ST ALBANS EDUCATION GROUP

Pupil Mental & Physical Health

June 2026

A group of sector-leading Independent Schools

STAHS Policies

P02: Pupil Mental and Physical Health

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1. PRINCIPLES

1.1. St Albans High School for Girls is committed to ensuring the promotion of physical and mental health and wellbeing of pupils. We will ensure that all pupils with medical conditions can access and enjoy the same opportunities at STAHS as any other pupil. Furthermore, STAHS is committed to ensuring that all pupils are able to play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy, and achieve their academic and personal ambitions. Wellbeing is at the forefront of the Skills for Life (PSHE) programme at STAHS and promoting good mental health and wellbeing is priority.

1.2. The STAHS Wellbeing Hub houses the Senior School health and wellbeing services. Here, pupils can access the School Nurses, a Female Health Nurse Specialist, the Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing, Pastoral Assistant, School Chaplain and School Counsellors. At Prep, the School Nurse is based in the Nurse's Bay and a School Counsellor is available on one afternoon per week.

2. COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

2.1. Medical Questionnaire

A medical questionnaire must be completed and returned to the School Nurse before a child joins STAHS. This ensures the health care needs of each pupil can be assessed and an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHCP) can be drawn up if required. The medical questionnaire is included in the joining pack provided during the admissions process, and must be updated by parents whenever a pupil's medical situation changes. The medical questionnaire is also available via the Parent Portal.

2.2. Consent to Treatment

STAHS presumes parental consent to their child being treated by the School Nurse or other trained staff at the point of need. If a pupil requires emergency treatment from outside medical professionals (i.e., emergency services), every effort will be made to obtain the prior consent of the parent or guardian. Should this be impossible in the time available, the Head, Deputy Head Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Lead, or other member of staff acting *in loco parentis*, is authorised to give valid consent to such treatment as may be recommended by the attending medical staff.

2.3. Disclosure of Information

In general, the professional code of practice of doctors, nurses, counsellors and other health professional place a duty on them not to disclose information about individual patients (pupils) without their consent except in exceptional circumstances. The duty of confidentiality owed to a person under 16 years of age is the same as that owed to any other person. However, where a professional believes that the health, safety, or welfare of the patient (pupil) or others is at risk, there is a duty to share information between professionals, as stated in the DfE Child Protection Act. In the case of the School Nurse and School Counsellors, they may be required to share information with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who may then need to share information with other members of staff, parents and/or outside agencies as appropriate.

3. PHYSICAL HEALTH SERVICES – THE MEDICAL CENTRE

3.1. Advice

Senior School pupils can self-refer to the School Counsellors by completing an online form available via the Student Dashboard. Once a referral is received, a School Counsellor will arrange an initial appointment with the pupil. Members of staff may also refer pupils to the School Counsellors. Pupils may self-refer to the School Nurses either via email or attending the Medical Centre. Should parents wish to refer their child to the School Nurse or School Counsellors, they should request this through their child's Tutor or Head of Year. In line with the 'Disclosure of Information' principles outlined above, pupils should expect that neither teaching staff nor parents will be notified that they are accessing services, nor will the information shared in these meetings be disclosed to teaching staff or parents. (Staff will be informed that a pupil has permission to attend an appointment, although they will not necessarily know which services are being accessed).

At The Prep School pupils under the age of 10 are referred to the School Nurse, School Counsellors or other services by teaching staff or parents, and parents are normally contacted by teachers and/or the Medical Centre staff with outcomes and further information as appropriate. Prep Pupils can be referred to the School Nurse by the parents. They should request this through their class teacher or directly with the school nurse. During the school day teachers can refer pupils to the school nurse and girls can ask class teachers if they feel they need to see the nurse.

3.2. Admission to the Medical Centre

The Medical Centre is open on a drop-in basis for all Senior School students, throughout the school day. The Medical Centre is open from 0830 -1730 Monday to Thursday and 0830-1615 on Friday. Senior School students who have an appointment to see the School Nurse, Counsellor or member of the Wellbeing Team during timetabled lessons or activities must seek the permission of the teacher in charge of the lesson or activity before excusing themselves to attend the appointment. Similarly, if a Senior School student needs to visit the Medical Centre without an appointment during a timetabled lesson or activity, they must first obtain permission from their teacher to miss all or part of the lesson or activity via a Nurse Pass. If a Senior School student feels unwell during the school day, they can report directly to the Medical Centre if they are not involved in timetabled lessons or activities. If a Senior School student feels unwell during timetabled lessons or activities, they should seek permission from their teacher to visit the Medical Centre via a Nurse Pass. Prep School pupils should always have the permission of a teacher to visit the School Nurse via a Nurse Pass.

