



Dundalk Institute of Technology

Student Mental Health Policy

June 2025

Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Description
1	20 th June 2025	Academic Council (AC:DOC:200:06:01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Policy approved for the first time.

Glossary of Terms and Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following terms and phrases are deemed to have the following meanings in the context of this specific policy:

Term	Definition
Policy	Student Mental Health Policy
Staff	All full-time and part-time employees of the University, including research Staff funded externally
Student	A student, either full-time, part-time or online, registered with DkIT.
College/Institute	Dundalk Institute of Technology
Wellbeing	Wellbeing is a broader and more subjective term relating to quality of life.
Mental Health	Mental health is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.
Mental health difficulty/Mental health issue	Mental health difficulty and mental health issue are broad terms that describe mental distress that may or may not be temporary and/or be related to a diagnosable mental health condition i.e., it may be a previously undiagnosed or onset of an emerging condition.

Mental health conditions	Mental health conditions are those which are clinically diagnosable – they may vary in severity, and their treatment pathways may vary e.g., a diagnosed anxiety/depressive disorder; eating disorder; Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD); Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD).
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Further information is available from the [WHO](#)

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1.Aims, Objectives, Ownership, and Scope of this Policy

1.1 Aim of this Mental Health Policy

The aim of this Mental Health Policy is to ensure that Dundalk Institute of Technology is responsive to the mental health needs of all its students, and in particular, to those students experiencing a period of psychological distress or an episode of mental ill health. This is to support students in realising their academic potential.

1.2 Objectives of this Mental Health Policy

The objectives of this Mental Health Policy are to:

1. Clearly state the aims, objectives, ownership and scope of this policy
2. Confirm the Institute's commitment in the area of mental health
3. Describe the sources of help and support available to students
4. Provide guidance to staff as to how to respond to students in distress
5. Identify DkIT policies which may apply to students with mental health difficulties
6. Outline data protection, GDPR, information sharing and communication requirements

1.3 Ownership of this Mental Health Policy

The ownership of this Student Mental Health Policy sits with the Registrar and Vice President for Student Affairs, who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the objectives outlined in 1.2 above, evaluating the operation of the policy, and for conducting a formal review of the policy every 3 years.

1.4 Scope of this Mental Health Policy

The policy is intended for the benefit of all registered students at Dundalk Institute of Technology. It provides guidance for staff to promote a consistent approach in responding to students in distress and in crisis, and in signposting to appropriate sources of support.

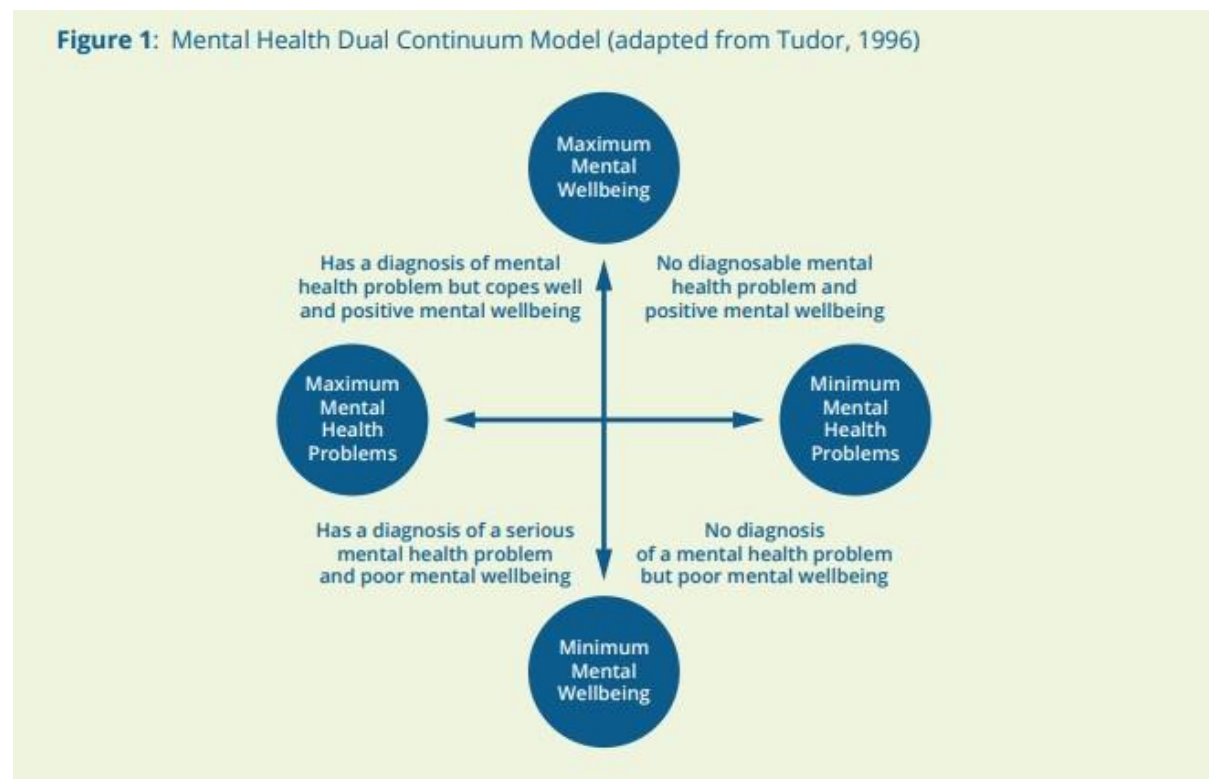
2. Mental Health

2.1 What is Mental Health?

Mental health has been defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right, and it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development.

Mental health is recognised as encompassing more than the presence or absence of a mental condition and it is best thought of as being on a continuum that includes positive emotional wellbeing and positive functioning. Each of us falls somewhere along the continuum and our position is not static, it changes throughout our lives according to circumstances.

