

<Creative Academy>

< Wellbeing Strategy >

Overview

The wellbeing strategy is an evidence-based, structured plan focusing on the physical, emotional, mental, and social health of students to improve performance. It includes a clear vision, aligned values, data-driven initiatives, and strong leadership support to foster a healthy, productive environment and student body.

Key Areas of Focus:

- **Mental Wellbeing:** Offering Headspace, student assistance, referral pathways and more.
- **Physical Wellbeing:** Providing advice on nutrition, additional fitness and health enhancing classes and physio and rehabilitation.
- **Social & Financial Wellbeing:** Encouraging student bonding, providing opportunities with information, advice and guidance.

Wellbeing Strategy

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Vision

Here at Creative Academy, we are placing Wellbeing at the heart of our students' experience as it affects how we all feel and our ability to function. We aim to equip our students with the understanding, skills and experiences to lead satisfying and happy lives. We acknowledge that mental health interconnects with all aspects of student life and that every student will experience mental health differently.

Aims

We will:

- Foster a whole community that is committed to supporting student mental health and Wellbeing and to communicating well about mental health and Wellbeing;
- Provide focussed support for students at key points of transition into and out of Creative Academy and at all transition points when students may be particularly vulnerable;
- Promote healthy behaviour and positive mental health within the University's curriculum, in co-curricular activities and in the use of spaces in the building;
- Ensure that the early identification of students at risk is facilitated by a co-ordinated range of services and practices including Personal Tutors, Wellbeing Team support, peer support and readily accessible support tools;
- Delivery effective student support services which are easy to access, meet the needs of a diverse student body and are resourced sufficiently to meet demand;
- Provide training and support for staff relating to mental health and learning needs and foster mutually supportive initiatives among staff and students;

- Use data and research to support mental health and Wellbeing, conducting regular surveys, monitoring trends, devising improvement plans and measuring success in relation to our aims in an evidence-based and transparent manner.

Our Strategy

This strategy has been developed to provide a framework enabling the whole of Creative Academy to support mental health and Wellbeing. The strategy references seven (of the eight) strategic themes proposed by UUK's hashtagStepChange framework for mental health in higher education. We will measure the impact of these strategies through a range of data sources. We will use this data and feedback from students to produce an annual mental health and Wellbeing report and to inform our annual Creative Academy planning.

Cornerstones of our Wellbeing Strategy

Leadership

The Head of Wellbeing is leading the Creative Academy wide approach to mental health and wellbeing, reporting into the Creative Academy Senior Management Team.

The Wellbeing Team consists of: Head of Wellbeing (Krissie Smith), Nutrition Lead (Gemma Kirkham), Physical Fitness Lead (Sunita Bolton & Pippa Holliday), Study Support Lead (Krissie Smith), Wellbeing Advisor (Jagdev Khatkar), Physio & Rehabilitation (Amrit Maan) and Counsellor (Various).

The Wellbeing Team is supported by external agencies who deliver Masterclass Week workshops and staff training in Wellbeing related subjects such as Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training.

The Wellbeing Team is leading on the development of a Creative Academy wide student and staff Mental Health and Wellbeing strategies co-produced with our students and staff.

The Wellbeing Team will continue to support the implementation of this strategy and embed a consolidated student Wellbeing service consisting of four strands of delivery. These are; Advice Services, Mental Health Services, Physical Health Services and Study Support Services.

We will foster a supportive environment that encourages early disclosure and ensures that students know how to access appropriate support services.

Transitions

We will provide focussed support for students at key points of transition into and out of Creative Academy and at all transition points when students may be particularly vulnerable.

What we are doing now...

We support students' transition to University by providing information and guidance relating to our student wellbeing with our recruitment and admissions activities. We encourage students to declare any pre-existing mental health issues prior to arrival.

We continue to review and improve our Welcome Week offer during the enrolment fortnight from a student perspective to support student transition and build an inclusive community.

What we will do next...

Increase our engagement with students through the admissions process, post-offer and once they are at University, give them multiple opportunities to declare any pre-existing mental health or physical health conditions.

We will develop a range of targeted support measures for students who may face challenges during transition (e.g. BME students, disabled students and LGBTQ+ students).

Prevention

We will integrate healthy behaviour and promote positive mental health within Creative Academy's curriculum and co-curricular activities.

What we are doing now...