Upon presenting at the Medical Centre, the pupil will be assessed by the School Nurse (or, in their absence, an appropriate first aider) prior to treatment or being sent home. A record of medication, treatment and outcomes is kept in the medical database on iSAMS. Information may also be recorded on CPOMS where the School Nurse deems it appropriate to share this with the pastoral or safeguarding team. If a child is deemed too unwell to remain at school, parents or emergency contacts will be contacted by the School Nurse to arrange for collection of the child from school. Unless absolutely unavoidable (and only at the discretion of the School Nurse in consultation with parents and the pupil), unwell children will not be released to make their own way home, even if they normally travel to and from school unaccompanied. If a pupil needs to be kept in the clinic for a period of time during the school day, but is not considered unwell enough to be sent home, the School Nurse may inform parents by phone or email. The Attendance Officer is made aware of pupil presence at the Medical Centre so that the school information system can be updated accordingly; this ensures that pupils' whereabouts are known. Not all visits to the

Medical Centre will be reported to parents; such reporting is at the professional discretion of the School Nurse.

3.3. Return to School and Quarantine

If a pupil has an operation, accident, severe illness, or anything that may affect their ability to fully participate in school life, parents must inform the School Nurse (this information is sometimes shared via Tutor/Head of Year/Class Teacher). If a pupil has been exposed to anyone suffering from an infectious disease, they must not return to school until after the NHS recommended quarantine period has passed. If an infectious disease is suspected, the pupil may not return to school until permission from the Health Protection Agency or other appropriate health professional (e.g., GP) has been obtained. If after the pupil has returned to school, infectious illness breaks out in the pupil's home, parents must immediately notify the school. No pupil should be sent to school unwell with a viral sore throat or heavy cold. STAHS follows NHS guidance with respect to quarantine following any episode of vomiting or diarrhoea. If a pupil is unwell with gastrointestinal problems, they **must not be sent to school until 48 hours has passed since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea**. If a pupil is sick or has diarrhoea at school, parents will be contacted and asked to collect the child as soon as possible. The pupil will not be permitted to return to school until a minimum of 48 hours has passed since the last noted episode of sickness. Should the pupil return to school before this time, they should expect to be quarantined in the Medical Centre until a parent or emergency contact collects them from school; **they will not be permitted to attend lessons or activities.** Parents are expected to honour the School's request for quarantine periods, and persistent failure to adhere to the School Nurse's request for a possibly infectious child to remain away from school will be treated as a breach of contract between STAHS and the parents. Please see the related document on Infectious Diseases.

Whilst not under quarantine, any child with a suspected concussion will be required to undertake 48 hours of brain and body rest and will be asked to remain at home until 48 hours have passed without incident since the occurrence of a head injury as they will not be permitted to attend lessons or activities at school. Please see the related document on Head Injury.

3.4. Medical Conditions

Many pupils have or develop chronic or short-term medical conditions or disabilities during their time at STAHS. The School Nurse is responsible for:

- Keeping and monitoring medical records and information for all pupils.
- Developing and monitoring Individual Healthcare Plans (IHCPs).
- Ensuring that sufficient numbers of staff are suitably trained and are able to access all relevant information and teaching support materials required to assist pupils with medical conditions.
- Ensuring that sufficient numbers of trained staff are available to support pupils' medical needs at all times whilst they are under the care of the school, including making contingency plans for staff absence and emergency situations.
- Ensuring that information regarding an individual pupil's medical condition is shared with appropriate staff (including supply teachers, visiting teachers, exam invigilators and others as required) on a need-to-know basis.
- Ensuring that risk assessments take into account the additional risks posed to individual pupils as a result of their medical conditions.
- Ensure that pupils are aware of procedures, contact details and where to report if in need of support during the school day