Figure 1 illustrates the mental health dual continuum model.



2.2. Legislation relating to Mental Health

There are several Acts that are relevant to Mental Health in Ireland, and which have been considered as part of policy development:

- Mental Health Act 2001
- Equal Status Act 2000-2015
- Disability Act 2005-2018
- Employment Equality Act 1998-2011

- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 (Section 42, Public Bodies)

These acts are included as reference points only. It is not anticipated that these would need to be consulted for college staff to be able to offer appropriate support to students.

5. Commitment to Student Mental Health in DkIT

DkIT is committed to offering an inclusive and supportive educational experience to all students, ensuring equal opportunities for development and progression. This support is aligned with the HEA's frameworks on Mental Health & Suicide Prevention; Healthy Campus; and the HEA National Access Plan. DkIT is also partnered with the JED Foundation, which supports ongoing development of an advanced mental health campus strategy. This promotes a supportive environment for all our students, raises mental health awareness, promotes emotional health, and prevents suicide of young persons.

This policy amplifies the commitment of the DkIT Strategic Plan 2024-2028, focusing on 'Support-Belong-Empower', with many goals aligning with and promoting the DkIT value of Inclusivity. It is well documented that improved wellbeing promotes student success in academia and employment.

DkIT acknowledges its responsibility to ensure its policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of students experiencing psychological distress or experiencing an episode of mental illness and to contribute to the cultivation of a campus environment that actively promotes positive mental health and avoids either the activation or exacerbation of distress.

DkIT commits to provide a supportive environment and to offer services to students that are complementary rather than as an alternative to or replacement of the services provided in the community. This is in recognition that the primary responsibility for the provision of community mental health services lies with the Health Service Executive (HSE).

DkIT therefore commits to:

- a. Encourage students with mental health difficulties to actively seek support. This includes without limitation, students of all ethnic, socio-economic, age, disability, gender, religious and sexual identities/statuses.
- b. Provide accessible information about the resources and support available to registered students and those intending to study at DkIT.
- c. Provide a range of support services, including Student Counselling, Student Health, Disability Support Service, Pastoral Care, Student's Union, International Students' Support Officer, Access Officer, Stage Convenors, Programme Directors, Peer Support, and two out of hours services: 'Niteline' and 'Togetherall'.
- d. Maintain appropriate contact between the Institute and relevant external agencies that support individuals with mental health difficulties. E.g. alignment with government's National Mental Health Promotion Plan 2024–2030 ("Pathways to Wellbeing")
- e. Provide referral to relevant external agencies where appropriate.

- f. Provide education and training for staff as to how to respond to students in distress, and work towards further responsiveness to student death. E.g., alignment with Connecting for Life (Ireland's National Strategy to Reduce Suicide 2015 – 2024); and JED partnership.
- g. Consider the potential impact of its academic and non-academic policies and procedures on the mental health of its students including how policies may impact on students living with mental health difficulties.
- h. Promote an environment in which mental health difficulties are openly acknowledged and not stigmatised. E.g., Sharing the Vision 202-2030 (Ireland's Mental Health Policy).
- i. Challenge any discrimination directed at students who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.
- j. Promote a healthy lifestyle and raise awareness of the harmful consequences of drug and alcohol use and misuse; and internet and social media use and misuse. E.g., alignment with the Framework for Response to the Use of Illicit Substances within Higher Education (and the National drugs strategy, Reducing Harm, Supporting Recovery 2017 – 2025)

4. Admission and Post-Entry Supports for Students with a Disability

DkIT is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and welcomes applications from students with disabilities including those with mental health conditions.

4.1 Admissions to DkIT for students with mental health conditions

Students with mental health conditions may gain entry to DkIT through usual admission routes or through the Disability Access Route to Education (DARE). DARE is a third level alternative admissions scheme for school leavers whose disabilities have had a negative impact on their second level education. Information on how to apply to DARE and the criteria can be found here: www.accesscollege.ie/dare/.

4.2 Disclosure of Disability

Disclosure of a disability, including a mental health condition, is encouraged to enable the College to prepare, in advance, the necessary supports that it may need to put in place to provide the student with full access to education. Duties under the Equal Status Act (2000) require the College to make reasonable accommodation for a person with a disability, provided that the cost is within the resources available. If a student requires support or arrangements in college (for example, mental health support or examination support), it is important that the student contacts Disability Services well in advance of their application to discuss their needs. Applicants will then be in a better position to make an informed decision as to whether DkIT can provide the support and environment they require.

4.3 Registration with DSS for students with mental health conditions

Students are encouraged to register with the Disability Support Service (DSS) with presentation of medical evidence. This medical evidence must be from a registered Health Professional. Students with a diagnosed mental health condition may register with the Disability Support Service at any time during the academic year. Students may begin the process of registering with DSS to avail of supports via the [Disability Support Service Information](#) link.

4.4 Reasonable accommodations for students with mental health conditions

The Disability Support Service plays an important role in minimising the possible adverse educational impacts experienced by students with a mental health condition. Upon registration with DSS, students will be offered an appointment to meet with the Disability Officer to determine if there are any appropriate reasonable accommodations required to support them in DkIT.

The granting of reasonable accommodations to students with mental health conditions is consistent with the academic rigour of programmes to maintain academic standards and ensure fairness for all. Reasonable accommodations in the learning environment include accommodations such as alternative examination arrangements; lecture capture, deferring, and splitting examinations.

5. Supports available for Students

Students often avail of support from their friends, college peers, classmates and family and some may be engaged with external support services. The support networks available to a student vary from individual to individual, according to whether they are still residing at home with family, or living away from home, living within their country of origin or studying abroad, and whether or not they have previously had access to or have been supported by their GP (General Practitioner) or Community Mental Health Services. Students can be encouraged to draw from existing supports, whilst accessing additional sources of help when necessary.

