



# PASTORAL POLICY (including Mental Health Procedures)

## Policy area

Students

## Statutory regulation

N/A

## SLT Lead

Upper School Assistant Head, Personal Development and Wellbeing  
(Fiona Parsons)  
Lower School Head (Karen Thomas)

## Last Updated

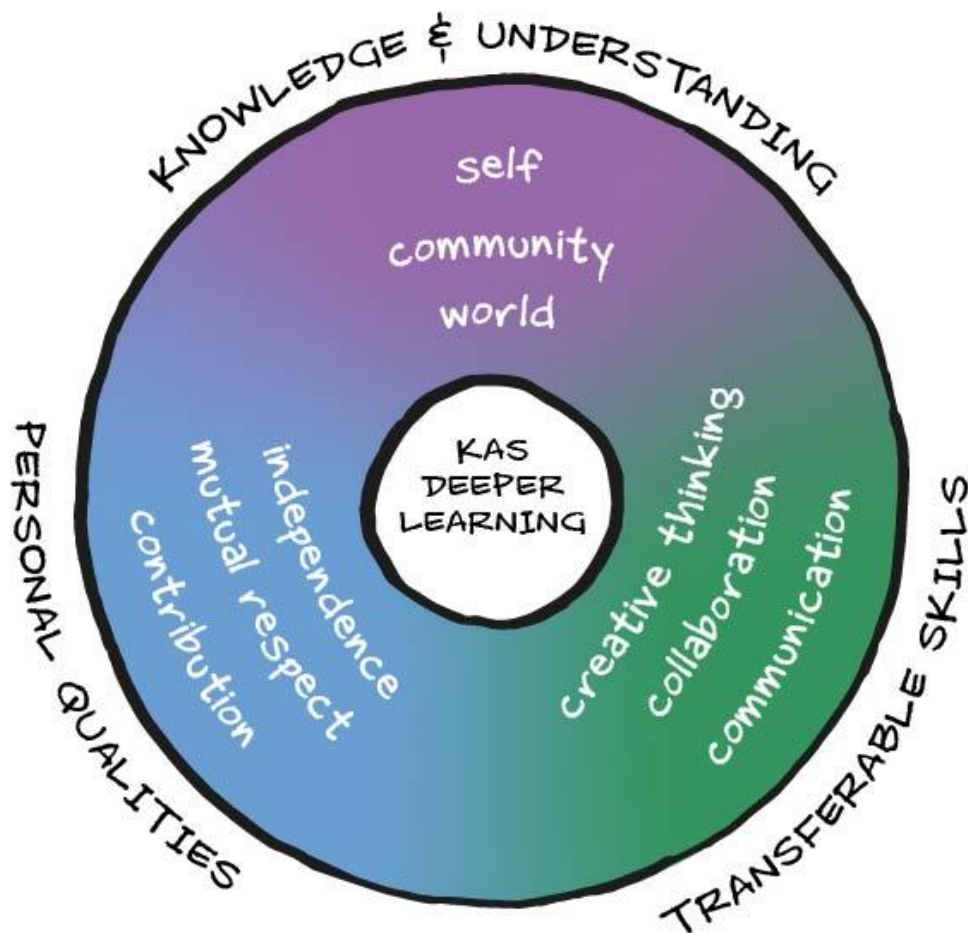
November 2024

## Last Approved

Approved by Education Committee and then approved by Council  
(March 2025)

## Next review

Spring 2027



## THE DEEPER LEARNING WHEEL

All King Alfred policies relating to students are informed by our vision of a holistic education, which is represented by the graphic above. The Pastoral Policy connects to each of the three sections:

In **Knowledge and Understanding**, we aim for our students to develop a strong understanding of themselves emotionally and in relation to others. Social responsibility is actively promoted across the school.

In **Personal Qualities**, our ethos, pedagogy and expectations encourage empathy, kindness, independence and respect. We promote contribution to others and mutual respect across the school.

In **Transferable Skills**, we provide opportunities for students to develop creative, collaborative and sensitive communication skills that they can apply and transfer across their different interactions and communications with others.

