

Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that Illoura College provides a safe, supportive, inclusive and respectful learning environment that promotes positive mental health and wellbeing for all students. Illoura College recognises that student mental health and wellbeing can affect a student's ability to engage in learning, attend scheduled classes, participate in training and assessment, complete course requirements and maintain satisfactory academic progress. This policy aims to ensure that Illoura College identifies student wellbeing needs early, provides timely and appropriate support, promotes help-seeking, reduces stigma, and refers students to suitable internal or external support services where required.

2. Definitions

- **Mental health:** A person's emotional, psychological and social wellbeing. Mental health may affect how a student thinks, feels, behaves, communicates, learns and manages daily responsibilities.
- **Student Support Team** refers to designated Illoura College staff responsible for coordinating, delivering, and monitoring student support services. This includes Student Support Officers, the Training Coordinator, and other authorised staff involved in identifying student support needs, providing frontline assistance, coordinating interventions, developing Student Support Plans, and referring students to internal or external support services in accordance with college policies and regulatory requirements.
- **Student wellbeing** refers to the holistic state of a student's mental, physical, emotional, and social health, and their ability to engage effectively in learning and daily activities.
- **Intervention** refers to early, targeted actions taken by Illoura College in response to identified risks to a student's engagement, wellbeing, attendance, or academic progress. Interventions are typically short-term and may include academic guidance, counselling, additional support sessions, or referrals designed to prevent issues from escalating.
- **External support services:** Qualified professional, community, counselling, health, emergency, crisis or specialist services outside Illoura College.

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Commitment to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

Illoura College is committed to ensuring that all students experience a learning environment that is safe, supportive and conducive to their overall wellbeing. Illoura College recognises that mental health and wellbeing are important to student participation, learning, course progression and completion. The College will take reasonable steps to promote positive mental health, identify wellbeing risks, respond to student concerns in a timely manner and connect students with appropriate support services.

Illoura College's approach to student mental health and wellbeing is underpinned by compassion, inclusion, respect, privacy and early intervention.

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Staff are not expected to diagnose or treat mental ill-health. However, staff may be well placed to notice changes in a student's attendance, participation, behaviour, communication or academic performance and respond early by referring the student to appropriate support.

3.2 Principles of Student Mental Health and Wellbeing

- **Safe and Inclusive Environment:** Illoura College will provide a learning environment that is free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, racism, vilification, intimidation and prejudice.
- **Holistic Support:** Illoura College recognises that student wellbeing includes mental, physical, emotional, social, cultural and academic factors. Support will be provided in a way that considers the student's individual circumstances.
- **Early Identification and Intervention:** Illoura College will aim to identify signs of student wellbeing risk as early as possible and respond in a timely and appropriate manner.
- **Empowerment and Resilience:** Illoura College will encourage students to seek support early, build confidence, develop resilience and access strategies that support their learning and wellbeing.
- **Access to Support Services:** Illoura College will ensure that students are informed of available internal and external support services prior to enrolment, during orientation and throughout their studies.
- **Respect for Privacy and Confidentiality:** Illoura College will ensure that all information related to student mental health and wellbeing concerns is managed with respect for the student's privacy and confidentiality.
- **Non-Clinical Role of the College:** Illoura College does not provide clinical diagnosis, counselling treatment or medical care. Where a student requires specialist mental health, counselling, medical or crisis support, the College will refer the student to appropriate external services.

3.3 Designated Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Responsibility

Illoura College recognises that student mental health and wellbeing support is a shared responsibility across the organisation. However, to ensure clear leadership, accountability and oversight, the College has nominated two dedicated members of the leadership team to champion mental health and wellbeing support across the organisation:

- Ms. Nimi Sidhu - Director of Operations
- Mr. Anil Bhattarai - Director of Quality Assurance

These nominated leadership representatives are responsible for promoting a whole-of-RTO approach to student mental health and wellbeing, supporting the implementation of this policy, ensuring student support processes are monitored, and assisting staff to understand their responsibilities in relation to student wellbeing.

