



King Henry VIII School Pastoral Letter – Recognising Eating Disorders

Dr MB Cuthbert (Deputy Head/Designated Safeguarding Lead)
10 November 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,


In our staff meeting this week I have given staff some guidance on how to recognise eating disorders. Recognizing the signs of eating disorders in teenagers is important for school staff, as they play a significant role in the lives of students and may be able to provide support or guidance.

There are some fantastic resources online that you may find helpful:

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/>

<https://cwrise.com/>


<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-information-and-support/>



Get information and support - Beat

Need information or support for an **eating** disorder? Find out about how to seek help including services that Beat offer.

www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk



Home

cwrise.com



YoungMinds | Mental Health Charity For Children And Young People

YoungMinds are a mental health charity for children, young people and their parents, making sure all young people can get the mental health support they need.

www.youngminds.org.uk

What is an eating problem?

Everyone eats in different ways. Teenagers might eat a significant amount one day, be less hungry another day, or go through phases of wanting to eat more or less healthily. That's completely normal.

But sometimes the way teenagers feel about food and eating can become a problem. Some signs that teenagers may have a problem include:

- Focussing a lot on controlling what or how much they eat.
- Having urges to get rid of the food from their body.
- Feeling unable to stop themselves from eating.

- Using food to manage their emotions.
- Feeling guilty for enjoying food.

Eating problems are common and they can affect anyone with any body shape or lifestyle, regardless of gender, culture, age, or ethnicity. Some people mistakenly think that eating disorders only affect girls, but this isn't true. Studies suggest roughly 25% of people affected by eating disorders are male.

What causes eating problems?

Many things can cause eating problems. Teenagers might develop an eating problem when things don't feel right in other parts of their life, especially if they're feeling worried, stressed or out of control. Some eating problems might be triggered by other mental health conditions. Some autistic teenagers also struggle with certain textures or types of food, which can be a symptom of a condition called Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder.

Images teenagers see in the media or on social media can make them feel they have to look a certain way, or be a certain weight, which can cause them to change the way they eat. A key message for teenagers is that there's no "right" or "wrong" way to look - everyone's body is different. Struggling with food or eating is never the fault of the person going through it and anyone experiencing problems around food deserves to get better. If their eating problem is having a really big impact on their life, a doctor might diagnose them with an eating disorder like anorexia or bulimia or other eating disorders.

What is anorexia nervosa?

Anorexia (also known as anorexia nervosa) is a type of eating disorder. People with anorexia generally try to keep their weight low by limiting how much food they eat, doing too much exercise, or both. They may have "rules" about what they eat, or when and where they eat. And they may think they are larger than they are and worry about gaining weight.

What is bulimia?

Bulimia is a type of mental health condition called an eating disorder. People with bulimia can get into a cycle of "binge-eating" (over-eating) and "purging" (trying to control their weight by making themselves sick, using laxatives, or over-exercising). Bulimia can affect anyone, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or background.

Bingeing is not enjoyable; in fact, it is often very distressing, and teenagers do not feel in control of it. During a binge, they may struggle to stop even if they want to, and they may feel disconnected from their body. It is usually a way of dealing with difficult feelings and emotions and is often followed by a desire to purge. Purging is a way of trying to make up for that overeating. They may feel guilty about what they have eaten and feel the need to "get rid" of it after a binge. This could be by vomiting, fasting, or taking laxatives or diuretics. Excessive exercise can also be a form of purging.

How does the school get involved?

If your child is diagnosed with an eating disorder by a medical professional then please get in touch with our school nurse, Mrs Cadwallader, nurse.khviii@csfoundation.org.uk. Mrs Cadwallader will work directly with the medical team supporting your child. They will supervise the school with respect to managing your child within school. Information is kept confidential and only the staff who have direct contact with your child will be aware. We work closely with the family and the medical team throughout the recovery process.

What advice has been given to staff on how to recognise eating concerns with our pupils/students?

1. Monitor Physical Signs:

- Noticeable and rapid weight loss.
- Frequent complaints of feeling cold or wearing excessive layers of clothing.
- Fatigue, weakness, or dizziness.

2. Observe Eating Habits:

- Skipping meals, especially lunch.
- Picky eating or avoidance of certain food groups.
- Evidence of excessive exercise, during school hours.