# THE KING ALFRED SCHOOL PASTORAL POLICY

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies:

- Safeguarding Children in Education Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

For further information about specific Pastoral Policies and Procedures, please refer to one of the following documents:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy (including the Mutual Respect Document)
- Drugs policy
- KCSIE 2024
- Mental Health, Well-being & Emotional Health Procedure (Annexe)
- Pastoral Support Plans
- The Counselling Procedures
- The PSHE Guidelines
- The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural agenda (SMSC)
- The RSE Policy

## 1. Introduction

At The King Alfred School (KAS), our pastoral vision is grounded in the belief that each student is an individual capable of growth, self-regulation, and contributing positively to our school community. Our approach to behaviour and wellbeing reflects our commitment to the holistic development of every child, guided by the principles of mutual respect, empathy, and person-centred care.

The school puts child-centred learning at the heart of its work and holds pastoral education to be as important as academic education.

For this approach to teaching and learning to be effective and successful, it is crucial that all teachers have as much knowledge as possible of the students in their care; this is applicable to all teachers, both as subject specialists and form tutors.

Pastoral care can be defined as the awareness that the whole child as an individual has to be considered when decisions and judgements are being made. We are a child centred school and we recognise the importance of emotional wellbeing. We believe that a child cannot flourish unless their emotional intelligence is nurtured.

We believe that positive tutor/pupil/parent relationships provide the foundations for an effective pastoral policy.

## 2. AIMS

Our aim is for students to leave as secure, confident and responsible individuals who have a personal sense of identity and pride in all their achievements.

We want them to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and others, the environment and society.

We aim to foster the understanding and character attributes such as empathy and resilience, to deal with challenges they face and to enjoy a fulfilling and happy life.

### 3. Principles

At KAS, we operate on the core principles of **Unconditional Positive Regard (UPR)**, **empathy**, and **personal responsibility**. We believe that every student has the potential to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally when they are treated with respect and care.

- **Intrinsic Motivation:** We aim to cultivate behaviour that is motivated by an internal sense of right and wrong, rather than relying solely on external rewards or punishments. Our students are encouraged to understand and embody the school's values in their everyday actions.
- **Respect and Empathy:** Guided by Carl Rogers' person-centred approach, we provide an environment where each student feels heard, valued, and understood. We prioritise empathy in our interactions, striving to understand the individual needs and experiences of every child.
- **Holistic Development:** We view each student as a whole person, capable of growth and self-improvement. When mistakes are made, we see them as opportunities for learning and development, supporting students through challenges with the goal of developing personal responsibility and emotional intelligence.

### 4. Culture

The culture at KAS is one of **mutual respect, self-regulation, informality** and **emotional literacy**. It is a culture where students feel empowered to make decisions and are encouraged to take ownership of their learning and behaviour.

- **Positive Relationships:** We foster a culture where students and adults engage in open, respectful communication. We encourage students to speak with confidence, whether interacting with peers or adults, and to navigate social situations with care and thoughtfulness.
- **Empathy and Care:** Empathy is central to how we respond to students' needs, both individually and within the wider community. Our pastoral care is based on a deep understanding of each child's experiences, ensuring they feel supported in their emotional and social development.
- **Restorative Approach:** We promote a restorative approach to behaviour, where mistakes are seen as opportunities for growth. Our students are encouraged to reflect on their actions, understand their impact on others, and work towards repairing relationships. The focus is on restoration rather than retribution.

### 5. Structure

The structure of our pastoral support system is designed to ensure that every student receives the guidance, support, and understanding they need to flourish.

- **Personalised Support:** Students are supported through a tailored approach that considers their unique developmental needs. This includes the PSHE programme, behaviour contracts, pastoral plans and regular discussions with staff members who act as mentors and guides.
- **Guidelines and Parameters:** While we provide students with the freedom to make their own decisions, we also establish clear guidelines that help them understand the expectations of behaviour both inside and outside the classroom. These guidelines provide a framework within which students can develop and express their values.

- **Collaborative Environment:** We believe in the power of partnership—working closely with families, internal teams, and, when necessary, external specialists to ensure a coordinated approach to each student's wellbeing. This collaboration is key to providing the right interventions and support when challenges arise.

## 6. Systems

Our systems are designed to reinforce our pastoral principles and foster a positive, supportive school environment. We use CPOMS and SIMS as principal information systems to capture and track student data.

