

Mental Health Support for Students at Backwell School – May 2017

- Each student is in a tutor group of no more than 32 students with usually one tutor. On occasions the group is shared, but where this happens regular communications between the tutors occur. The tutor sees the student every day and is available to speak to the student, by appointment, at any time. Backwell School policy is that, where possible, a tutor stays with the group from Year 7 to Year 11, developing a clear knowledge of the student.
- There is very specific emphasis within Year 7 on the transition between Key Stage 2 and 3, and the reduction of factors that cause anxiety in young people. The experienced Year 7 team allow for a stepping stone for students into the rest of the school.
- Each student is attached to a unit which has a Pastoral Leader and Deputy Leader, except in the Sixth Form where there are no deputies. The Pastoral team are available to support the student and parent with concerns over mental health. This group of extremely experienced staff can advise regarding reduced timetables, the 'Return to Learn' base, Children and Adolescents Mental Health Service (CAMHS) referrals and signpost other external agencies who can offer help and advice. The Pastoral team know your child well and are available for email, telephone conversations or meetings. School policy is that email and telephone requests for advice will always be returned within five working days, usually much quicker.
- Students who require extra support for a specific educational need are looked after by the school's Education Support team. They offer 1:1 and small group support, as well as literacy and numeracy catch up for students who need a boost.
- The school employs a Parent Support Advisor who is able to visit parents at home or discuss over the phone, concerns the parents have about the behaviour, mental health or attendance of their child.
- Students are able to access an IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) advisor who can support them with their future plans, career paths or further education options.
- The school has a trained counsellor who is in school on two days a week. This service is for the more acute cases, bereavement counselling, family break up and other serious concerns. There is a waiting list for this service, but the counsellor also runs drop in sessions when she is in school.
- Mindfulness Colouring Sessions are held at lunchtime in the library.
- A Learning Mentor is available to support students with academic or learning concerns. This service is arranged by referral through the Pastoral Leader.
- Post-16 students can access a Sixth Form Student Advisor and a Sixth Form Study Supervisor who are available by appointment at the school.

- A School Nurse visits every Wednesday for students to discuss medical concerns; these can be physical illness, mental health, sexual health or any other worries. She can be seen by appointment either by self-referral, through the Pastoral Leader, or via a lunchtime drop-in session.
- The school has access to the Education Welfare Service who can advise parents regarding attendance issues, but can also support parents with transport, housing or other needs.
- One Assistant Headteacher is the Designated Safeguarding Lead who is responsible for all child protection issues and allegations of abuse. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead is also available.
- All teaching and support staff understand the mental health care needs of students and can be approached to give support to students who have concerns.
- The school's behaviour support includes a provision called 'Return to Learn'. This is staffed by one permanent teacher, supported by an Education Support Teaching Assistant (ESTA) and administration staff. This provision provides personalised behaviour, academic and social/emotional support for a range of needs. In particular Periods 1 and 2 are currently used to help support students with anxiety about returning to school and help them to springboard back into mainstream education.
- The library stocks a variety of books on mental health suitable for all age groups and with the purpose of trying to help support individual students' resilience – "shelf help". The books, both fiction and non-fiction, contain advice, support and personal stories to help students deal with anxiety, depression or problems such as bullying.
- Where required the school will make further referrals to the local authority's 'vulnerable learners service' and on rare occasion refer students to other provision where there is more appropriate support for their anxiety / mental health needs

We believe in working at all times to develop the resilience of our students and this is regularly revisited in school assemblies, teaching and learning strategies in the classroom as well as the strong pastoral system. All students are encouraged to become involved in the life beyond the classroom. The opportunities for extra-curricular activities are very varied and can be accessed by all students.

Whilst the school endeavours to support all of our students emotional mental health and wellbeing needs and it is our responsibility to keep them safe; we do not have medically trained practitioners on site and can therefore offer no medical support or therapeutic advice where either physical or mental health is concerned. If you have any concerns regarding the health of your child, you should refer to your local surgery for treatment and support.