A range of supports are available for students within DkIT including:

- Academic Departments
- Stage Convenors
- Access
- Careers and Employability
- Pastoral Care
- Student Counselling Service
- Student Health Unit
- Disability Support Service
- Student Assistance Fund
- Student's Union/Student's Union Welfare Officer
- International Office
- Funded Out of hours Services (e.g., Niteline, Togetherall)
- Peer supports (e.g., class reps, ambassadors, champions)

Contact details and brief descriptions of DkIT Student Services which may be of assistance to students and staff in responding to students in distress are outlined with the [Student Services Handbook](#).

Support is offered to students on an opt-in basis. Some students may not wish to engage in counselling or other forms of support. If you are concerned about the behaviour of a student, you can seek advice from the relevant Student Service in the first instance.

6. Guidelines for Staff on Supporting a Student in Crisis

Staff are not expected to understand and respond to all of the needs and frustrations presented by students. The staff member's key role is to recognise that a student is in distress, and to either signpost or make initial contact with the relevant Student Service on the student's behalf.

All staff are encouraged to avail of the brief training programme, "*Responding to Students in Distress or at Risk*". This contains two 30 minute online modules, followed by a half day in-person workshop. Information is available on in the *Supporting Students as Staff* section on the [Moodle for Staff](#) or contact the student counselling service for bespoke support and input to your department.

The course of action undertaken by a staff member who is concerned about the wellbeing of a student will depend on a number of factors including:

- The seriousness and nature of the behaviour/distress.
- Whether the student acknowledges the problem and agrees to seek help.
- Whether they feel they are safe dealing with the student.
- Whether the student is coherent and rational.
- Whether they know the student.

In responding to a student in distress, staff should always act within their limits of competence and contact the student counselling service for advice if they have any uncertainties with regards to appropriate actions. Staff are welcome to consult with Student Counselling if they are unsure.

6.1 Responding to Students in Distress

For the purposes of considering which actions should be considered, a situation can be described as a **'non-urgent'**, **'urgent'** or **'emergency'** situation. Any chosen course of action may need to be reviewed and changed if a situation alters.

(i) Non - Urgent Situations

Members of staff may become concerned about a student because of a change they have noted in the student, or because of concern expressed to them by the student themselves, by another student or by another staff member.

You may be worried about a student's mental health or behaviour but do not feel there is an immediate risk to the student or others.

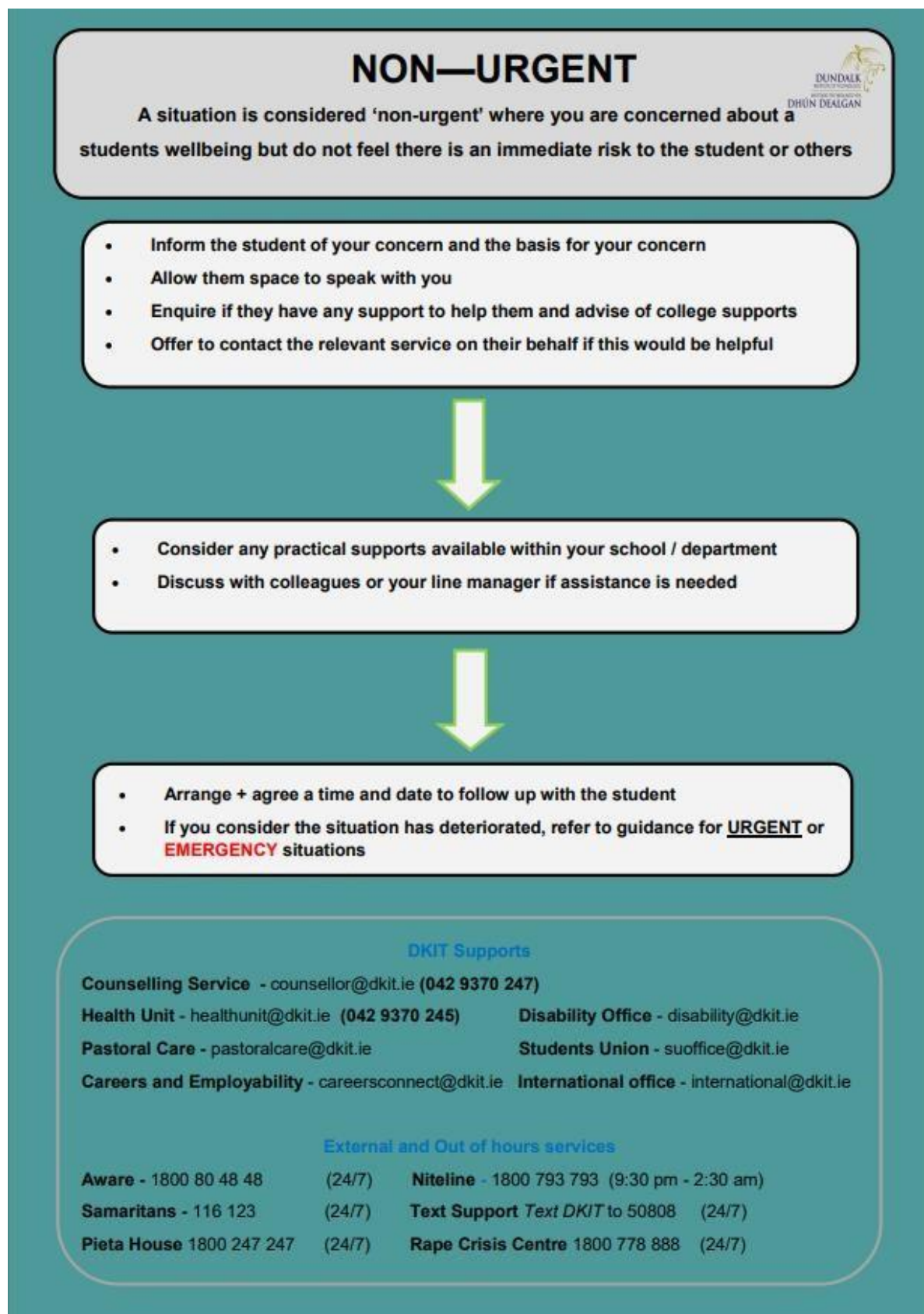
The student may:

- a) approach a staff member seeking help
- b) appear withdrawn, isolated or lonely
- c) be low in mood, low in self-esteem, tearful
- d) be stressed or anxious
- e) have a deterioration in attendance at class or in academic performance, with repeated failure to meet deadlines for submission of assignments.