- **Supportive Interventions:** When behaviour falls short of expectations, we approach the situation with understanding and support. This may include mentoring, behavioural contracts, restorative conversations, and collaboration with families and external professionals, ensuring that every child receives the help they need.
- **Restorative Practice:** In cases where behaviour disrupts the community, our first priorities are to end the disruptive behaviour and support those affected. We then focus on identifying the underlying causes of the behaviour, offering the necessary support for the individual involved to learn from the experience and grow.
- **Monitoring and Reflection:** We regularly monitor the progress of students who need additional support, providing ongoing reflection and feedback. This ensures that our interventions are effective and that students are continually learning and improving.
- **Clear Boundaries with Flexibility:** While we have clear expectations for behaviour, we recognise that children and adolescents will occasionally make mistakes. We embrace these moments as opportunities for learning, offering a compassionate response that focuses on growth rather than punishment. In cases where behaviour continues to be an issue, we work with families to determine if KAS is still the right environment for that student.

## 7. Procedures

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher in Lower School or form tutor in Upper School as appropriate if they have any concerns or worries. Urgent concerns are given immediate attention.

Parents are encouraged to share any information about home circumstances or medical matters which may affect the children's well-being and behaviour in school. A child may receive a Pastoral Plan, overseen by the Head of Year in the US to support their wellbeing in school. Matters that pertain significantly to a child's mental health will be addressed using the Mental Health Procedure (see Appendix 1)

Any sensitive information will be treated as confidential, unless it is felt beneficial for the pupil's welfare that relevant staff should be informed. In these circumstances consent from parents will be sought to pass on the information to staff who meet regularly to discuss and review pastoral care issues.

When a student/ teacher/ pupil/ parent reports an incident, the usual procedure would be to contact the class teacher/ tutor as the first point of contact in the school. If the problem persists, they should liaise with the Head/Deputy Head of Lower School, Head of Year or the Assistant Head, Personal Development and Wellbeing as appropriate. The Head is regularly informed of pastoral issues. We use CPOMS to record incidents including behavioural, safeguarding and pastoral ones and the pastoral team meet regularly as a team and the HoYs with the AHP in US to ensure

each case is given careful attention. Analysis of data informs curriculum, care and planning.

The school cannot promise the unconditional confidentiality of information in a situation where a child may be in danger or where a child's welfare may be threatened. The school has a legal responsibility to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard children. In making decisions about what to share the needs of the child are considered as paramount. There is a separate document detailing guidelines for staff (see the Staff Code of Conduct).

On rare occasions, some incidents may be dealt with immediately by the Head/Deputy Head Lower School or Assistant Head, Personal Development and Wellbeing Upper School who may decide to seek advice from The Head and the Safeguarding Team (please refer to the Safeguarding Children in Education policy for more details). See Appendix 1 for key information from the Mental Health Procedure.

## **8. Summary**

The King Alfred School's pastoral approach is a carefully structured, empathetic, and person-centred system that supports students in becoming confident, self-regulated, and compassionate individuals. By prioritising respect, empathy, and intrinsic motivation, we help students grow not only academically, but also emotionally and socially. Our systems, structures, and culture are designed to guide each child on their unique journey, ensuring they leave KAS as well-rounded young adults ready to contribute positively to society.

## Mental Health Procedure

### **1 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE KAS WELL-BEING & MENTAL HEALTH PROCEDURE?**

At KAS we have a fully committed pastoral team that includes Form Tutors, Heads of Year, Assistant Head, Personal development and well-being and the Head of Counselling. We believe that the promotion of Well-being has enormous benefits for each child.

It is estimated that up to 10% of all children and young people suffer from a diagnosable mental health disorder, with this percentage growing significantly since covid, and these can often lead to low self-esteem and social isolation and the knock-on effect can mean that they can underperform at school. Disorders can appear in many ways such as self-harm, eating disorder, depression, underperforming or disruptive and anti-social behaviour.

All staff at KAS – be it teachers, admin staff, kitchen staff and grounds staff are part of a wider community that are well placed to observe pupils and can often help in identifying potential problems. Any concerns are always passed on to the pastoral team who will be able to look at the concern in context for the child concerned, and who can also assist parents or carers to access professional support (e.g. medical interventions, counselling, psychological or psychiatric support) as part of its responsibility under Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

KAS promotes healthy lives – mentally, emotionally and physically, as part of the PSHE curriculum and are proactive in identifying potential problems early on. Therefore, KAS has a strong pastoral system which gives all staff the opportunity to identify, report and watch behaviour which may point to physical or mental health problems.