3. Behavioural Changes:

- A decline in academic performance.
- Frequent trips to the bathroom, possibly to purge.
- Frequent absences or tardiness, especially around school mealtimes.

4. Social and Emotional Indicators:

- Isolation from peers or social withdrawal.
- Mood swings, irritability, or signs of depression.
- Perfectionism and high levels of self-criticism.

5. Clothing Choices:

- Wearing baggy or layered clothing to hide weight loss.
- Expressing dissatisfaction with one's body shape.

6. Unusual Preoccupation with Food:

- Constantly talking about diets, calories, or food.
- Exhibiting unusual food rituals, such as cutting food into very small pieces.

7. Signs of Bulimia:

- Frequent trips to the bathroom immediately after meals.
- Evidence of food wrappers, containers, or a noticeable odour in the bathroom.

8. Educational Initiatives:

- PSHE sessions that promote body positivity and healthy eating habits.
- Encourage open dialogue about mental health and eating disorders to reduce stigma.

9. Confidential Communication:

- Create a safe environment where students can confidentially share their concerns.
- Teachers, Tutors, Support or Pastoral Staff need to be approachable and non-judgmental.
- Share all concerns, no matter how small with the safeguarding team.

Many thanks for reading my pastoral letter,



Dr MB Cuthbert

MBC@csfoundation.org.uk



**KING
HENRY VIII
SCHOOL**





KING HENRY VIII
SCHOOL

Safeguarding & Wellbeing for PUPILS/STUDENTS (2023/2024)

All students can expect the following from **KHVIII** Staff:

- Vigilance
- Information and Engagement
- Explanation
- Support
- Stability
- Understanding and action
- Respect
- Advocacy

If you are **WORRIED** or are worried about a friend, share your concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), a trusted staff member, My Concern Boxes or use the 'I Need Help' button on the School's Intranet.

DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS & PUPIL WELLBEING SUPPORT



Dr Cuthbert
Deputy
Head
DSL



Mrs Cadwallader
School
Nurse
DDSL



Mr Dearden
Headmaster
DDSL



Mrs Kaczur
Assistant
Head
DDSL



Mrs Brindley
SENCo



Mrs Tromans
Pupil
Wellbeing
Mentor



Mrs Dowding
Deputy
Head



Rev Slavic
School
Chaplain



Miss Rees
6th Form
Learning
Mentor



Miss Ainsworth
HoY 7



Mr Andrews
Assistant
HoY 7



Dr Coull
HoY 8



Mr Amlani
HoY 9



Mr Parker
HoY 10



Mr McKee
HoY 11



Mr Lovell
HoY L6



Mrs Tracey
HoY U6



Mr Miller
Assistant
Head
Sixth Form

Emergency Help

For when you don't think you can keep yourself safe

Call **999** if you are at immediate risk
[NHS Mental Health Crisis service](https://www.nhs.uk/mentalhealth/crisiscare): call
0300 200 0011 free 24/7 service

Young Minds: 24/7 Crisis Support
Free text to **85258**
<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

RISE: Crisis support for children and young people
Call **08081 966798 (select option 2)**

Papyrus: Confidential support and advice for young people struggling with thoughts of suicide
Call **0800 068 4141** or text **07860 039967**

Emotional Wellbeing Support

For when you need guidance or someone to listen

Young Minds: Guidance and advice for Mental health
<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Kooth: Free confidential online counselling support
<https://www.kooth.com/>

Childline: Free telephone counselling support for young people for any issue

Call free on **0800 1111**
<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Samaritans: 24 hour confidential emotional support and guidance
Call free on **116 123**

If you are 16+ years

Healthy Mind Service (IAPT: Improving Access to Psychological Therapy): A therapeutic intervention service for people feeling anxious, low in mood and depressed. Call **02476 671090** www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/iapt

All employed Staff who are safe to work with children wear a **BLACK** KHVIII Lanyard
All Governors who have been DBS checked wear a **BLUE** Coventry Foundation Lanyard

GREEN lanyards are worn by visitors that are allowed to be on site without supervision



PINK lanyards are worn by visitors that are NOT allowed to be on site without supervision: report to reception