In *non-urgent situations*, it is recommended that staff respond as follows:

1. At an appropriate time, make the student aware of your concern and the basis for that concern.
2. Allow them space to speak with you about the issue and enquire if they have any support to help them with this.
3. Advise of support services available to the student within the college and encourage the student to consider obtaining support. Offer to communicate with the relevant service on their behalf if this would be helpful.
4. Consider any practical supports that may be possible within your school/department if relevant.
5. If a student does not wish to avail of support services, or does not wish to follow your advice, their wishes should be respected. You may still wish to discuss your concerns (e.g., with Student Counselling Service or with Pastoral Care Coordinator) and can do so without naming the individual involved.
6. Arrange to meet the student later, to review progress and assess if any additional actions are required.
7. If you consider that the situation deteriorates to become an 'urgent' or 'emergency' situation, proceed as per 5.2 and 5.3 below.
8. Keep a record of the conversation and the outcome, letting the student know you are doing so, unless you judge that this will inflame the situation.
9. Take some time to talk through the event with a trusted colleague. You may also find it helpful to avail of supports available to you through the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (or 1800 814 243).

Figure 1: Supporting a student in a non – urgent situation



(ii) . Urgent situations

A situation is considered to be urgent where:

- a. A student is significantly distressed to the point of needing same or next day support.
- b. You have observed or been advised of changes in behaviour that are increasingly concerning.

In an urgent situation, each of the Institute support services (as outlined in Figure 1 above) should be considered as possible sources of help.

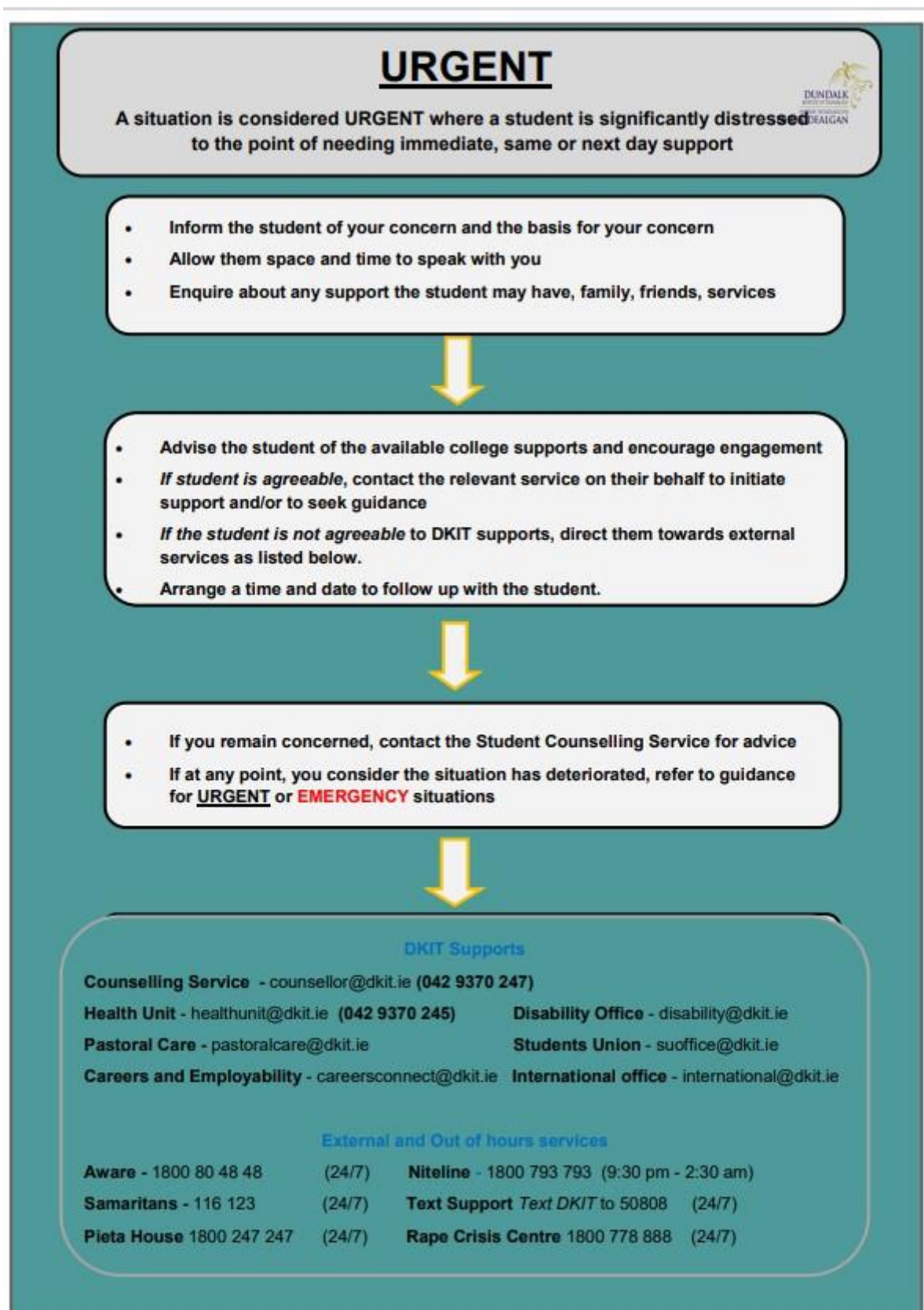
Where staff feel that expert help is needed, they should contact the relevant service and if necessary, accompany the student to attend.