Young people often experience difficult moments at some point during their school lives which is normal and part of life's rich tapestry. However, sometimes – for some pupils, these dips may be more persistent or challenging and harder to overcome and these can often be indicative of deeper issues. KAS has a co-ordinated approach to helping pupils manage these issues and works closely with parents and carers and if necessary, experts beyond the school to help each pupil individually.

The School is not a specialist physical or mental health facility and our main objective will always be to educate students as effectively as possible. However, in the face of persistent concerns, parents and carers may have heightened or unrealistic expectations of the school. This procedure aims to help parents to understand what the School can do to help and what it can only do in collaboration with health experts.

The very nature of this procedure aims to highlight the King Alfred Pastoral commitment to raising awareness among staff, pupils and parents in order to continue to promote emotional, mental and physical well-being of each of our pupils. As such KAS will review this procedure regularly to incorporate any official research by the government and other appropriate bodies to ensure our pupils lead a healthy life.

## **2. COMMON MENTAL HEALTH RISK FACTORS**

There are common risk factors that may influence the chances of a young person developing a mental health disorder. In some cases, mental health problems can be an indicator that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

These may include:

- Physical illness or learning disability
- Difficult temperament or communication difficulties
- Family factors, such as parental conflict, family mental health issues, difficult sibling relationships.
- Psychological reaction to adverse events (bereavement, bullying, abuse etc.).
- Environmental factors and life changes, such as socio-economic disadvantages, homelessness, medical issues, or frequent moving of home and/or school.

The details of the type of mental health issue are not likely to affect the course of action that the school takes (see Appendix 1 Flow Chart) unless there is an immediate risk of harm to the student, in which case the School's Safeguarding Children in Education procedure and associated procedures would be followed.

## **3. PROMOTING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH**

King Alfred has always worked holistically to enhance the social and emotional development of its students. Being an emotionally and mentally healthy school requires an on-going commitment from both staff and pupils. The pupil's commitment is based on the positive and caring culture within the school of kindness and mutual respect regardless of physical, cultural, racial or any other differences and these guidelines can be found in the KAS Framework and School's policies on Safeguarding, Behaviour and Anti-Bullying.

In addition, the School has in place the following for an emotionally healthy school:

- **A carefully considered PSHE Programme** that includes discussions and activities to raise awareness about what emotional and mental health is, how to achieve it and what support is available for students who are experiencing difficulties.
- **Pastoral support** e.g. Heads of Year, Form Tutors, School Counsellor, AHP, LS Head & Deputy (See **Counselling At KAS**)
- **Self-Referral and drop-in Options** to see the school counsellors who also advises on ways of being referred to external psychiatric or other counselling services.
- **An active and supportive team of Learning Support Teachers** who help to re-inforce the self-esteem and mental health of pupils.
- **Peer Mentors/Buddies (KPLs)** pupils and staff who are trained and appointed to act as mentors for younger pupils or their peers.
- **Teaching to help pupils recognise their personal strengths** to help themselves or other pupils.
- **Mutual Respect** – pupils and staff are encouraged to value and respect every member of the KAS community and to build constructive relationships using Form Hour and Restorative Justice when needed.
- **All staff are encouraged to listen to pupils and hear what they say** through regular Safeguarding training and via Pupil Voice and Pupil Council, School Six and Circle time.



- **Snack and Chat** Sessions which are run informally to allow pupils to talk about issues that are important to them and to get guidance on conflict resolution.
- **An Emphasis on the Personal Development of each Student** through a strong encouragement for pupils to develop friendships through engagement in the extra-curricular life of the school, opportunities for pupil-led activities like the Village Project, KPL Programme, Council and School Six are actively encouraged.
- **Identification and Monitoring of Vulnerable Pupils** – through close collaboration between the academic and pastoral staff, clear lines of communication with parents and a highly responsive pastoral team intervention when necessary to safeguard the well-being of the child.
- **Reasonable and appropriate adjustments** within the school for students with physical or mental health issues.
- **Support and Training for Staff** in pastoral care for those who may be involved in supporting physical and/or mental health issues with pupils.
- **Joint collaboration** between KAS pastoral staff, counselling team and parents and external experts e.g. specialist adolescent mental health units, Designated Safeguarding Leads and Children's Social Services.
- **Fostering a strong and trusting relationship with parents** with the well-being of the pupil as the focus.
- **Provision of regular presentations for parents** – with invited speakers or members of staff dealing with relevant issues common in young people and adolescents e.g. internet safety, positive friendships, eating disorders, self-harm, substance abuse, teenage parties and exam stress and anxiety.
- **Key U/S pastoral staff are Youth Mental Health First Aiders / Champions (MHFA)** and we follow the guidance from the MHFA Foundation.

