

# Welfare Statement

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. New College recognises that academic success and personal development are interdependent activities and that students are likely to need guidance and support in each of these areas. The Tutor for Welfare collaborates with the Senior Tutor and Dean to ensure that College's policies and practices reflect its commitment to providing a context within which all students can flourish and fulfil their potential.
- 1.2. College aims to facilitate and promote positive mental health and wellbeing by providing the opportunity to pursue social, cultural and sporting fulfilment in addition to academic excellence.
- 1.3. College will endeavour to ensure that there is equivalence in the support a Junior Member would receive when experiencing poor physical health and when experiencing poor mental health
- 1.4. College has a specific legal responsibility towards students who have condition that fall within the definition of "disability" under the Equality Act 2010. It subscribes to The Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students (<https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/common-framework-for-supporting-disabled-students>) and endeavours to ensure that the best New College experience is available to all its students.
- 1.5. College understands that all students arriving at university for the first time or embarking on a new course might have to learn to adapt to significant changes and that international students might face the specific challenges of living in a new country and adjusting to a different culture. Students at Oxford have to learn, also, to adjust to a new style of teaching based on the tutorial system. For many, these changes are exciting and an intrinsic part of the attraction of coming to university. In some cases they can also give rise to anxiety.
- 1.6. It is recognised that most personal difficulties can be resolved by talking to a family member or a friend or by seeking help from tutors or other advisors. However, a small number of Junior Members might experience emotional, psychological or health difficulties that are more persistent and that inhibit their ability to participate fully in college life without appropriate support.

## 2. Welfare support systems at New College

- 2.1. As Head of the College, the Warden is ultimately responsible for the welfare of the Junior Members. Day to day, the welfare function is delegated to those in tutorial, teaching and supervisory roles, and to an experienced welfare team in the College. The team has a particular brief to ensure that welfare and wellbeing matters are integrated into all college processes. In addition, this team is available to listen to student concerns and offer first line support (<https://www.new.ox.ac.uk/health-welfare>)
- 2.2. College is committed to specialist psychological and emotional support being available when required and believes that is best served by funding and collaborating with services such as the University Counselling Service (<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling?wssl=1>) so that students have access to a range of professionally qualified and accountable practitioners who are

familiar with the University setting and to a variety of models and practice that can be matched to their needs. With permission, the Counselling Service works with the welfare team, tutors and advisors to ensure coherent support for individual students. In addition, through its linked counsellor scheme, it is a valuable source of advice and guidance for those who are engaged in first-line support.

- 2.3. It is recognised that some students will be taking responsibility for their own health for the first time and that international students will encounter a new system of health care provision. To ensure that health care is readily accessible to all students the college has formal links with the National Health Service General Practice at 28@Northgate (referred to as the College Doctors) and all students are requested to register with this Practice. Although College Doctors are independent general practitioners they are experienced in the care of university students and New College students in particular. They know the college system well and can liaise, with students' permission, with college officers over mental and physical health issues. They can refer students to other agencies and to specialist health services, provide medical certificates e.g. in respect of examinations and to funding bodies if study is suspended or in support of disability-related funding and they advise on fitness to study .
- 2.4. The College Nurse plays a varied role in supporting students with health matters, including referring students to appropriate services and continuing to be involved with the student's care as it progresses.

### **3. Confidentiality**

- 3.1. It is understood that Junior Members with personal or health difficulties might be reluctant to seek help without assurances that the information they provide will be treated confidentially and that it will not harm their academic standing. The welfare team operates within the team's Confidentiality Statement (<https://www.new.ox.ac.uk/policies-statutes-accounts>). Doctors, nurses, counsellors and chaplains are all required to observe confidentiality in accordance with strict ethical codes.
- 3.2. The welfare team encourages students to allow them to share information with relevant officers within the College, if this is in the best interests of the individual and/or others. This will be carried out with discretion, will be limited to those who need to know and to facts that are pertinent to the current situation. If the Junior Member, nevertheless, asks the team not to share any information a clear explanation will be given of the significant limits to the support and services that can be provided without disclosure.

### **4. Limits to welfare provision**

- 4.1. The welfare team will refer students to specialist services when the limits of its competence have been reached. When appropriate referral pathways to, for example, specialist health services are unavailable it cannot, nor would it be appropriate, for it to attempt to fill the gap by providing services beyond its competence.
- 4.2. Specifically, College is not equipped, nor does it have the expertise, to offer consistent support if a student's difficulties are so serious that constant monitoring is required.
- 4.3. College believes that students should be encouraged and helped to build resilience and a greater capacity to manage challenges. Where there is evidence that a Junior Member is

consistently unable to do so and that their physical, mental, emotional or psychological health or state is having an unacceptably deleterious impact upon the health, safety and/or welfare of the student and/or other students and/or University or college staff (not withstanding adjustments required by law), it will consider whether action under the College's Fitness to Study policy is appropriate (<https://www.new.ox.ac.uk/policies-statutes-accounts>).

- 4.4. College welcomes the fact that many students wish to support their colleagues but where Junior Members are drawn to giving a level of support that goes beyond that of a 'good neighbour' the welfare team will work with them to support their setting healthy limits to the support they wish to provide.

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