The nominated leadership representatives will work in collaboration with the Student Support Team, Training Coordinator, Trainers and Assessors, and administration staff to ensure that students are provided with timely, respectful and appropriate support. Where required, students may be referred to internal support services or appropriate external professional services. The nominated leadership representatives are not expected to provide clinical diagnosis, counselling or medical treatment. Their role is to provide leadership oversight, promote a supportive culture, ensure appropriate referral pathways are available, and monitor continuous improvement actions relating to student mental health and wellbeing.

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3.4 Identifying Mental Health and Wellbeing Risks

Illoura College identifies student mental health and wellbeing risks through a structured and ongoing process, including:

- enrolment information
- orientation activities
- student disclosure
- trainer and assessor observations
- attendance monitoring
- academic progress monitoring
- assessment outcomes
- student feedback
- complaints or appeals
- critical incidents
- direct referrals to the Student Support Team
- Indicators that a student may require wellbeing support may include:
 - frequent or unexplained absences
 - sudden decline in academic performance
 - failure to submit assessments
 - withdrawal from class participation
 - visible stress, distress or anxiety
 - changes in behaviour or communication
 - difficulty concentrating
 - fatigue or disengagement
 - conflict with peers or staff
 - student statements indicating distress, hopelessness or crisis
 - difficulty managing study, work, family or personal responsibilities

These indicators do not automatically mean that a student has a mental health condition. Staff must not diagnose students. The purpose of identifying these signs is to ensure the student is offered appropriate support or referral.

3.5 Staff Awareness and Professional Development

Illoura College will ensure that relevant staff undertake professional development in student wellbeing, mental health awareness, diversity, inclusion, disability awareness, cultural safety, privacy, referral processes and reasonable adjustment. Professional development may include:

- staff induction
- internal training sessions
- external webinars
- mental health awareness resources

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- refresher training
- staff meetings
- policy briefings
- review of relevant RTO mental health resources

3.6 Student Awareness and Access to Support

Illoura College will ensure that students are informed of available wellbeing and mental health support services through:

- pre-enrolment information
- Student Handbook
- orientation sessions
- College website
- LMS announcements
- student newsletters
- email reminders
- posters in student areas
- trainer reminders
- student support campaigns
- wellbeing awareness events

Students may access support by contacting the Student Support Team in person at reception or via email at sso@illoura.edu.au.

3.7 Counselling and External Referral Support

Illoura College may refer students to external support services where a student requires specialist mental health, counselling, medical, crisis, community or welfare support. External support services may include:

- GP or medical clinic
- psychologist or counsellor
- Lifeline
- Beyond Blue
- Headspace
- community mental health services
- emergency services
- international student support services
- housing, financial, legal or family support services

Where specialist external services are recommended, students will be advised that these services may have their own costs, eligibility requirements or waiting periods. Students are also welcome to use a service provider of their choice.

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4. Procedure

4.1 Identify Student Mental Health or Wellbeing Concern

A student mental health or wellbeing concern may be identified through the various processes mentioned in point 3.4 of this policy. Where a concern is identified, the staff member must respond respectfully, avoid judgement and refer the matter to the Student Support Team.

4.2 Initial Response by Staff

Where a student discloses a mental health or wellbeing concern, the staff member must:

- listen respectfully and calmly
- thank the student for sharing the concern
- avoid diagnosing the student
- avoid providing counselling or clinical advice
- reassure the student that support is available
- explain that the Student Support Team can assist
- refer the student to the Student Support Team
- escalate immediately if there is a serious safety risk

4.3 Referral to Student Support Team

Once a mental health or well-being concern has been identified, the staff member must refer the student to the Student Support Team. The referral should include only necessary and relevant information, such as:

- student name
- student ID
- course
- brief nature of concern
- date concern was identified
- whether urgent action is required
- any immediate safety concerns

Student support needs must be treated confidentially. Team members handling student support communication should exercise discretion and sensitivity, communicate only necessary information and manage support needs confidentially.

