



# SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

## Mount Compass Area School

### School mental health service

The Department for Education is implementing a mental health service for students that will provide mental health practitioners based in schools.

Our school will have a School Mental Health Practitioner from August 9<sup>th</sup> 2023. The SMHP will be on site Wednesday, every second Thursday and Friday.

### Role of school mental health practitioners

School Mental Health Practitioners (SMHP) will be based at Mount Compass Area School to provide an early intervention mental health service. They will not provide clinical diagnosis or treatment.

Mental health practitioners are based in schools to support young people with mild to moderate and emerging mental health concerns.

Practitioners may provide a range of services, including:

- assessing student mental health needs and concerns
- supporting students to develop strategies to manage distress and maintain their mental health
- contributing to referral and case management processes for students with more complex mental health presentations
- supporting referrals and linking to external support services as required
- developing the mental health literacy of their school communities.

Practitioners have formal training in psychology, social work and/or occupational therapy and experience working in mental health related settings. They work collaboratively with students and families, education staff, other support service providers and external agencies to support young people to improve their psychological health and emotional wellbeing.

# How does the service work?

The SMHS provides a brief intervention service – short term, time limited support.

The practitioners work alongside the student and family to identify difficulties, determine goals and complete a SMHS wellbeing safety plan. This information is then used to plan future sessions.

There is often a large focus on skill building and providing helpful information to support students to develop coping strategies and assist students and families to understand their current situation.

# Is there a cost?

The SMHS is free. The SMHS is fully funded by the Department for Education and is offered with no out of pocket costs to students and their families.

# Role of external health providers

Diagnosis and treatment of mental health issues will continue to be the responsibility of general practitioners, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and other health providers. However, the SMHS will help with triaging and referring students into external services.

# Why we need this service

Increasing numbers of students are experiencing mental health concerns that are impacting on their learning.

A recent audit by the Department for Education found that most of the investment in student mental health and wellbeing has been focused on:

- general wellbeing strategies available to all students
- support and responses for students with complex mental health concerns.

This means there is a gap in responses to students with mild to moderate and emerging mental health concerns.

Following a feasibility study, the department identified that a new mental health service was needed to address this gap. It complements the existing wellbeing work occurring in schools through the employment of trained mental health practitioners.

# Other wellbeing supports available

Our school currently offers a range of programs and initiatives to support student mental health and wellbeing.

# Contact

Mount Compass Areas School Wellbeing Leader 8556 8219