

College Mental Health Support Services - Senior School

Our College Mental Health Practitioners (MHPs) use their expertise to provide support services that help students with their learning and personal wellbeing. MHPs hold firm to the dignity of every person created by God and, therefore, prioritise the wellbeing, agency, and autonomy of everyone with whom they work.

Throughout this document, MHP is used to describe the variously trained professionals who may occupy the role of providing specific Mental Health Support Services within Trinity College. This may include chaplaincy workers, youth workers, counsellors, social workers, and psychologists.

Mental Health Support Services

The College MHPs work as part of a holistic support and pastoral care team, alongside Heads of Year, Learning Support Case Managers, and First Nations Education Coordinators, to provide advice and support for common student concerns. If a concern cannot be resolved at the Head of Year or Case Manager level, Mental Health Support Services may be recommended to help the student better cope and resolve concerns.

This service is voluntary, meaning it is the student's choice to engage in these services, and they may choose to discontinue participation at any time. Parents may also withdraw consent for their child to participate at any time. Withdrawal of participation must be communicated to the relevant College MHP via email, phone call, or in person.

The type and duration of support will be determined by the College MHP. Mental Health Support Services at Trinity College are provided at no additional cost to students or their families.

Referral Process

Students interested in scheduling an appointment with a College MHP are encouraged to first consult their Head of Year, who can provide initial assistance and, if needed, refer them to the College MHP or other support staff. Students may also choose to self-refer by contacting the College MHP directly.

For parents seeking to discuss matters with a College MHP, the initial point of contact should be their son's Head of Year. Parents may request an appointment with the College MHP for their child; however, as participation is voluntary, a referral will only proceed with the student's consent and willingness to engage.

At the end of each school year, all referrals are closed. If support for a student is required again in the following school year, a new referral will need to be completed, and a consent form signed by the student's parent.

On occasion, it may be appropriate for the College MHPs to refer students to external professionals or agencies that are better equipped to address their specific needs. If a concern primarily involves the student's family and does not significantly impact their school life, the College MHPs may recommend seeking help from external agencies.

Consent

Consent is a critical foundation for the effective provision of Mental Health Support Services at Trinity College, and a fundamental aspect of ethical mental health practice.

Consent is a professional requirement for all MHPs and supports person-centred care. Seeking and obtaining consent is also a requirement of ethical practice and arises from a commitment to provide clinical practice that is relational, affirms human dignity, recognises individual autonomy, and builds solidarity in clinical practice.

A MHP will not impose services and will seek informed consent from the student before providing Mental Health Support Services. It must be clear to the MHP that the student consents freely and that they are aware that they can change their mind at any stage.

Consent for the treatment of young people (under 18 years of age) is generally provided by parents on behalf of the young person. However, it is accepted that there are circumstances in which young people can consent themselves. This is commonly referred to as a 'mature minor' or a 'Gillick competency'. In Australia, a young person is considered capable of giving effective consent to treatment if they fully comprehend the nature and consequences of the proposed treatment, irrespective of whether a parent consents. This is usually considered to be age 15 but depends on the treatment and the context.

Confidentiality and Record Keeping

The College MHPs adhere to the CEWA MHP Practice Guidelines, and College Psychologists additionally adhere to the Australian Psychological Society's Code of Ethics.

Confidentiality is essential for any MHP and a fundamental requirement for the effective provision of Mental Health Support Services. Confidentiality provides clients with safety and privacy, protects client autonomy, builds the professional and interpersonal relationships necessary to sustain mental health provision, and affirms the dignity, safety, and wellbeing of individuals.

Once consent has been provided by a parent, MHPs will only disclose confidential information with either the prior consent of the client, or (when necessary) when that disclosure is required or permitted by law or policy directives. The fact that a young person is meeting with the MHP, as well as the duration and timing of these meetings, is visible to school staff. Confidentiality may be breached when required by law or when there is a serious risk to the safety of the student or others. The MHP recognises that, at times, the

best interests of the client are served by placing reasonable limits on confidentiality through the appropriate sharing of information.

When conveying or storing confidential information, whether verbally, in writing or electronically, MHPs do so in a manner which safeguards confidentiality and complies with relevant Commonwealth and State laws, and CEWA Policy. Material and information provided by the client or gathered or collected by the MHP as part of the provision of mental health services (including session notes, emails, phone calls, and reports), are only used and collected for the purpose for which they were obtained and necessary for the service being provided.