We support students via Student Wellbeing Advisers, Personal Tutors, our Administrative Team and Wellbeing champions. Personal Tutor guidelines have been re-drafted and enhanced.

We encourage participation in sport and physical activity outside of Dance by offering discounted gym memberships and free in-house Pilates, Body Conditioning and Cardio classes daily.

We create and deliver initiatives like 'Where's Your Head At?' to promote in-house and external Wellbeing services. We aim to reduce financial hardship and provide a Student Hardship Fund to reduce financial pressure on students.

The structure of the academic year was reviewed in 2019 with a resulting shift in focus in Wellbeing and reducing stress, anxiety and workload including offering more opportunities for students to engage in part-time work in order to reduce the financial burden of University life.

What will we do next...

Additional Study Skills resources will be developed to support improved health and wellbeing.

We will develop more Wellbeing spaces within our building including more quiet reflection spaces and study spaces.

We will develop initiatives to promote awareness that addresses issues relating to Wellbeing such as healthy eating, sleep, drugs and alcohol misuse.

Early Intervention

What we are doing now...

We will ensure that the early identification of students at risk is facilitated by a co-ordinating range of services and practices including Personal Tutors, Wellbeing Advisor Support, peer support, engagement monitoring and readily accessible support tools.

Core staff are required to undertake mandatory mental health training with more intense face to face training for those in key student support roles. We have introduced Mental Health First Aid training with 80% of the staff team now trained.

What are we doing next...

We are reviewing the information sharing arrangements across Creative Academy to ensure students showing poor engagement are picked up early.

We are recruiting Wellbeing Champions for each year group. They will be educated in how to identify and respond to classmates who are struggling.

We will continue to develop and deliver appropriate mental health and Wellbeing training for staff across Creative Academy.

We will investigate systems for the early identification of students withdrawing via registration and engagement activities and provide targeted support in cases of Extenuating Circumstances, extensions etc which are often an indicator that students are struggling.

We will ensure that support services are visible and easy to access so that students receive timely interventions before issues escalate.

Support

What we are doing now...

We will deliver effective student support services which are easy to access, meet the needs of a diverse student body, and are resourced sufficiently to meet demand.

Support for students is available through a range of integrated services to help students access support that is right for them.

We provide enhanced guidance to support the Personal Tutoring system and facilitate the Tutors in each module in their work to support students.

We offer significant bursaries, including financial hardship packages and bursaries for students who have lived in Slough for more than four years.

What we will do next...

We will continue to invest in Student Wellbeing and will regularly review the effectiveness of these services adapting them in a flexible manner as necessary.

The Student Counselling Service will grow in line with the planned student growth and will explore ways to increase flexibility around timings of counselling appointments.

We will continually review the case for new services to target gaps in existing provision and will review access routes to services.

We will make improvements to relevant procedures and regulations, including student Fitness to Study and Student Code of Conduct. We will review our engagement and attendance activities and approach to ensure it supports this Strategy.

Staff

We will provide effective training and support for staff relating to mental health and Wellbeing, connecting our work with staff and students for mutual benefit.

What we are doing now...

Online and in-house delivered staff training relating to student mental health and how staff can best provide support to students forms part of the suite of training within our staff review and development processes.

We provide focussed training and resources for staff in Wellbeing Services and for Personal Tutors.

What we will do next...

We will take a strategic approach to the planning and delivery of staff training relating to the mental health and Wellbeing including developing the role of Personal Tutors.

We will provide training and support on student wellbeing issues for frontline staff outside of traditional pastoral roles, such as the administrative staff team.

We will regularly seek feedback from staff and students (e.g. through surveys on Wellbeing issues) to inform our approach.

We will seek opportunities to include students in training design, delivery and participation.

Data and Research

We will use data and research to support mental health conducting regular surveys, monitoring trends, devising improvement plans and measuring success in relation to our aims in an evidence based and transparent manner.

What we are doing now...

We invite all students to participate in an annual wellbeing survey designed by the Wellbeing Team to provide baseline data and opportunities to identify trends and priority areas where interventions are specifically required.

Student support services employ a range of monitoring and evaluation methods including service usage and satisfaction rates.

What we will do next...

A student wellbeing assessment will be introduced at student registration from 2020-21 onwards. The resulting data will be used to inform staff and students where help might be appropriate. These results will also feed into the baseline data to identify trends and priority areas where interventions are specifically required.

Creative Academy Wellbeing Support Services

