

Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013 - 2016

Policy statement

Bedford College aims to create a healthy and safe environment for its students and staff. We are committed to:

- promoting healthy lifestyle choices
- providing a range of services which improve the physical, emotional and sexual health and wellbeing of our students and staff
- empowering individuals to develop the knowledge and understanding to make informed choices about their health, well-being and safety, and reducing risk-taking behaviour
- engaging the whole college community in developing and implementing a health and wellbeing strategy
- developing effective partnerships with specialist local, regional and national organisations.

A healthy college recognises the importance of investing in the health and welfare of its students and staff by providing a physical and social environment which is conducive to teaching, learning, living and working.

Context

In July 2008 the government announced the launch of the Healthy FE programme to target the health needs of those who study or work in further education. It aims to work with FE providers to make the health and wellbeing of staff and students an integral part of all aspects of life in FE, 'producing learners and staff who are confident, healthy, safe, emotionally resilient and personally fulfilled' (Healthy FE Steering Group, December 2008).

The programme was sector-led, via the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS), and sought to enhance a provider's ability to cater for the health and wellbeing of its staff and students through a self-review tool, support through partnership with local health services and established regional networks. In 2010 the College achieved Healthy College status.

With the closure of LSIS in 2013, together with the dilution of the Every Child Matters 'brand', the College seeks to ensure that its commitment to the health and wellbeing of its staff and students and the values of Healthy College are maintained and embedded in practice.

In 2012 Ofsted introduced a new Common Inspection Framework. Inspectors will make judgements on the extent to which students develop personal and social skills, and benefit from health and wellbeing care and guidance to support success.

Strategy

The purpose of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is to provide a framework within which to:

- ensure staff and students understand the College's commitment to health and wellbeing
- embed a concern for health and wellbeing throughout the organisation
- celebrate our achievements in relation to health and wellbeing
- collect and report on appropriate data relating to staff and student wellbeing, and identify actions required to further promote health and wellbeing
- promote healthy living and raise awareness of the consequences of an unhealthy lifestyle
- through partnership working, further develop the range of available services, facilities and activities, increase take-up and reduce health inequalities
- meet Ofsted expectations in respect of outcomes for learners.

Progress to date

1. General health and wellbeing

- Health and Wellbeing Weeks are established annual events in the College calendar and feature activities and awareness-raising events for students and staff, including exercise and fitness, healthy eating, drug awareness and smoking cessation
- A cross-college Healthy College group identifies and monitors the implementation of actions based on self-evaluation and feedback from students, staff and partner agencies
- A questionnaire has been developed (based on Bedford Borough Council's school improvement survey) and used to collect feedback during Health and Wellbeing Week, to establish levels of awareness and baseline data against a range of health and wellbeing-related criteria.
- The tutorial framework is based on outcomes for learners and mapped against the Ofsted Common Inspection Framework. Health and Wellbeing is a theme for the first term and ties in with cross-College events
- Full-time students complete a health questionnaire at induction. This alerts teaching staff, personal tutors and the Health and Safety team to any student health issues and, where appropriate, leads to the completion of a health needs assessment
- Many courses include modules or additional qualifications in health-related subjects, including healthy eating and health and safety
- We have developed protocols with local authority Children's Services to enable us to support looked after children and care leavers who may be regarded as vulnerable learners
- Health checks are offered to all core and associate staff
- Risk assessments are carried out for all expectant mothers

- Health assessments are issued to staff after maternity leave or long term absence to ensure any necessary adjustments are made
- Health needs assessments are issued to any new or current member of staff who declares a medical condition or disability
- A Safety at Work Week event has been delivered to raise awareness of risks to health in relation to work and the workplace for students
- Staff are referred to occupational health services where appropriate
- An absence management procedure is in place which includes back to work discussions relating to health and wellbeing following short-term absence, and benchmarking of absence data
- There is an Employee Assistance Programme for all staff including access to a website containing a range of toolkits
- A staff development discount scheme is available for staff to enrol on any funded courses including health and wellbeing.

2. Physical health

- A comprehensive enrichment programme includes a range of activities designed to encourage participation in sports, both at academy and social standards
- The student enrichment programme includes sports, fitness and wellbeing activities, with good take-up
- There is a team of trained first-aiders
- There is a Health and Safety e-learning programme for staff which includes topics relevant to individual staff roles
- There are good links with local drug/addiction support agencies who deliver awareness-raising activities across college and via the tutorial programme
- The College operates a smoke-free environment, enforced through staff and student codes of conduct
- Staff in Student Services have been trained to deliver smoking cessation throughout the year, with promotional events taking place during Health and Wellbeing Week and national No Smoking Day
- College gyms and other sports facilities are available for staff use, subject to availability
- Where there are issues of concern or ill health, risk assessments and health assessments are undertaken to ensure staff are physically able to carry out their duties and to ensure any necessary adjustments can be made.

3. Sexual health

- Wellbeing Zones have been developed in student common rooms to provide a safe place for the delivery of sexual health and other wellbeing advice
- 'Undercover' c-card condom distribution and sexual health advice services are available at all campuses, delivered by trained staff.
- A condom distribution policy is in place
- Partnerships have been developed with NHS Bedfordshire to deliver Chlamydia screening services throughout the year and the College has its own NHS health code

- Staff from NHS Bedfordshire deliver talks on sexual health as part of the tutorial programme
- Counselling is available to all students and gives them the opportunity to discuss their sexual relationships confidentially, helping them to make informed choices and understand their emotional well-being within sexual relationships. The counsellor may refer a student to their GP if there is a possibility of sexual dysfunction
- Counselling also offers students a safe place where they can discuss their sexuality or past/present trauma which may be of a sexual nature
- The counsellors can support students who become pregnant/whose partner becomes pregnant and offer non-judgmental, practical support about the available choices they have before them
- Staff have 24/7 access to the Employee Assistance Programme for advice and support.

