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Policy on Supporting Unwell Students and those with Mental Health Difficulties

Policy renewed at least annually, or as required according to changes in procedures or legislation. The policy is available on the Europa website.

Responsibility for this Document: Charlotte Fisher

Responsibility for implementation: Charlotte Fisher (Director), Stephanie Dasan (UK Operations Manager), Richard Wedderburn-Clarke (DOS)

Introduction

At International Projects (IP), we are committed to creating a supportive environment where all students can thrive mentally and emotionally. This policy aligns with the latest UK government guidance, including "Keeping Children Safe in Education" and mental health best practices for schools.

Objectives

Ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students including those who become unwell during their stay with us.

Provide specific support for students with mental health issues.

Equip staff with the necessary knowledge and skills to support these students effectively.

Awareness and Education

Training: All staff will receive training on physical and mental health awareness, recognizing signs of mental health issues, and providing appropriate support for students who show signs of illness during their stay.

Support Structures

The person with responsibility for the health and welfare of the students in the centre is the Centre Manager. They are supported by a team of supervisors and can also refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who has overall responsibility for the health and welfare for all students at the school. In the absence of the DSL any member of the safeguarding team can also give advice and guidance.

Supporting students who become unwell in the centre

Where a student shows signs of illness during their stay the CM must be informed and the CM must also inform our booking team (sales and marketing). If the student is staying with a host family the CM must also make sure our Accommodation Officer is aware. The CM and Accommodation Officer must work together to find the most appropriate solution to the situation.

Several factors must be taken into account when deciding on how to resolve the situation:

The severity and type of illness. Does the student need to see a doctor? Is it a recurrence of an existing well managed condition? Does the student simply need some rest?

The age of the student and any behavioural issues or pre-existing conditions. Is it safe and reasonable for the student to remain at the hosts home alone with some regular check-ups?

The host family set up and their ability to remain at home to supervise the student.

Each situation is unique and all factors must be considered before taking action. Some actions might be:

Student may need to see a medical professional. Staff member could phone 111 to get some further advice.

Student may be well enough to attend school and be looked after by a staff member on site.

Student may need to rest and a staff member may need to organise regular check ins with the student at their homestay or residence.

Sometimes we will need to arrange taxis for students where necessary, but these should be authorised by the Centre Manager in advance.

Students who have mental health conditions must be treated with the utmost sensitivity and care. We are commonly now seeing students who present with symptoms of anxiety, panic attacks, anorexia and depression along with other conditions.

These situations are also very unique and must be treated on a case by case basis. The starting point for these cases is that students should be encouraged to participate in the planned programme wherever possible.

Students with mental health issues should not be left in their host families or in the residences alone but if host families and staffing levels allow, we may be able to facilitate students remaining in their homestay/residence but we cannot guarantee this. If students feel unable to participate in lessons or activities then they should be encouraged to attend the centre and can sit in a relaxed environment in the centre with staff available. Each centre will be set up with an area available for students to sit and relax in case they don't feel they can participate in the full programme.

Privacy:

All mental health discussions and disclosures with strict confidentiality, complying with data protection laws. Share information on a need-to-know basis only, with the student's consent where appropriate. Never promise not to share information with a student's parents or guardians. It may be necessary for us to speak with parents or guardians and we must always remember that.

Crisis Intervention

Where there is a clear mental health crisis which poses a danger to the student or others, staff must contact the emergency services immediately.