STAHS will focus on the needs of each individual pupil and how their medical condition impacts on their school life, including how the medical condition impacts on a pupil's ability to learn, and will take steps to help increase pupils' confidence and ability to self-care. Where a pupil has a long-term or complex medical condition or health needs, STAHS will, where appropriate, produce an IHCP for that pupil. IHCPs will be prepared by the School Nurse in consultation with parents, the pupil (where appropriate), members of the pastoral team and any other relevant healthcare professionals. Where appropriate, the IHCP should be linked with a pupil's statement of Special Educational Needs and/or Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Where a pupil has a special educational need but does not have a statement or EHCP, their SEN should be mentioned in their IHCP. Once the IHCP is approved by the School Nurse, parents, pupil (where appropriate) and the appropriate pastoral team member, the School Nurse will be responsible for its maintenance and implementation. The IHCP will be reviewed at least annually or more frequently where a pupil's needs change. The School has guidance and protocols in place to deal with common medical conditions such as anaphylaxis, asthma, epilepsy and diabetes, which should be used to inform the IHCPs for children with these conditions. These protocols are drafted by the School Nurse in line with current NHS advice, and are available as related documents alongside this policy.

3.5. Emergency Care

Major and minor incidents can take many forms and can happen without warning. No plan can provide for every eventuality. The response to any incident is handled however, with a management framework which has been put in place for the day to day running of STAHS. In the event of an accident the pupils concerned should be taken to the School Nurse or in her absence to the relevant first aider. The Medical Centre can be contacted directly on ext 249 (Senior) on 606 (Prep). Reception has the emergency mobile number for the School Nurse. If contact cannot be made with the Medical Centre or the School Nurse, Reception should be the next point of contact to locate a trained first aider.

- If the School Nurse is present, they will determine whether the emergency services are required and will contact them directly. In other circumstances, one of the trained first aiders will decide if the emergency services are required and will contact them directly.
- In the unlikely event that there is no first aider available, and that an ambulance is required, there must be no delay in calling an ambulance by the most senior member of staff present. If back up is required, a member of the pastoral team should be alerted.
- The School Nurse or relevant first aider should be made available to meet the ambulance on Townsend Avenue and direct them to the most convenient parking place and escort the medical staff to the site of the emergency.
- If hospital or ambulance treatment is not deemed necessary, the School Nurse or relevant first aider will attend to the injury on site.
- Subsequently, the member of staff originally reporting the accident should fill out an accident report form and submit this on EVERY. The School Nurse will then report their actions on EVERY.

STAHS conforms to the statutory requirements and will report to HSE in accordance to Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulation 2013 (RIDDOR). In the event of any bodily fluids (blood, faeces, urine and vomit) needing to be cleaned, a member of the Maintenance Team should be informed immediately. Gloves should always be used when dealing with bodily fluids, and waste should be disposed of in a clinical waste bin located in the Medical Centre. The fluids should not be left unattended whilst waiting to be cleaned.

Further information on the use of Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in an emergency, the use of emergency inhalers and emergency auto-injectors is available in the related documents (Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Epilepsy and Diabetes). School Nurses follow the Royal College of Nursing guidelines on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Covid-19 and Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Guidance during Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic.

4. MEDICATION

4.1. A small range of non-prescription ('over the counter') medicines is kept in the Medical Centre. These are supplied for occasional use by pupils in urgent cases only. The School Nurse will also administer prescription medicines, subject to the usual permissions, during the school day. All medication must be kept with the School Nurse – **pupils are not permitted to carry or self-administer prescription or non-prescription medication at school.** The only exceptions to this are reliever inhalers, EpiPens and insulin pens/pumps which may be carried or worn by pupils to whom they are prescribed, provided a Consent for the Administration of Medicines Form is on file for the pupil and the pupil's IHCP states that this is appropriate. Unless otherwise stated on the pupil's IHCP, it is the pupil's responsibility to report to the Medical Centre at agreed times to have medication dispensed. Non-attendance and non-compliance with taking prescribed medication will normally be reported to parents by the School Nurse. For those pupils requiring treatment or medication from a specialist consultant, an IHCP must be in place detailing the treatment and medications necessary, as well as outlining procedures in the event of an emergency.

4.2. Prescription Medicines
Prescription medication may be required on a regular basis or on an emergency or as-needed basis. All prescription medication to be taken during the school day must be administered by the School Nurse (or, in her absence, an appropriate first aider). The medication must be in the original packaging with the original pharmacy label containing the pupil's name, dosage and time to be given. Additional labels can be obtained from the dispensing pharmacy on request. Medications will be stored in a locked cupboard or secure refrigerator in the Medical Centre. It is the responsibility of the parents to keep the School informed about changes in pupils' medicinal needs.