4. Mental and emotional health

- There is a Counselling Service, staffed by qualified professionals and with links to specialist external agencies including GPs
- The counsellors undertake risk assessments where there are concerns about students' emotional wellbeing and safety
- The Counselling Service has successfully introduced drop-in sessions to respond to immediate need and reduce waiting times
- The counsellors deliver workshops for students around low self-esteem, anger management, bullying and respect
- The anti-bullying and counselling policies have been reviewed and updated
- Student health needs assessment processes provide a strong framework of support including Individual Support Plans
- The Additional Support team offers support for students declaring mental health problems
- The Employee Assistance Programme is a free and confidential service available to all staff and their family household members with online access to fact sheets and toolkits
- The College will fund up to six face-to-face counselling sessions for staff through the Employee Assistance Programme
- The College has signed up to the charter of employers who are positive about mental health, making us a 'Mindful Employer'
- Managers can access support and training in managing mental health issues
- Manager support groups are held regularly to offer advice and guidance on how managers can support staff
- Carefully managed returns to work are established for staff after long-term absence, in line with the absence management procedures, supported by the HR Manager
- Non-judgmental and proactive support provided to individual staff experiencing mental health issues, managed through HR and using staff health needs assessments.

Key priorities 2013 – 2016

1. General health and wellbeing

- Continue to promote and embed the Health and Wellbeing Strategy across College
- Develop a process to enable part-time students to notify health issues and needs
- Encourage student participation in the development and evaluation of health and wellbeing strategies, through student voice groups and the student conference
- Continue to collect and analyse data on students' health awareness and lifestyle choices during Health and Wellbeing Week, and use to show distance travelled
- Improve systems for tracking vulnerable students
- Continue to promote health checks for all staff
- Promote and increase awareness of health and wellbeing issues through staff development for all staff and managers
- Continue to monitor staff absence for positive impact.

2. Physical health

- Ensure Student Development team have staff available at main campuses who are trained in smoking cessation support
- Work with Bedford College Services to further improve the range of healthy meals on offer and to promote the benefits of healthy eating
- Involve students in developing and promoting healthy eating choices
- Increase take-up of sport and physical fitness activity, particularly among students not traditionally accessing enrichment programmes
- Clarify College policy in relation to use of electronic cigarettes.

3. Sexual health

- Further develop links with external agencies to improve the range of sexual health provision for students in College and offsite
- Extend current sexual health services to include pregnancy testing
- Promote counselling to students attending the Student Wellbeing Zone as a way to discuss any concerns they have about their emotional well-being in their sexual relationships.

4. Mental and emotional health

- Respond to increasing needs for support relating to students' mental health issues
- Develop protocols to ensure the College benefits from newly-established links with Samaritans
- Explore new strategies for promoting safe levels of alcohol consumption and good mental health, including using national initiatives such as National Mental Health Day
- Update and disseminate the substance misuse policy

- Respond to identified needs for CPD for teaching and student support staff to increase awareness and expertise in supporting students with mental health issues
- Deliver workshops for tutors on the benefits of the Counselling Service for their students, where there are concerns about mental, emotional or sexual health and wellbeing
- Continue to develop and promote workshops for students delivered by the counsellors around low self-esteem, anger management, bullying and respect
- Continue to meet the commitments of Mindful Employer through inclusion in the Health and Safety Manager's 1:1 new manager briefings.

Communication strategy

This strategy is communicated via the website, staff intranet and Update staff newsletter. Health and wellbeing is widely promoted to students and staff via:

- Student Services website www.yourspaceonline.net
- Freshers' Fair, Health and Wellbeing Week and other events
- Student handbooks
- Enrichment programme
- Tutorial programme
- Group and one-to-one interventions by tutors and Student Services, including Wellbeing Zones
- Staff development programme
- New staff induction, including health and safety e-learning modules covering core elements of good health at work
- Essential Health & Safety information for staff on StaffNet and included in handbook for new staff.

Monitoring strategy

Progress against this strategy will be reviewed annually by the Healthy College group. Measures include:

- Annual distance travelled survey of student health and behaviours
- Delivery and take-up of services and activities including counselling, enrichment, sexual health talks, Chlamydia screens, C-card issues, smoking cessation – all reported annually through the self-assessment process
- Student feedback through student conference and student voice group meetings themed around health issues
- College Safety Committee is a statutory body which monitors and initiates improvements in health, safety and welfare for staff and students
- Executive performance monitoring of staff absence
- Staff development records
- Take-up of Employee Assistance Programme and mini health checks
- Health & Safety audit of student health needs assessments

- British Safety Council 5 Star audit to include wider aspects of wellbeing.

Links to other policies

The following policies and procedures also relate to the health and wellbeing of students and staff:

- Substance misuse policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- Tutorial policy
- Condom distribution (Undercover c-card) policy
- Health and safety policy and related procedures
- Smoke-free college policy
- Absence management procedure
- Employee Assistance Programme

Healthy College Group
June 2013