It may also be helpful to enquire about any personal supports available to the student.

In *urgent situations*, it is recommended that staff respond as follows:

1. At an appropriate time, make the student aware of your concern and the basis for that concern.
2. Allow them space to speak with you about the issue and enquire if they have any support to help them with this.
3. Advise of support services available to the student within the college and encourage the student to consider obtaining support. Offer to communicate with the relevant service on their behalf if this would be helpful.
4. If the student is reluctant to avail of support services, and you have concerns about this, you can contact the Student Counselling Service for advice and guidance. You can let the student know that you are doing this out of your concern for them and that you can do so on a confidential basis, unless you judge that this will inflame the situation.
5. Ask about any support that the student has around them (e.g., family, friends, services within or outside of the college).
6. Consider any practical supports that may be possible within your school/department if relevant.
7. Agree a date to meet with the student to review their progress.
8. Keep a record of the conversation and the outcome, letting the student know you are doing so, unless you judge that this will inflame the situation.
9. Take some time to talk through the event with a trusted colleague. You may also find it helpful to avail of supports available to you through the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (or 1800 814 243).

Figure 2: Supporting a student in an urgent situation



(iii) Emergency/Crisis Situations

A situation is deemed to be a ‘crisis’ or ‘emergency’ when you believe the student may be at risk of harm to themselves and/or others and are concerned for one or more of the following, for example when a student:

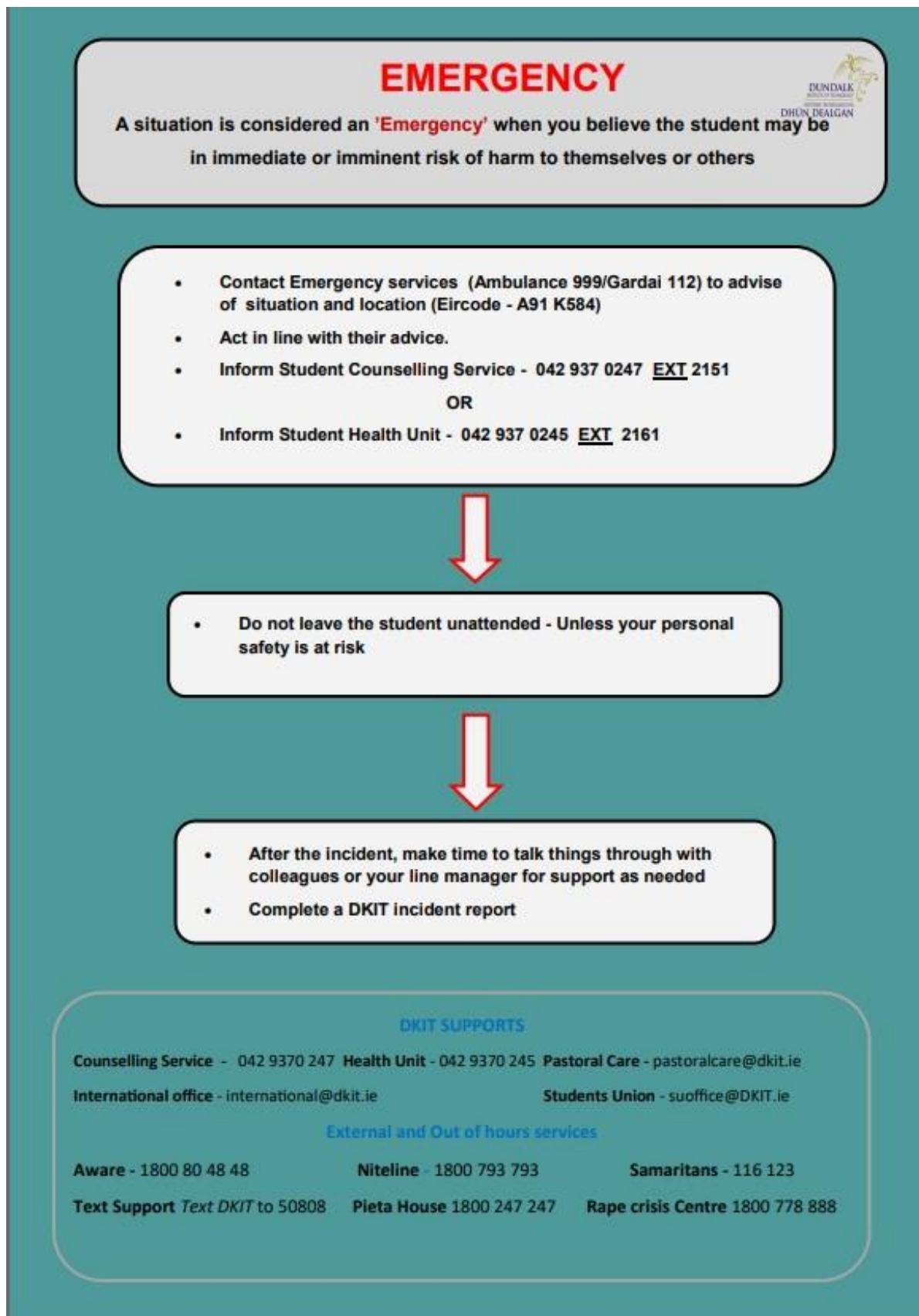
- a) Is actively talking about suicide.
- b) Is threatening violence to people or property.
- c) Is behaving out of character.
- d) Is very disturbed, disorientated and/or clearly in mental distress.
- e) The student tells you they have taken an overdose.

