



HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY (STAFF & STUDENTS)

Process Area	Student Services
Reference Number	STS/010
Directorate	Client Services

Issue No	Date	Details	Author	Approved	Next Review
001	April 2021	Merger of HRS/015 Mental Health & Stress Policy (Staff) and STS/012 Students Health & Wellbeing Policy.	RS	Governing Body	Feb 2024
002	Feb 2024	Minor changes to reflect update to policy titles section 6	RS	Governing Body	Feb 2027

If requested, the College will make the policy available in alternative formats to accommodate visual impairments. The policy can also be downloaded from the College website and made available in alternative languages upon request.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy outlines the framework within which the College's commitment to the promotion and maintenance of the Health and Wellbeing of staff and students.

Southern Regional College is committed to promoting and protecting the mental wellbeing, health and safety of its employees and students and recognises this is important for individuals' physical health, social wellbeing and productivity. The College recognises that mental wellbeing and stress are associated with many of the leading causes of illness and with this in mind has signed up to the Equality Commission's Mental Health Charter, which is a framework for employers to work towards improving mental health within the workplace.

Southern Regional College recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health issues is critical to positive work performance; student academic achievement and to the wider staff/student experience. All staff and students should be able to work; study and perform to the best of their ability in a safe and comfortable environment. The College has a general duty of care to all within its community and a responsibility to take action to support those in distress.

The College will continue to make the health and wellbeing of all staff and students an integral part of College life. The College's Student Health & Wellbeing strategy and Staff Health and Wellbeing action plan will focus on the wider issues of staff and student wellbeing such as motivation, self-esteem and the environment in which our staff work and students learn. Our health and wellbeing services are provided as part of a comprehensive range of support services provided to staff and students. They are underpinned by referrals where appropriate to external agencies with whom the College has effective and strong relationships.

Many factors in the workplace/educational setting influence the mental wellbeing of individual employees and students. Understanding and addressing the factors which impact people's mental wellbeing at work and study have a wide range of benefits, both for the individual and the College. The College acknowledges the importance of identifying, managing and reducing stress and workplace stress is a crucial part of a preventative approach to supporting mental health in the workplace and educational setting.

The College aims to create an environment that promotes the mental wellbeing of all employees and students. The College also aims to create and promote a culture whereby employees and students are able to talk openly about their job, course and mental health problems and to report difficulties without fear of discrimination or reprisal.

2. SCOPE

The policy applies to all staff and students of the College.

3. DEFINITIONS

Health and Wellbeing	The framework for the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices and Wellbeing programmes for students and the devising and implementing of such programmes, activities and training that will enhance their health and Wellbeing.
Mental Wellbeing	The ability to cope with the day-to-day stresses of life, work productively, interact positively with others and realise our own potential.
Health and Wellbeing Activities	The term used to describe a wide range of programmes, activities, practices and approaches designed to raise awareness of health and Wellbeing and to promote health and Wellbeing among all students.
Stress	As defined by the Health & Safety Executive the adverse reaction people can experience when exposed to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them and which can manifest itself in mental, emotional or physical strain or tension. Stress is not a medical diagnosis but severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of depression or anxiety or more severe mental health problems.
External Partners	For example, the Public Health Agency and Health Trusts.

4. RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 Governing Body and Chief Executive

The Governing Body and Chief Executive are responsible for ensuring that appropriate structures are in place for the implementation, review and evaluation of the Health and Wellbeing Policy and associated policies, procedures and activities.

4.2 All Staff

Staff should take reasonable measures to:

- raise awareness of Health & Wellbeing issues and signpost to relevant staff and students.
- identify any issue which may be causing stress and discuss with their line manager, or in circumstances where they feel unable to approach the line manager, the issue should be referred to a more senior member of staff, trade union representative, or a Senior Manager within the Human Resources team.
- avail of advice offered by the College if experiencing difficulties which are impacting their ability to work, such as, the services offered by an Independent Counselling Service or resources and signposting of external support agencies via HRD SharePoint site.
- comply with their contractual and statutory obligations in respect of the College employment policies and health and safety policies and procedures.

