their Academic Advisor, without the learner's explicit consent in writing. This applies regardless of whether the learner attends the Counsellor of their own volition, or is directed to the service by a staff member, Students' Union Officer, Class Rep or other learner. In the case of the latter, information divulged while directing the learner to the service is also confidential and is not for discussion with other persons, including but not limited to, staff members or Students' Union Officers, Class Reps or friends.

On occasion, it may be helpful to share information with other support services, academic departments, health service or external professionals. If necessary, disclosure will be arranged through the Counsellor with the learner's written explicit consent. The learner may choose to grant or refuse consent, and may later withdraw consent, and the potential implications of their decision will be explored and discussed by the Counsellor as they relate to the individual learner's situation.

Please refer to Appendix 4 for full information on Confidentiality and Data Protection

Contact between Counsellor and Academic Advisor

Where a Counsellor thinks the personal issues of a learner attending the service are impacting their academic work, the Counsellor will encourage the learner to contact their Academic Advisor in the first instance. With the learner's written consent, the Counsellor can discuss measures with the Academic Advisor which might be helpful and supportive to the learner without necessarily revealing more specific and confidential information. Where appropriate, the Counsellor may engage in a three-way meeting with the learner and Academic Advisor to assist the learner engage with the appropriate academic processes. This meeting will be organised by the Academic Advisor and the Counsellor will play an advisory role only.

Appendix 3: Flowchart for Responding to Learners in Distress[9]

RESPONDING TO A DISTRESSED LEARNER

If a learner:

- Appears withdrawn, low mood, tearful/overly emotional or anxious
- Has a noticeable change in behaviour or presentation
- Has a sudden deterioration in academic performance and/or motivation

RESPONDING TO A LEARNER IN A CRISIS OR EMERGENCY

If a student is or appears:

- Very agitated, aggressive or threatening
- Expressing suicidal thoughts
- Threatening self-harm or harm to others
- Engaging in bizarre thoughts (auditory hallucinations or delusions)

EXPLAIN YOUR CONCERNS AND WORRIES TO THE LEARNER

If the lLearneris willing to accept help:

- Redirect to the appropriate College support service and/or
- Suggest and arrange an appointment with the counselling service

CONSULT A COLLEAGUE, TRY NOT TO ACT ALONE. EXPLAIN YOUR CONCERNS AND WORRIES TO THE LEARNER

If the Learneris willing to accept help:

- With their consent, contact the Counselling Service / Health Service and explain your concern.

[9] This flowchart is based on TUD Grangegorman Guidelines for Responding to a student in distress.

EXPLAIN YOUR CONCERNS AND WORRIES TO THE LEARNER

If the learner is unwilling to accept help/follow your advice:

- Respect their decision Consider arranging a follow up meeting to monitor the situation
- Sign-post to supports (e.g. in a follow up email)
- No further action is required unless their condition deteriorates into a crisis or emergency

CONSULT A COLLEAGUE, TRY NOT TO ACT ALONE. EXPLAIN YOUR CONCERNS AND WORRIES TO THE LEARNER

If the learner is unwilling to accept help and you have safety concerns:

- Explain that due to safety concerns about the learner and/or others, you need to consult with the Counselling Service / Health Service or call their emergency contact listed on SMRS

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

IF THE LEARNER IS OR APPEARS TO BE ATTEMPTING SUICIDE/HAS ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

CONTACT GARDAI IMMEDIATELY 999/112

During Normal Business Hours

Contact NURSE. 059 9153237
Contact COUNSELLOR 059 9153225 / 085 7564441

DIAL THE INCIDENT NUMBER AT CARLOW COLLEGE: +353862018268 (MONITORED BY FACILITIES)

IF THE LEARNER IS VERY AGGRESSIVE/VIOLENT/ARMED

CONTACT GARDAI IMMEDIATELY 999/112

During Normal Business Hours

Contact RECEPTION. 059 9153201
Contact PRESIDENT'S OFFICE 059 9153236

DIAL THE INCIDENT NUMBER AT CARLOW COLLEGE: +353862018268 (MONITORED BY FACILITIES)

Outside Normal Business Hours

DIAL THE INCIDENT NUMBER AT CARLOW COLLEGE: +353862018268

IF YOU HAVE BEEN AFECTED AFTER AN INCIDENT TALK TO:

- Line Manager
- HR Office
- Colleagues
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

COLLEGE CONTACTS:
College Counselling Service: 9am-5pm Mon-Fri (Semester). 9am-5pm Mon & Thurs (Summer) – 059 9153225 / 0857564441
College Nurse: 9am-3:30pm Mon-Thurs (Semester), 059 9153237
College Chaplain: 9am-5pm Tues-Thurs (Semester), 059 9153245
Reception: 9am-5pm Mon-Fri 059 9153201
Out of Hours Incident Number: 086 2018268
College Eircode: R93 A003

Appendix 4: Information Regarding Data Protection

COLÁISTE CHEATHARLACH NAOMH PÁDRAIG
CARLOW COLLEGE ST. PATRICK'S

Information Regarding Data Protection

Confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality is paramount to the process of counselling. It enables learners to speak freely about personal concerns in a safe and private environment.

Healthcare professionals employed in a therapeutic role with learners on behalf of the College, such as the Counsellor or Nurse, are bound by their own professional codes of practice, such as the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP), the Psychological Counsellors in Higher Education in Ireland (PCHEI) and the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO), to maintain confidentiality except in the rare circumstances where (i) a learner is a risk to themselves, or to another person or (ii) where disclosure is required as part of a legal process or Garda investigation. These healthcare professionals also adhere to their reporting responsibilities under the *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2017).