In *emergency situations*, it is recommended that staff respond as follows:

1. Contact emergency services to explain the situation and act in line with their advice. Advise the student that you are doing so, and obtain consent where possible. It may not be possible to obtain the student’s consent because of the nature and extent of the student’s mental health issues or if it is believed that doing so would inflame the situation.
2. Stay with the student until the emergency services arrive and you are able to hand over to the paramedics or Gardai. Do not leave the student unattended, unless there is a risk to your own physical safety.
3. Contact the Health Unit or the Counselling Service for immediate assistance.
4. Ask if there is someone that you can contact on the student’s behalf to advise of the situation (e.g. family, friends).
5. If possible, move the student to a quiet and safe place.
6. If the situation is occurring off - campus, and you are supporting a student remotely, identify their location as a matter of priority and then follow steps as above.
7. After the event, keep a record of the incident, the conversation and outcome(s) using a DkIT Incident Report Form.
8. Ensure to some time to talk through the event with a trusted colleague. You may also find it helpful to avail of supports available to you through the [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (or 1800 814 243).

Guidance for staff on responding to a student in a crisis or emergency situation is given within the flowchart in Figure 3. In the event of a probable student death, please consult with the Crisis Management Team.

Figure 3: Supporting a student in a crisis or emergency situation



6.2 Students concerned about other students

Students very often turn to their friends and fellow-students for support when they are experiencing distress or indeed friends and fellow students may become concerned about some-one they know who is struggling with their mental health. Whilst friendship and support are invaluable in helping students who are struggling to manage the challenges of college, there may be times where additional support is needed.

Guidance for students on how to support and signpost fellow students for help and how to take care of themselves when supporting others is available on Moodle under the *Counselling* icon on the right-hand side of their page (see below).



When students raise concerns about a fellow-student directly with a staff member, re-assure them that you will follow this up as appropriate and direct them to this resource. The act of raising concerns directly with a staff member suggests that the students feel their own inputs have not resolved or are unlikely to resolve the situation and they are looking to staff to intervene directly with the affected student. The second option therefore is for the staff member to consider intervening directly with the affected student.

Should a student raise a concern directly with a staff member or should a staff member observe and judge that a student is a source of real concern to their fellow students, the staff member should consider intervening directly with the affected student as described in Section 6.3 above.

The staff member should consider advising the other student that a response is being put in place, whilst being careful to respect the affected student's right to privacy.

6. Mental Health and other DkIT Policies

Whilst the welfare of the student is your first consideration, you should also consider if the student may have breached Student Code of Conduct or a Fitness to Practice Policy, or has been impacted on their ability to study, as policies may need to be invoked. Please contact

relevant personnel to report or discuss e.g., Head of Department to discuss impact or potential need for temporary leave if possible.

7.1 Students of DkIT are subject to a number of policies that may be relevant when supporting students with mental health difficulties:

- [DkIT Student Charter](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Policy](#) (specified courses only)
- [Dignity at Work Bullying and Harassment](#)

These policies and the Student Code of Conduct ensure that the rights of any individual, including those with a mental health difficulty or diagnosed mental illness, are balanced with the right of all members of the Institute to study and work in a safe and productive environment.

7.2 Disciplinary Process

All students are bound by the College Disciplinary procedures. Any student who behaves inappropriately may be in breach of the Student Code of Conduct. This includes students with mental health difficulties. The Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary process describes what is to occur when a student is being considered as being in breach of the Student Code of Conduct. Students will only be subject to one policy at a time. For further detail on the Student Code of Conduct and Discipline, consult [DkIT Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#).

7.3 Withdrawing from Study on Health Grounds and Re-Admission

Students who are unable to continue their studies, or who need to interrupt them on health grounds (including mental health grounds), may be given permission to defer or to withdraw from their programme. Students are encouraged to engage with the Talk Before you Walk initiative and discuss their requirements with their Head of Department, Programme Director, and their medical advisor before seeking a deferral or making the decision to withdraw. Supporting documentation from the students' health professional will also be required. Refer to [Talk Before You Walk / Student Services / Student Life / DkIT - Dundalk Institute of Technology](#) for further details. Deferring assignments/exams is up to the discretion of the department.

7.4 Careers and Employability

Students who experience mental health difficulties and / or have queries or concerns regarding the impact of their mental health on their career are advised to speak with a Careers Adviser. Where a student's academic achievements have been adversely affected or have led to withdrawal, they are advised to consult the Careers & Employability Centre to support and inform decision-making. Careers advisers have expertise in helping students and graduates with employability skills development and career action planning. The Careers team in conjunction with the wider Student services team create a supportive environment and can refer or collaborate with the mental health professionals on the team if a student needs additional support at a particular point in time.

Student Work Placement

Students who attend work placement as part of their programme of study are advised by their Placement Officer of the benefits of discussing their mental health concerns with their Placement Officer to best support the student in managing a quality and positive learning experience whilst on placement.

They are given the opportunity to disclose any issues that might affect their performance on placement as a formal part of the Placement Preparation process. Placement students are advised by their Placement Officer in advance of attending placement of the mental health supports available to them as a student, which remain fully to them whilst on work placement. These supports are signposted in the [Programme Placement Handbook](#).

8. Data Privacy, Information Sharing and Communication

8.1 Data Privacy

In all matters relating to student data, staff are required to comply with the Institute's Data Protection Policy. The Institute respects a student's right to privacy and actively seeks to preserve the privacy rights of those who share personal information (also known as personal data) with the College. It is important therefore to assure students that any personal information they give a staff member will be treated in accordance with the [DkIT Data Protection Policy](#).