#### **4. COUNSELLING AT KAS**

Counselling has been offered at King Alfred for over 50 years. We have a committed counselling team that works alongside pastoral staff to support pupils and is part of the fabric of pastoral care offered at KAS. There is no stigma to counselling at KAS and the opportunity to talk things through with an independent person is actively encouraged and is a valuable additional support that is offered to students.

Students in Upper School can self-refer without parental consent with the knowledge that the counselling is confidential whilst following Department of Education guidelines on counselling in Schools.

#### **5. IDENTIFYING A PROBLEM – GUIDANCE FOR STAFF**

Supporting a distressed pupil can be extremely time-consuming and challenging. You may know the pupil well from your lessons or clubs but it is important to look objectively at the situation and to work with the Pastoral Team to establish how best to support the pupil.

Supporting pupils requires good communication and teamwork. Consult with Designated Safeguarding Leads, Assistant Head, Personal development and well-being, or Heads of Year or in Lower School the relevant form tutor, and always keep relevant pastoral staff informed of your actions and interactions with the pupil. Relevant information must always be recorded either on Sims in Upper School or on the Pastoral Notes in Lower School. It may be appropriate to use a Safeguarding Form – and any concerns should be discussed with the DSL.

Think carefully about what you can and cannot do to help the pupil and be realistic, ensuring that the pupil clearly understands the limits of your role.

Be prepared to take a firm line about the extent of your involvement so that it does not impact on your own teaching and well-being.

Additional training and support is always available if required. We currently follow the Mental Health First Aid England approach to support in urgent cases in the Upper School HoY team who are currently trained Mental Health First Aiders or Champions and the AHT Pastoral is a registered MHFA Instructor Member.

## **6. GENERAL ADVICE FOR STAFF (TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH POLICIES AND GUIDANCE ON SAFEGUARDING AND PASTORAL CARE)**

- Follow up on any concerns, however small, with pupils through the Pastoral Team (see Appendix 1 - Flow Chart for Staff Guidance); be proactive.
- Always be prepared to listen to pupils.
- If you are concerned about a pupil – ask for a Snapshot from other staff to see if your concern is shared.
- Consult with your Head of Year to consider the most effective and supportive way of communicating your concerns to the Assistant Head Personal development and well-being, and then, if appropriate, to the pupil and their parents using the established procedures.
- If you suspect that a problem with a pupil is not straightforward, or if there is no improvement in the pupil despite your initial intervention, do not delay in contacting the Head of Year or Assistant Head Personal development and well-being. Concerns can also be raised with the Head of Counselling.
- Always be mindful of the guidance on confidentiality contained within the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

Advice on external referrals can be obtained via the Head of Year and the Deputy DSL who will liaise with the Head of Counselling. As a first port of call we would suggest involving the pupils GP or the pupil's local borough Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), when a referral is required. The school will work together with any family requiring assistance in these matters and continue to engage with the external services when required. Local drop-in and self-referral centres can also be recommended for adolescent or family counselling as well as parental support.

Staff and Parents alike should be aware that only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. However, staff are well placed to observe children day-to-day and identify those who may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

## **7. PROVIDING CONTINUING SUPPORT IN SCHOOL FOR A PUPIL RECEIVING MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT**

- **Keeping things “normal”**

While it is not the responsibility of KAS to replace, or act for, mental health experts if a pupil has mental or emotional health problems which are being treated, the School will seek to play a valuable role in supporting the pupil. Part of this may be simple as keeping school as a constant of “normal” life. When the pupil is in school, they should feel a part of the KAS Community.