4.3. Non-Prescription Medicines
Consent for the giving of all non-prescription drugs must be obtained from the parent/guardian of all pupils. The medical questionnaire sent out on admission to STAHS contains simple 'yes/no' consent for basic non-prescription medications that are held in the Medical Centre. Parents may update the School Nurse by letter or email if they wish. Renewal of consent may be requested by the Medical Centre periodically. Non-prescription medications kept in the Medical Centre are: *paracetamol, ibuprofen, cetirizine, throat lozenge, sterile saline eye wash, single use heat and ice packs, and antihistamine cream for insect bites and stings.*
Occasionally, a student may be required to have non-prescription medication administered during the school day. In this event, parents should discuss the treatment with the School Nurse, and if appropriate, a consent for the administration of medicines form must be completed by the parents.

5. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

5.1. According to the latest NHS data, one in six young people between the ages of 5 and 16 will have an identifiable mental health issue at any one time. By the time they reach University, this figure is as high as one in five. Around 75% of mental health disorders are diagnosed in adolescence. Further information on supporting pupils with anxiety, depression, eating disorders and self-harm are available in the Wellbeing Hub. All pastoral staff are familiar with the risk factors and warning signs of anxiety, depression, eating disorders and self-harm. Procedures for staff who have a concern about a pupil are outlined in the STAHS Safeguarding Policy and its related documents.

5.2. Youth Mental Health First Aiders

An annual cycle of Youth Mental Health First Aid training, led by the School's accredited Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing is delivered to teaching and support staff across Prep and Senior. The training course has been developed through an inclusive lens, with extensive input from young people with lived experience. Through the two-day training, staff are given the skills and confidence to identify poor mental health and provide first-level support to pupils in school

5.3. Mental Health and Wellbeing Team

A full time Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing works closely alongside a Pastoral Assist. Both members of staff are based in The Hub and available to pupils throughout the school day. The wellbeing team support the Form Tutors and Heads of Years with pastoral intervention and support for pupils. They will signpost pupils and families to appropriate mental health support and ensure provision is in place to support the pupil when in school. The Wellbeing Team work with pupils who require a referral for professional counselling or external professional mental health support. The team oversee the work of Year 10 Wellbeing Ambassadors and the Sixth Form School Officer responsible for Wellbeing.

At STAHS Prep, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) serves as the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lead and works closely with the pastoral team to promote and support the wellbeing of all pupils. The pastoral team, comprising the Deputy Head (Pastoral), Head of Pre-Prep, School Chaplain, and SENDCo, provides guidance to class teachers in identifying and implementing appropriate pastoral interventions and support strategies. The pastoral team works collaboratively with pupils and families, signposting them to appropriate mental health and wellbeing services where required. This includes the use of resources such as Tooled-Up Education, alongside support from external agencies and specialist third-party providers, to ensure that suitable provision is available. The Wellbeing Team supports pupils who may require referral for professional counselling or specialist external mental health services and oversees the referral process where appropriate. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) also has oversight of pupil wellbeing leadership initiatives, including the Wellbeing Ambassadors and the Year 6 Pupil Council representatives responsible for promoting wellbeing across the school community.

5.4. Counselling

STAHS has a formal course of counselling available to pupils. Pupils may self-refer or be referred to counselling by STAHS staff or their parents (via Form Tutor or Head of Year). Pupils at Prep can ask for help from their class teacher. To see the School Counsellors Prep School referrals should come the Deputy Head Pastoral via the class teacher or direct from the parent. STAHS recognises the right of pupils to refuse counselling services, regardless of who referred them. Pupils self-refer via a form on the Student Dashboard. Once a referral form is received, pupils will be allocated a time with one of the Counsellors for an initial

assessment. During this assessment, the level of need will be identified and, where appropriate, a course of counselling sessions with an appropriate counsellor will be made available to the pupil. Access to the Pastoral Assistant, Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing or School Chaplain is offered if counselling is not suitable.

5.5. CAMHS

STAHS works closely with Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), both in terms of referring children to CAMHS for further assessment or early intervention and in liaising with CAMHS professionals over the best provision of care for pupils. If a pupil is under CAMHS care following a referral from a GP or other health professional, it is important that this information is shared with the pastoral team at STAHS (through the Form Tutor, Head of Year, Deputy Head Pastoral, School Nurse or Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing) including contact details for the mental health professional(s) working with the child.