Staff are required to comply with [General Data Protection Regulations](#) and be aware of rights conferred on individuals regarding the holding and processing of their personal data. Under GDPR Health Data qualifies as one of the Special Categories of Personal Data. The rules that apply to processing Health Data are therefore stricter. For further information, see data protection information on the DkIT website (Data Protection Policies and Procedures)

8.2 Information Sharing

Staff to whom a student has disclosed information regarding their mental health, may judge it in the student's interests, or in the interests of others, to share that information with other staff or other third parties, either to seek advice, arrange supports or report concerns. In such circumstances:

8.2.2 Obtain the student's explicit consent to share information by explaining:

- i. the reasoning behind the decision to share the information
- ii. the identity and role of person(s) with whom the information will be shared
- iii. an outline of the information that is to be disclosed

Should the student withhold consent to the sharing of information:

- iv. consider sharing the information or seeking advice on a no-name/no ID details basis
- v. consider sharing the information without the student's explicit consent if you judge the situation may be urgent/emergency where the student may be a risk to self or a risk to others as per Section 6.2

vi. If you judge that there may be concerns as to a student's Fitness to Practise or Fitness to Continue in Study, consider sharing information that solely relates to the actions and/or incapacity that is causing concern, whilst not sharing any of the student's Health Data.

Where the student has withheld consent to the sharing of information and you have decided to share the information without their consent as in 8.2.2ii and 8.2.2iii above, you should inform the student of your intention to do so and explain your reasoning, unless you judge that this would inflame the situation.

Healthcare professionals employed in a therapeutic role with students on behalf of the Institute are obliged to maintain levels of confidentiality consistent with their own professional codes of practice. These professionals may include, among others, Doctors, Nurses, Psychologists, Psychotherapists and Counsellors. Confidentiality may only be breached in specific situations for example, where there is reason to believe that an individual is at risk of significant harm.

8.3 Communication

Discussions relating to a student's mental health should be conducted discreetly and in private, whether in person or by telephone. It is advised that if this is not possible, that staff communicate with caution, by providing limited and anonymous information where possible unless it is an emergency. This includes fax communication and electronic communication via internet, social-media platforms, e-mail or SMS and Instant Messaging, which may lead to unintended accidental distribution to person(s) other than the intended recipient(s), which is a GDPR data breach.

It is good practice to keep brief notes of any interactions with students where there has been guidance or decisions in relation to personal issues, and to inform the student that you are making a record of the encounter.

The record should be dated and written as soon as possible after the interaction with the student. It should state the nature of the interaction and any action taken or advice given. If appropriate, it should also state if the student gave consent for further action.

Records should be kept securely in departments in accordance with the DkIT [Records Retention Policy](#) for the duration in the applicable record retention schedule, and then destroyed. The security of notes should be maintained in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act and GDPR.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Recognising when a student is in distress

Everyone experiences symptoms of distress at one time or another. However, if symptoms persist over time and/or increase in severity, there may be a need for intervention: The following may indicate that a student is in mental distress:

- Dramatic drop in grades / academic performance
- Failure to attend classes, complete assignments or sit examinations
- Perfectionism and excessive anxiety about academic work
- Strong reactions to class material
- Exaggerated need to oppose the teaching or discussions
- Inability to communicate clearly
- Non-participation in class
- Exaggerated emotional responses that are inappropriate to the situation
- Depressed or lethargic mood
- Apathy or “in a daze”
- Anxious / avoidant behaviour
- Disruptive behaviour
- Marked increase or decrease in energy level
- Marked increase in irritability
- Low tolerance for frustration
- Unusual or changed pattern of interaction with others
- Social withdrawal
- Poor personal hygiene
- Consistently avoiding eating with others
- Dramatic weight loss or gain
- Swollen or red eyes
- Substance abuse

Recognising a Serious Mental Health Crisis, Urgent or Emergency Situation

A crisis is a situation where a student’s usual coping style becomes severely overwhelmed and emotional and behavioural responses may escalate. The person may become incoherent, disorientated, or attempt self-harm. The following may indicate that a student is experiencing a Mental Health Crisis or that the situation is urgent or an emergency:

- Highly disruptive, erratic or unpredictable behaviour
- Behaviour inappropriate to the social context
- Extreme agitation or severely marked anxiety
- Euphoria
- Physical and / or verbal aggression
- Overt suicidal threats (written or verbal)
- Threatening the safety of others either written or verbally.

- Incoherent speech
- Loss of contact with reality (seeing/hearing things that are not there)
- Paranoia
- Disinhibited behaviour
- Extreme social withdrawal / avoidance of social interaction or contact
- Unexplained or prolonged crying
- Marked unresponsiveness to normally upsetting events
- Change or disturbance in eating / sleeping patterns
- Marked deterioration in personal hygiene, unkempt / unwashed

Staff members who have become concerned about a student who is displaying some of the features above should proceed as outlined in Section 6 above.

Appendix 2: DkIT Internal Supports for Students and Staff

2.1 Contact details and brief descriptions of DkIT Student Services which may be of assistance to students and staff in responding to students in distress are outlined with the [Student Services Handbook](#).

Student Counselling:

Web: www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-services/counselling/

Email: counsellor@dkit.ie

Phone: 042 93 70 247

Student Health:

Web: <https://www.dkit.ie/student-life/student-services/health-unit.html>

Email: healthunit@dkit.ie

Phone: 042 9370245

2.2 International Office

The International Office is a “one-stop-shop” responsible for the admission of international (non-EU) full degree students and all visiting and Erasmus+ exchange students. The International Office advocates on behalf of International and Erasmus students on welfare and pastoral concerns.

Website: www.dkit.ie/international

Email: international@dkit.ie

Emergency support: 087 8348611

2.3 Students’ Union Vice President (Welfare)

DkIT Students’ Union has a vice – president that is dedicated to student welfare. The Welfare Officer provides a listening ear and a referral service to students. This is an open, caring, impartial and non-judgmental service with information on issues relating to Student

Accommodation Rights, Mental/Physical/Sexual Health issues, Finance and Budgeting, Employment Rights and Parenting & Crisis Pregnancy.