- **Pastoral Plans & Team Around the Child Meetings (TAC)**

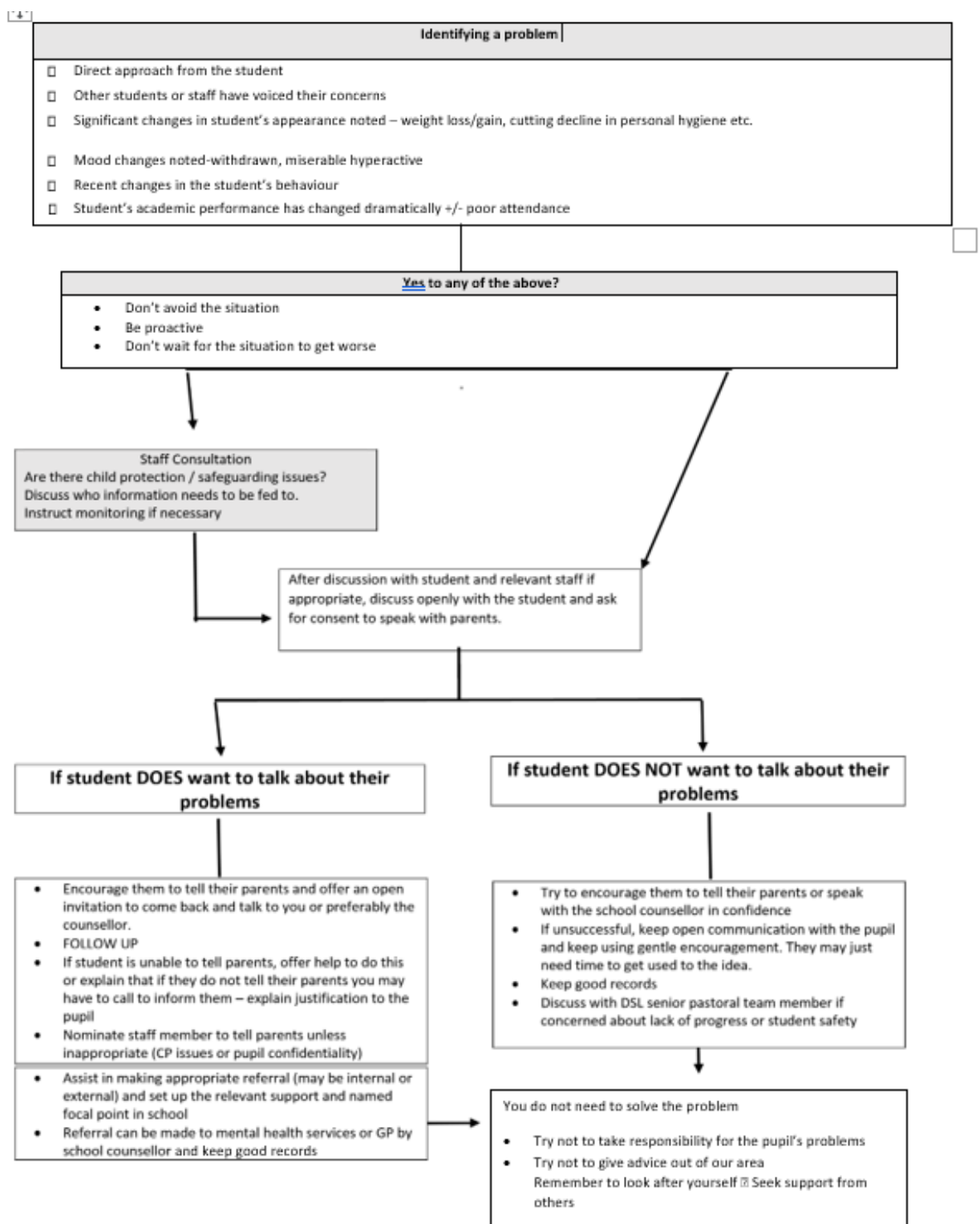
The Pastoral Team will prepare a Pastoral Care or Support plan for any student that needs additional Mental Health Support. As part of this, regular CIN meetings will be chaired by the school to include parents, staff and external agencies to ensure that the student is well supported.