4.3 All Students

Students are:

- responsible for their Health and Wellbeing.
- responsible for respecting and valuing fellow students, staff and other stakeholders.
- responsible for highlighting concerns and issues that may impact on their health and wellbeing and ultimately their work.

- encouraged to avail of services and activities offered by the College in respect of Health and Wellbeing.
- encouraged to report to Student Support Services, any person about whom they have concerns with respect to their physical or mental wellbeing.

4.4 Managers

Managers should take all reasonable steps within their area of responsibility to:

- monitor the workplace, identify hazards and risks and take steps to eliminate or reduce these as far as reasonably practicable and ensure risks assessments are conducted and outcomes implemented.
- refer to the “HSE’s Management Standards” for guidance on how to assess work-related stressors.
- ensure recruitment procedures are carefully followed so that there is an appropriate fit between an employee’s abilities and the requirements of the post.
- ensure employees receive appropriate induction, resources, training, and meaningful development opportunities required to carry out their job.
- ensure information relating to the College health and safety arrangements and health and wellbeing promotion initiatives are passed on to the employees.
- advise employees they should participate in activities to assist in their mental wellbeing.
- ensure that employees are treated fairly and consistently.
- encourage open communication within their team about work pressures and to recognise signs of poor mental health.
- ensure employees are aware of the employee welfare/counselling arrangements available.
- monitor working hours and overtime to ensure that employees are not working excessive hours and monitor holidays to ensure employees are taking their full entitlement.
- ensure harassment and bullying are not tolerated within their team, as per the College’s Harassment Policy.
- direct employees who have raised a concern about mental wellbeing or stress within or outside work to appropriate support.
- be sympathetic towards employees who experience stress as a result of factors outside the workplace including the provision of family friendly policies.

4.5 Student Services

Student Services staff will:

- provide a range of confidential services to support student wellbeing.
- will advise lecturers and students on Health and Wellbeing programmes, activities, training requirements and on-going support to students, including referrals to support services where appropriate. Safeguarding officers will signpost.
- provide additional support for students who are enrolled and have a diagnosis of a mental illness or disorder.

4.6 Human Resources

Human Resources will:

- provide guidance and advice for managers on this policy.

- advise managers and employees on appropriate courses of action to take if an employee is believed to be suffering from poor mental wellbeing or stress.
- signpost employees to resources and promote awareness and training on mental wellbeing as appropriate.
- provide sickness absence statistics to line managers and trade union representatives.
- advise managers and other employees on training requirements and can provide on-going support to all employees and facilitate referrals to an Occupational Health Advisor where appropriate.

4.7 Occupational Health Advisor

Where the College is concerned that the work is adversely impacting on the employee's health, the College will consult with the employee with regard to how the matter may be progressed. This may include referral to the College's Occupational Health Advisor. Referral will be made in consultation with the Human Resources Department and the employee concerned.

5. DISTRIBUTION

- Policy Centre SharePoint
- SRC VLE
- SRC Website

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy (Students)
- Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Misuse Policy (All Staff)
- Anti-Bullying Policy (Students)
- Career Break Agreement
- Student Diary/Guide
- Disability Discrimination Act (1995)
- Disability Policy
- Organisational Development Policy
- Equality and Good Relations Policy (Staff & Students)
- Flexi Scheme Policy (Support Staff)
- Flexible Working - Right to Request Policy
- Harassment Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Health and Well Being Programme
- HSE Management Standards
- Learning Support Policy
- Mental Health Charter
- Mind Hub - HRD SharePoint site
- Network Acceptable Use Policy
- Safeguarding, Care & Welfare Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- SRC Student Health and Wellbeing Strategy & Action plan
- SRC Counselling Service literature
- SRC Student Charter (Code of Practice)
- TOIL Policy

7. REVIEW

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every three years.

8. FLOWCHART

None.