

# Dumfries High School



Mental Health First Aid  
Handbook for young  
people, parents and  
carers

**Mental Health  
First Aid**



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## List of Mental Health First Aiders

Rae MacPherson (Head of Mental Health)	Science Lab 8
Natalie Hamblin	Business studies 1
Hayley Johnstone	Science Lab 7
Liz McQuinness	English Room 1.9
Lauren Wilson	English Room 1.8
Graeme Campbell	Technical TC3
Robbie Gordon	Science lab 4
Iain Stewart	Maths Room 2.8
Marion Glen	R.E. Room 3.5
Caroline Grieve	English Room 1.6



## Introduction to Dumfries High School's Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) policy.

It is estimated that one in four people in the UK will have a mental health problem at some point in their lifetime, with  $\frac{3}{4}$  of these issues arising prior to the age of 24. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also seen an increase in the number of young people and adults experiencing low mood and anxiety due to the ever-changing nature of the current climate.

With this in mind, we believe that at Dumfries High School, we must do all that we can to help streamline the mental health support available for the young people in our care

The aims for First Aid for Mental Health are:

- Preserve life where a person could be a danger to themselves or others
- Alleviate suffering by providing immediate comfort and support
- Prevent the condition from developing into a more serious problem
- Promote recovery of good mental health by signposting and obtaining professional support.

The MHFA team are not a diagnostic team for mental health conditions. Rather, the role of the MHFA at Dumfries High School will be to support the existing Pupil Support structure and provide signposting to young people who are in need of Mental Health First Aid. They will act as a first-line referral service for young people who are experiencing low level mental health issues. They will triage the young person and take the appropriate action.



## Getting help from the MHFA Team

If you feel that as a young person, parent or carer, that support from the Mental Health First Aid team would be beneficial for a young person in our community, you can make a referral into the service. The great thing is that someone will be in contact with you within 24 hours (Monday-Friday) to arrange an appointment with a qualified member of the team.

### As a young person:

If you think you would like to arrange a session with a MHFA staff member to get some advice, please follow the procedure below:

### Young person self-referral

1. Find any member of the MFHA Team (check the notice board if you are not sure) – you can arrange a time to sit down with them for a session.
2. Email [gw14macphersonrachae@glow.sch.uk](mailto:gw14macphersonrachae@glow.sch.uk) to ask for help.  
*Remember to state your name and house. A member of the MHFA team will contact you back within 24 hours to set up a meeting.*
3. A link to the MHFA referral form is on the school website in the Promoting Positive Mental Health section. Complete and submit this form and a member of the MHFA Team will contact you back within 24 hours to set up a meeting.
4. Click the “get help” button on the main page of the school website. A member of the MHFA team will contact you back within 24 hours to set up a meeting.

## Information for Parents and carers

As previously mentioned, please be assured that the MHFA are not a diagnostic team for mental health conditions. Rather, the role of the MHFA team will be to support existing Pupil Support structure and provide resources to young people who feel that they require support. All Child Protection measures will remain in place and will be followed to ensure the safety and protection of your young person.

If you feel that your young person would benefit from some support from the MHFA team, you can make a referral on their behalf by following these instructions:

1. Email [gw14macphersonrachae@glow.sch.uk](mailto:gw14macphersonrachae@glow.sch.uk) to ask for help. *Remember to state your child's name and house. A member of the MHFA team will contact you back within 24 hours to set up a meeting.*
2. A link to the MHFA referral form is on the school website in the Promoting Positive Mental Health section. Complete and submit this form and a member of the MHFA team will contact you back within 24 hours to set up a meeting.
3. Click the "get help" button on the main page of school website. A member of the MHFA team will contact you back within 24 hours to set up a meeting.

Here are some examples of signs that you may notice in a young person struggling with their mental health. Please note that this list is not exhaustive and you know your young person and their “normal” attitude and behaviour; changes in this may indicate a shift in their mental health.

### **Signs of decreasing mental health**

#### **Emotional**

- Feeling tearful/upset/unusual mood swings
- Irritability/not controlling temper
- Low self-esteem
- Lack of motivation or interest
- Feeling overwhelmed or “on edge”
- Unusual or seemingly irrational responses to study pressure – e.g. student presenting as overly worried about an assessment or homework piece.

#### **Behavioural/Social**

- Avoiding contact with friends/social isolation
- Avoiding hobbies/extra-curricular activities
- Lower attainment/homework completion
- Inability to concentrate
- Seeking lots of reassurance from others

#### **Physical**

- Change in appetite/weight loss or gain
- Complaining of nausea/headaches/aches and pains
- Overly tired due to lack of sleep
- Unusual repetitive behaviours- nail biting/skin picking/scratching
- Dizziness
- Trembling/shaking/panic attacks
- Looking unkempt
- Talk of/evidence of/concern of substance misuse
- pattern of absences during assessments

### Section 3: Some useful resources

Here are some useful resources that we use to promote positive mental health at Dumfries High School that you can utilise at home.

**Mind info-line:** Mind provides information on a range of mental health topics. Call 0300 123 3393 or visit [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

**Hopeline UK:** Call 0800 068 4141 or text 07860 039 967

**Childline:** Call free on 08001111 (UK) or visit [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**The Samaritans:** offers emotional support 24 hours a day. Call free on 116 123 (UK) or visit: [www.thesamaritans.org](http://www.thesamaritans.org)

**Breathing Space** provide advice and support if you need to talk to someone. Their phonenumber is open 6pm-2am Monday-Thrusday and 6pm-6am on Friday to Monday: Call free on 0800 83 85 87 or visit

**Cool2talk:** local organisation ran by health professionals. This website provides a safe space for young people aged 12 and over where you can get your questions answered accurately and without judgement. All questions are answered within 24 hours. Visit <https://cool2talk.org/>

**Headspace:** [Headspace](http://www.headspace.com) provides articles and exercises to boost self-care through meditation and mindfulness techniques. The great thing is the exercises are designed to last only 2-3 minutes, so its easy to fit into your routine! <https://www.headspace.com>

**Mindshift:** "[Mindshift](http://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/)" is designed to help young people cope through periods of anxiety using strategies based on Psychologist designed Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques which help you relax, be mindful and develop more effective ways of thinking and coping with stress and anxiety. <https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/>

**Calm:** [Calm](http://www.calm.com) is designed to aid relaxation and has exercises to help calm you when you are feeling stressed and anxious. It provides daily mediation, sleep aid as well as masterclasses and articles to help boost your productivity and motivation. <https://www.calm.com>