5.6. Emergency Mental Health Care

Urgent mental health incidents may arise without warning, and it is not possible to anticipate every circumstance. All incidents will therefore be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding, pastoral, and health and safety procedures. In the event of a pupil experiencing a mental health crisis, the pupil should immediately be escorted to the Head of Mental Health and Wellbeing, the Deputy Head Pastoral and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or, in their absence, another appropriately trained member of the Safeguarding Team. The designated member of staff will assess the situation and determine the most appropriate course of action. Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable and will normally be expected to collect their child from school. Where urgent physical and mental health intervention is required, parents/carers may be directed to take their child to Accident and Emergency (A&E). The Hertfordshire Children's Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (CCATT) provides support within the A&E departments at Lister Hospital and Watford General Hospital. If a parent/carer is unable to collect their child immediately, or where the level of risk requires additional professional guidance, the school may contact the Hertfordshire Children's Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (CCATT) via the 24-hour Single Point of Access (SPA) Crisis Line on 0800 6444 101 for advice and support. In situations where there is an immediate risk to life or serious harm, emergency services will be contacted by dialling 999.

5.7. Additional Services

STAHS works closely with Public Health Hertfordshire via the Health and Improvement Lead at Children and Young People's Services. Through this partnership, we are able to provide our pupils with additional off-site, online, and out-of-hours support for any aspect of emotional wellbeing, sexual health or drug and alcohol misuse. These additional services include:

- Access to Healthy Young Minds in Herts https://www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk/
- Access to Just Talk Herts https://www.justtalkherts.org/just-talk-herts.aspx
- Access to Kooth, a free, safe and anonymous online support, including live chat with qualified counsellors
- Access to https://www.ychertfordshire.org/support-for-young-people/ and the Sexual Health texting service on 07860 057 369

Further information about all of these services is available on the Student Dashboard.

5.8. The Wellbeing Hub

At the Senior School, all pupils, staff and parents have access to 'The Wellbeing Hub' (https://teentips.co.uk/wellbeing-hub/) an expert-led, evidence-based resource for meeting the social, emotional, and educational needs of children and young people. The platform offers comprehensive tools and guidance to empower educators and support the entire school community in nurturing students' mental health and wellbeing. Pupil's access to the platform is age appropriate.

5.9. Mental Health and Wellbeing Tracking
At STAHS Prep the pastoral team use UHQ to track wellbeing data. At STAHS Senior the pastoral team use Smoothwall Pulse to track wellbeing data. This enables proactive intervention and support to be put in place for individuals as well as pupil cohorts. It also offers pupils at STAHS Senior a function to discreetly request pastoral support. These requests are actioned by the Pastoral Assistant who is a non-teaching member of staff.

6. ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

6.1. If a pupil is absent from school for any length of time then appropriate arrangements will be made to send work home. This may be in discussion with any medical professionals who may be treating the pupil. If STAHS considers that the presence of a pupil in school is having a detrimental effect on the wellbeing and/or safety of other members of the community or that a pupil's mental health concern cannot be managed effectively and safely within the school, the Head reserves the right to request that parents withdraw their child temporarily until appropriate reassurances have been met.

6.2. Reintegration
Should a pupil require some time out of school due to injury or physical or mental ill-health, the school will be fully supportive of this and every step will be taken to ensure a smooth reintegration back into school when they are ready. The Deputy Head Pastoral will work alongside the Wellbeing Team and/or other healthcare professionals, the School Nurse, relevant pastoral and academic staff, the pupil and parents to produce an appropriate IHCP to support them in their return to school. If a phased return to school is deemed appropriate, this will be agreed with the parents and will be reflected in the IHCP.

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy and related documents	
Document title	Availability
Asthma	Y, P, S
Anaphylaxis	Y, P, S
Epilepsy and Non-Epileptic Seizures	Y, P, S
Diabetes	Y, P, S
Administration of Medicines	Y, P, S
Head Injury	Y, P, S
Infectious Disease	Y, P, S
Emotional Wellbeing	Y, P, S
Providing Sexual and Relationship Health Guidance to SS Pupils	Y, P, S
Mental and Physical Health Concerns flows	Y, P, S

Policies and related documents as indicated are available request via info@stahs.org.uk
St Albans High School for Girls, 1-3 Townsend Avenue, St Albans AL1 3SJ. Tel: 01727 853 800

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.