Mental Health Policy

Policy Number:
065-2021

Academic Year:
2026/2027 Onwards

Target Audience:
All Staff

Summary of Contents
To outline the Colleges commitment to providing a healthy, safe, and supportive working environment that promotes positive mental health of all its employees.

Enquiries
Any enquiries about the contents of this document should be addressed to:

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Review Information (Responsible Owner):

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Last Reviewed:	July 2026
Next Review:	July 2027

Change Type at last Review:
~~No~~/Minor/~~Significant~~ (delete as appropriate)

Approval/Noting By:

CMT:	9 October 2026
Lead GB Committee:	Finance & Staffing
Governing Body:	October 2026

Related Documents:
Sick Absence Policy
Stress Policy

Superseded Documents (if applicable):
N/A

Date of Equality of Opportunity and Good Relations Screening (Section 75):
January 2021

Date of Last Accessibility Screening:
August 2023

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1.0 Change History

Changes to this Policy are documented in Appendix 1 of this document. When reading electronic copies of this document, you can click here to view the change history.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 The College is committed to providing a healthy, safe, and supportive working environment that promotes positive mental health of all its employees. Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being and affects how individuals think, feel and act.

2.2 The College recognises that individuals may experience different levels of mental ill-health and that it may develop at any stage.

The College is committed to raising awareness of mental health matters and has signed up and committed to the Mental Health Charter, whichis jointly produced by the Equality Commission, Action Mental Health, Disability Action, Mindwise, Mental Health Foundation and Niamh. The Charter provides a framework for working towards mentally healthy workplaces.

2.3 The College has put in place measures to help and support employees with mental health and provides training and techniques to encourage employees to look after their own mental health and build resilience.

2.4 The College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 in its policies and practices.

2.5 The College will provide this policy in alternative formats on request where reasonably practicable, e.g., Braille, Large Print, Computer Disk, Audio Formats, etc, and/or alternative language.

3.0 Aim of the Policy

3.1 The aim of this policy is to promote the mental wellbeing of all staff and ensure they are treated fairly and equally by:

- providing information, support services and raising awareness about mental wellbeing;
- providing opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing and encourage employees to look after their own mental health and build resilience;
- providing training to Managers to ensure they are equipped to support employees: and
- promoting policies and practices that promote wellbeing.

4.0 Definition

4.1 Mental illness is a medically diagnosed condition, which can range from the severe end of the spectrum to the mild.

4.2 Mental health difficulties can affect people at any stage in their lives and may include:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Phobias
- Eating Disorders
- Schizophrenia
- Psychosis
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Personality Disorders
- Bipolar Disorder

Mental wellbeing issues can affect everyone at any time.

5.0 Objectives of the Policy

5.1 The College will:

- provide information for employees to increase their awareness of mental wellbeing;
- provide opportunities for employees to look after their mental wellbeing, through physical activity, activities and social events;
- help develop skills among staff to reduce stress, increase resilience and improve coping skills;
- endeavour to identify and address any aspects of the working environment that may adversely affect mental wellbeing;
- encourage self-awareness for staff to recognise problems at an early stage;
- ensure adequate systems of support are in place;
- offer employees the opportunity to access flexible working/work life balance;
- through an ongoing programme of training and awareness training, reduce the stigma associated with mental health;
- provide prevention training for line managers to support staff and advise how to manage their own mental health through self-care;
- provide support for staff to assist with recognising the early signs and symptoms for early intervention with students and how to manage their own mental health through self-care;
- manage conflict quickly and encourage a workplace free from bullying and harassment, racism or discrimination;
- show a positive attitude to job applicants with mental health issues, including having positive statement in recruitment literature;
- ensure that all staff involved in the recruitment process are aware of mental health issues and the Disability Discrimination Act;

- endeavour to ensure there are sufficient trained mental health first aiders available on campuses;

- ensure that this policy is linked to other College policies, e.g. Sickness Absence, Stress Management and Dignity at Work Policies;

- Utilise Mental Health Action Plans for those who may have suffered from mental health and for new starts as part of their health declaration process to show commitment to mental health; and

- work with other relevant agencies to rehabilitate staff who had, or have, mental illness.

6.0 Roles

CMT and Human Resources are responsible for the iongoing review of the policy.

The Internal Equality Working Group will contribute to the ongoing workings f the policy.

6.1 Steps will be taken to raise awareness of mental health and stress issues by the Human Resources Team who will continue to monitor stress among the workforce in the College

7.0 Assistance and Support

7.1 Sources of assistance and support will be identified to assist staff when dealing with mental health issues.

Staff can access support directly from their Head of Department/Head of Unit or Human Resources who have undergone training.

Access to trained Mental Health First Aiders click here, and Lena by Inspire provides an independent confidential counselling service with access to qualified counsellors on the Inspire helpline by contacting 0800 800 0002 and are available 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.

Lena by Inspire Wellbeing Hub is available for all staff and provides instant access to a range of information, guidance, screening, and intervention/ self-referral tools, specifically to help care for individual wellbeing needs. The Inspire Support hub can be accessed: click here (user name SERCSTAFF)

7.2 Pastoral Care visits to provide support and assistance and can be arranged by Human Resources.

Access to the Mind Yourself Wellbeing App, in the Healthy Mind Section for information and wellbeing directory of support services click here

Dignity at Work Advisors to assist staff with concerns in relation to bullying and harassment which may be affecting their mental health.

Menopause Advocates to assist staff and support staff who may be experiencing symptoms which may be affecting their mental health.

7.3 Human Resources can access further support from sources such as Occupational Health or External Agencies. All matters relating to the mental health of staff will be treated with the strictest confidence. Information will only be shared with the consent of the staff member.

8.0 Monitoring Arrangements

8.1 Human Resources will monitor the policy on a regular basis to assess effectiveness and consider the equality implications.

9.0 Communication Plan

The policy will be placed on the SERC intranet and will be available to all staff.

10.0 Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually, or when the need for change has been identified.

Appendix 1: Document Change History

Version	Date	Change Detail
1.0	December 2020	Created
1.1	June 2023	Updates Made: • Update at Para 4.1 Objectives to reflect MH Action plans are developed and in place. • Update at Para 5.2 to clarify role of College's internal equality group.
1.2	August 2023	Transferred to new Accessibility Template
1.3	December 24	Cover sheet updated to reflect the recent structure changes, contact details and new annual cycle. Section 7 Assistance and support web page link updated. Section 9 communication plan updated to reflect accessible on the intranet. Section 10 review period updated to annually
1.4	August 2025	Reviewed and no changes necessary
1.5	August 2026	Reviewed, links in section 7, Assistance and support web page links updated Section 7, Menopause Advocates added