- **Treatment and Medication**

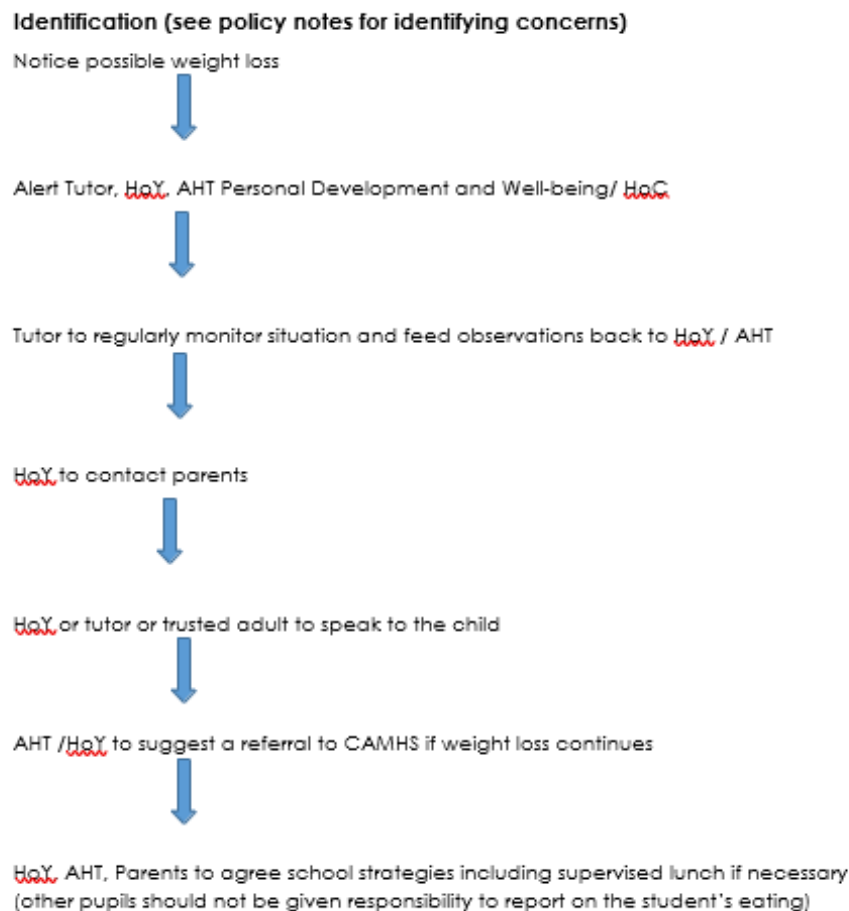
External treatment can have several types of support including different types of therapy, such as counselling, psychotherapy, cognitive behavioural therapy, alternative therapy such as hypnotherapy and/or medication. Parents should be open about medications so that staff can be supportive, particularly if the medication may result in side effects which could affect mood, focus and ability to sleep, all of which can impact on the pupil. The School nurse must also be informed of any medication so that there are no safety issues in the case of the pupil needing to be treated for any other medical issue. To ensure best practice, the nurse follows a medicines protocol – available from the School Nurse.

**Safeguarding, Child Protection and Welfare** Safeguarding Training is an essential part of understanding and dealing with well-being issues relating to children. All KAS staff must ensure that their CP training is up to date, according to statutory guidelines and the School's Safeguarding & Child Protection policy.

## 8. FLOW CHART FOR STAFF GUIDANCE



## **9.PROCEDURE FOR THE IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF A PUPIL WITH AN EATING DISORDER**



### **Management after notification from the parent or CAMHS**

- Once a diagnosis has been made, the school should be seen as a safe place and therefore will not be involved in weighing or policing students with an eating disorder, although we can provide supervised lunches where possible and necessary if parents are unable to do this. This would usually consist of the School nurse supervising up to 3 lunchtimes a week.
- The Pastoral Dept will liaise with external medical and psychology experts and work with teachers to help the school to support the pupil as far as reasonable possible to keep a normal school routine.

The school needs to identify any other children who may have been affected by the Eating Disorder and will offer the appropriate pastoral support. Any assistance offered to the pupil will be co-ordinated by the HoY in conjunction with the AHT.

- When working with outside agencies, we reserve the right to request the support plan for the student and also have correspondence to verify that the child is fit and healthy enough to attend school and, in specific circumstances such as overnight camps / trips, if they are well enough to participate.