Any discussions that take place between the learner and the Counsellor will not be divulged to a third party, such as their Academic Advisor, without the learner's explicit consent in writing. This applies regardless of whether the learner attends the Counsellor of their own volition, or is directed to the service by a staff member, Students' Union Officer, Class Rep or other learner. In the case of the latter, information divulged while directing the learner to the service is also confidential and is not for discussion with other persons, including but not limited to, staff members or Students' Union Officers, Class Reps or friends.

On occasion, it may be helpful to share information with other support services, academic departments, health service or external professionals. If necessary, disclosure will be arranged through the Counsellor with the learner's written explicit consent. The learner may choose to grant or refuse consent, and may later withdraw consent, and the potential implications of their decision will be explored and discussed by the Counsellor as they relate to the individual learner's situation.

Data Protection.

The Privacy Notice for Learners, explains how the College uses learner data and learner data protection rights. This Appendix provides supplementary information about how data processed under this Policy is used.

Data protection laws, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the *Data Protections Acts 1988 to 2018,* set out rules for organisations which use or store personal data about living people and give rights to those people whose personal data has been collected. Health data, including that about learner disabilities, learning differences and long-term health conditions, which includes mental health is special category personal data and Carlow College has various obligations in respect of it

The primary uses of mental health data are to provide counselling or other health services to learners and administration of reasonable accommodations (Academic Resource Office).

In some instances, learners are asked to give their consent for the use of their data Consent may cover use or sharing of data, sometimes with parties external to Carlow College. Learners may grant or refuse consent, or later withdraw consent if first elected to grant consent. Withdrawal of consent does not affect the lawfulness of processing prior to its withdrawal. However, learners should be aware that if they refuse or withdraw consent, it may not be possible to provide services to them.

Learners with a diagnosed mental health condition and who are registered with the Academic Resource Office for reasonable accommodations may withdraw their consent by contacting academicresource@carlowcollege.ie

Learners who have engaged with the College Counselling Service may withdraw their consent for third-party discussions (see Appendix 2) or external referrals by emailing counsellor@carlowcollege.ie.

While consent is a well-known basis on which organisations process personal data (and special category personal data), Carlow College may, in limited circumstances require to use data regarding disabilities, learning differences and long-term health conditions without learner consent. This is permitted by data protection laws, and in all circumstances, Carlow College will ensure that it acts in accordance with legislation. Areas where the College may use such learner data without consent include, but are not limited to the following:

- Emergency situations where learners are injured or unwell and are unable to consent;
- To protect the vital interests of learners or other individuals e.g. safeguarding concerns;
- Sharing information with law enforcement agencies, such as An Garda Síochána, in connection with the prevention, detection and investigation of crime. Where information is sought by a third party for investigatory purposes, as distinct from a situation where disclosure of personal data is urgently required to prevent injury, it should be confirmed that the third party has a valid legal basis for requesting the

information such as a search warrant or a letter from a garda superintendent.

- For the establishment, exercise and defence of legal claims;
- Investigations under College policies;
- Statistical purposes, such as reporting into the use of the College's support services. It shall not be possible to identity individuals in any such report, and reports shall normally use aggregate data.

Where required or permitted by law or court order.

In all situations where the College uses learner data, it will exercise the greatest possible discretion and protect the privacy of learners to the greatest degree possible. Learner data is shared among College staff in a manner commensurate with staff duties and in accordance with data protection laws.

In some instances, Carlow College may share learner data externally. For example, the College avails of funding from the Fund for Students with Disabilities / National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education, to provide supports to learners and the Counselling Service may make referrals to external agencies on the learner's behalf. In such cases, learner data is managed under the external organisation's *Data Protection Policy*. Carlow College will ensure that we have agreements in place with external organisations, where necessary, with regard to the sharing of learner data.

Appendix 5: Other External Supports and Emergency Services

COLÁISTE CHEATHARLACH NAOMH PÁDRAIG
CARLOW COLLEGE ST. PATRICK'S

Other External Supports and Emergency Services

TEXT CCSP TO 50808:	Free 24/7 text service for Students.
PIETA HOUSE:	24/7 freephone and text support service. 1800 247 247 or Text HELP to 51444.
YOUR MENTAL HEALTH:	SE portal for mental-health related resources in Ireland Freephone 1800 111 888. www.yourmentalhealth.ie
THE SAMARITANS:	24/7 Freephone listening service 116123.
RAPE CRISIS HELPLINE:	24/7 Freephone 1800 77 8888
AWARE:	Freephone support line, daily, 10am - 10pm. 1800 804 848
TURN2ME.IE:	Online peer support and professional support groups. www.turn2me.ie .
SPUNOUT.ie:	Youth driven support, information and practical advice www.spunout.ie.
JIGSAW:	Online services for young people aged 12-25. Web-based live chat (1 to 1 and group) Monday to Friday. www.jigsaw.ie.
BeLonG To LGBTQ+:	The National LGBTQ+ Youth Organisation www.belongto.org.
TENI:	Transgender Equality |Network Ireland. www.teni.ie.
LGBT IRELAND:	Helpline 1800 92 95 39 Monday – Thursday (6.30pm – 10pm), Friday (4pm-10pm), Saturday and Sunday (4pm-6pm)

BODYWHYS: 012107906 or email: alex@bodywhys.ie

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING: St Catherine's Community Centre, Carlow. Call 086 414 7511