4.4 Student Support Meeting

The Student Support Team will contact the student and arrange a private support meeting where appropriate. The meeting may be conducted in person, by phone, via Zoom or Teams, or by another suitable communication method agreed with the student. During the meeting, the Student Support Team will:

- discuss the student's concern
- identify the student's support needs

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- explain internal support options
- explain external referral options
- discuss reasonable adjustments where applicable
- confirm whether there are any immediate safety concerns
- agree on next steps with the student
- record meeting outcomes

4.5 Develop Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Support Plan

Where ongoing or targeted support is required, the Student Support Team will develop a Student Support Plan in consultation with the student. The Student Support Plan may include:

- identified concern or support need
- support strategies agreed with the student
- reasonable adjustments
- academic support arrangements
- attendance or engagement support
- communication preferences
- external referral information
- responsible staff
- student responsibilities
- review dates
- follow-up actions

The plan will be provided to the student and saved securely on the student's record within the student management system.

4.6 Implement Support Strategies

Support strategies may include:

- regular check-ins with Student Support
- academic support sessions
- study planning assistance
- assessment extension guidance
- reasonable adjustment to assessment arrangements
- flexible communication arrangements
- support to re-engage after absence
- referral to counselling or specialist services
- referral to medical or community support services
- support with LMS or digital access

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- financial hardship referral where applicable
- monitoring attendance and progress

The Student Support Plan may be shared with the Training Coordinator or relevant Trainer only where necessary to implement agreed support strategies.

4.7 External Referral

Where the student requires support beyond the College's capacity, Illoura College will provide referral information for appropriate external services. The Student Support Team will explain:

- the type of service being recommended
- how the student may contact the service
- that external services may involve additional costs
- that students may choose their own provider
- that Illoura College does not guarantee or warrant external services
- that emergency services should be contacted where there is immediate risk

Students will be encouraged to make their own enquiries and satisfy themselves that the external service is suitable for their needs.

4.8 Serious Risk or Emergency Situation

Where a student appears to be at immediate risk of harm to themselves or another person, the matter must be treated as urgent. Staff must:

- remain calm
- stay with the student where safe and appropriate
- notify the Student Support Team or senior management immediately
- contact emergency services on 000 where required
- follow the Critical Incident Policy and Procedure
- record the incident in accordance with college requirements
- arrange follow-up support where appropriate
- Staff must not attempt to manage a serious mental health crisis alone.

4.9 Monitor and Review Support

Where a Student Support Plan is in place, the Student Support Team will monitor and review the student's progress. Monitoring may include:

- scheduled follow-up meetings
- reviewing attendance
- reviewing academic progress

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- checking assessment submission
- seeking feedback from the student
- checking whether support strategies remain suitable
- updating the Student Support Plan where required
- closing the plan when ongoing support is no longer required

4.10 Continuous Improvement

Illoura College will review student mental health and wellbeing support through:

- student feedback
- student surveys
- support request trends
- attendance and academic progress data
- complaints and appeals data
- critical incident reviews
- staff feedback
- management meeting reviews
- policy review processes

Where improvement opportunities are identified, they will be recorded in the Continuous Improvement Register in Illoura College's Quality and Compliance Management System (QCMS) and considered at management meetings.

5. Related documents and Forms

Related Policies

- Enrolment Policy
- Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy
- Student Support Policy
- Course progress Policy
- LLND Policy
- Training Policy
- Fee Policy
- Refund Policy

Related Forms

- Intervention form
- Intervention Plan
- Student Support Plan
- Student Support Plan-Review

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- Continuous Improvement Record

6. Policy Information

Policy area	Student Support
Policy Version	V 1.0
Date of Effect	July 2025
Review Schedule	July 2026
Applicable Standards	• Outcome Standards for RTOs, Standard 2.3, 2.4 and 2.6. • National code of practice for providers of Education and Training to Overseas students 2018 – Standard 6 • Disability Standards for Education 2005
Responsibility	• CEO • All staff