The Welfare Officer organises health promotion events and welfare campaigns for issues locally and nationally. The Welfare Officer interacts with the local authorities and national bodies on a wide range of issues, and is trained by groups such as the USI (Union of Students in Ireland). The Welfare Officer is always available to chat and listen no matter how big or small the issue. The Welfare Officer can be contacted between the hours of 9.30am-5pm by phone/email/text to schedule an appointment, or by calling in person to the office below.

Website: dkitsu.ie

Email: suvpreswelfare@dkit.ie

Phone: 083 8961409

2.4 Staff Support and Training

The DkIT Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free and confidential counselling service for DkIT employees and their household family members (available to those aged 18 and above) that is operated on behalf of DkIT by Spectrum Corporate Services. It is a self-referral service, and you can contact them online [Employee Assistance Programme](#) (or 1800 814 243). For more information on staff wellbeing supports contact hr@dkit.ie.

All staff are encouraged to avail of the brief training programme, “Responding to Students in Distress or at Risk”. Information is available on [Moodle for Staff](#).

Appendix 3: External Support Agencies and Resources

The following are the details of external support agencies, which may be of assistance to students with mental health difficulties.

Community Based Services

- Dundalk Counselling Centre: 042 9338333 Email: info@dundalkcounsellingcentre.ie
- Turas (Community Addiction Service): 0429338221 Email: info@turascounselling.ie
- Red Door Project (Community Drug/Alcohol Service): 041 9804957 Email: admin@lcdat.ie
- Dundalk Outcomers:(LGBT+ support)042 9329816 Email: info@outcomers.org
- Rape Crisis Northeast: 042 9339491/1800 2121 22 Email: info@rcne.ie
- Women's Aid Dundalk: 042 933 3244 Email: info@womensaidlk.net
- Drogheda Women's Aid&Child Refuge: 041 9834492 Email: supportservices@droghedarefuge.org
- Mens' Aid: 01 539 4277(Support worker monthly in Dundalk/Drogheda) Email: hello@mensaid.ie

Online Resources/Links:

- www.togetherall.com: Digital mental health support service available online 24/7, free to all DKIT Students

- www.niteline.ie : Listening and information service run by and for third level students every night of the week during term-time, 9pm-2:30am
- www.yourmentalhealth.ie HSE website providing information and advice about your mental health and wellbeing
- www.pieta.ie Provides free, confidential, 24/7 support to people who are experiencing thoughts of suicide, those who engage in self-harm, and those bereaved by suicide
- www.samaritans.ie Provides free, confidential, 24/7 emotional support to anyone in distress, loneliness, or struggling to cope, including those who are feeling suicidal
- www.spunout.ie Youth information and support platform, which shares factual information on mental health&wellbeing, as well as free and anonymous text support
- [Depression Support & Education Services - Aware](#) provides free support, education and information services to people impacted by anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder and related mood conditions
- www.bodywhys.ie Organisation supporting people affected by eating disorders, as well as advocating for the rights and healthcare needs. One to one and group supports available
- www.turn2me.ie Online counselling service offering support through video, text or phone
- www.myoptions.ie Information and support on all options available for an unplanned pregnancy, including continued pregnancy supports and abortion services

Local HSE Mental Health Services

- HSE resource page for services: [Mental health supports and services - HSE.ie](#)
- HSE emergency departments in Ireland: [Find urgent and emergency care in Ireland - HSE.ie](#)
- HSE Link to get urgent help for a mental health issue: [Get urgent help for a mental health issue - HSE.ie](#)
- Doctor on call (NorthEast): 1800 777 911
- Note: There are HSE Mental Health and Psychology Services such as the Adult Community Mental Health Team and HSE Addiction Services, however these require a referral from a Mental Health Professional such as a GP (Doctor) or the Health Unit. You can contact the DkIT Counselling Service or the Health Unit for further information.

Appendix 4: Guidance for Initiating Sensitive Conversations

Please note that your role is to LSR (“Listen, Support, and Refer”), and hand the issue over to student supports. You may wish to consult about the issue before/after with student counselling.

Step 1: Setting Up

Request to meet with the student privately after class (or at another mutually agreeable time as appropriate based on the urgency of the situation). Contact may be made using telephone or an online platform, if necessary, although such technology may be unsuitable for sensitive one-to-one interactions.

Step 2: Opening the conversation

Begin by outlining your reason for wanting to meet the student - e.g. *“I’m concerned about your progress in this class”*. Indicate what you have observed that makes you concerned without adding interpretation - e.g. *“I have noticed that you have been having difficulty completing your assignments and submitting them on time.”*

Step 3: Asking and Allowing

Ask the student if they are aware of the behaviour and how they understand it (e.g., *‘Is this something that you have noticed? What do you think might be happening?’*). Allow them to talk without pre-empting or interrupting. Ask for clarification if you need to and ensure that you fully understand what is being said. Gather enough information to help you make sense of the situation and guide you in decision making regarding the severity and urgency of the situation as well as identifying what support services may be most helpful.

Step 4: Listening and Understanding

As best you can, remain calm, and listen respectfully, with a sense of openness.

Express empathy (e.g., *‘I can see how this would be causing you to worry’*) and avoid offering advice (unless there are particular practical issues that you may be able to help resolve).

Step 5: Establishing Supports

Validate how difficult circumstances or feelings can interfere with performance or concentration. Enquire if the student is aware of the student services that are available to them within the Institute, identifying specific services as appropriate (e.g., pastoral care, counselling, disability, health). Recommend engaging with support services if they are not already doing so. It may be helpful to emphasise that all student support services are free and confidential.

Step 6: Knowing your limits

It is important that you do not take on greater responsibility than you or required to take on or that you are trained for. In challenging circumstances, we can find ourselves feeling overwhelmed and being less able to think clearly. Remember that you do not need to resolve any issue by yourself and that you can speak with student support services for advice and guidance as needed.