

Student Handbook

2023-2024





Introduction

A very warm welcome to a new academic year at MPW. We are very much looking forward to all our students flourishing both academically and personally. In this handbook you will find key information regarding college life and the support on offer to you. Additional information related to your emotional wellbeing and mental health is also included within this booklet.

Please do read and refer to this booklet in conjunction with the more comprehensive Student Guidelines and Rules. All students will be asked to sign and return a declaration that they understand and agree to them.

Wishing you all a very successful year ahead.

Sally Powell

September 2023



Key Information

1 Student Wellbeing

MPW prides itself as being a friendly and inclusive environment in which all students feel welcome, safe and supported. The last few years have tested us as individuals, families and communities and we've quickly had to adapt to new ways of studying, working, socialising and getting on with our lives and now return to normal. Navigating difficult circumstances can be emotionally taxing, contributing to poor mental health or exacerbating existing conditions. MPW has a number of ways of supporting you and your wellbeing via both the Director of Studies system, college counsellors, the safeguarding team, PHSE seminars and Firefly.

Furthermore, MPW is proud of its reputation as an environment where bullying is unlikely to be encountered. Bullying of any kind (including child-on-child abuse and sexual violence) will not be tolerated. This includes the use of social media to spread comments, photographs or anything else designed to cause physical and emotional harm to a student. Our policy contains procedures for ensuring anonymity of whistleblowers, alleged victims and alleged perpetrators and the protection of alleged victims whilst investigations are being carried out. We will take any allegation of bullying extremely seriously and students and parents/guardians should be aware that proven cases of bullying are likely to lead to the exclusion of the perpetrator. Our anti-bullying and cyber-bullying policies provide a fuller statement of the college's position and are available on the VLE.



2 The Director of Studies (DoS) System

Every student at MPW has been allocated a Director of Studies (DoS). The DoS is the link person between home and college and their responsibility is to oversee the pastoral and academic wellbeing of each student. The DoS works alongside parents to ensure students reach their potential. The DoS offers guidance on university applications including the personal statement, and they will write the UCAS reference. **Your DoS is the person you should contact if you have any problems or concerns.** You can book a meeting with them by email or at reception. They will also contact you to arrange regular meetings in order to discuss your progress either in person or via MS Teams.



3 Lessons and Learning

Students are obliged to attend all their timetabled lessons. Aim to arrive at least 5 minutes before the lesson is due bringing resources such as your student files, pens, paper, laptop and whatever else is asked of you by your teacher (eg textbook, material from a previous lesson). Most lessons last for two hours with a short break at the halfway point. A register is taken at the start of each lesson and absences communicated to a student's Director of Studies and their parents. Students who arrive late may not be admitted until after the break, at the discretion of the teacher. Similarly, students who arrive back late from the break may be excluded from the remainder of the lesson. Students are not permitted to take holidays during term time without the express permission of the DoS (who will consult the Principal).

Students are expected to concentrate during lessons, applying themselves to set tasks and responding positively to questions and discussions. Homework is set regularly and returned promptly. All work submitted by students must be their own and not copied from their peers or the internet. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence that may lead to students being removed from public examinations.

4 Books and Publications

Departments provide course notes and make available academic articles. Students may be required to purchase one or more textbooks. The course tutor will advise accordingly.

5 IT Resources

Student log-ins will be issued on the first day of term.

Acceptable use of college IT is detailed in Student Guidelines and College Rules.

Students will be issued with a college email address that should be used in all communication with staff. Members of staff are not allowed to contact you using your personal email address whilst you are studying at MPW.

Students can access My MPW (the college intranet) from within the college or anywhere via the internet. My MPW will show your timetable, a calendar of important dates and any important announcements. It also contains the college's VLE (Virtual Learning Environment). The VLE has materials for all courses, including details of homework and deadlines. **Students should check their college email and the VLE regularly throughout the day.**



6 Class Tests, Exam Practice papers and Mock Examinations

All students are expected to sit a series of tests and examinations as part of their courses.

- **Class Tests (CTs)** will typically involve examination questions, completed in lessons.
- **Exam Practices (EPs)** are more formal tests for Year 13/14 students that take place in the college library or Queen's Gate House.
- **Full mock examinations** take place in the second half of the Spring term (for full-year A level and GCSE candidates) or in April (for students following January to June or split-study courses).

Please note: The college will only enter students for public examinations who have demonstrated satisfactory progress through their courses. This includes, but is not restricted to, regular and punctual attendance at lessons, completion of class and homework tasks and securing at least a pass grade in the mock exams.

7 Formal Examinations

Exam entries will be made in November. Students are responsible for ensuring they are entered for the correct exams and must therefore check their statements of entry carefully.

In order to qualify for extra-time or access arrangements in college and public examinations, please make an appointment with Erica Stillwell (erica.stillwell@mpw.ac.uk), Head of Learning Support. Students are required to be re-assessed at MPW even if they were entitled to special arrangements at their previous school.

8 UCAS (University applications)

Students should make an appointment with their DoS to discuss plans for university. Those interested in applying to either Oxford or Cambridge (Oxbridge) should arrange to see Mat Carmody (mat.carmody@mpw.ac.uk) as soon as possible. Simon Horner (simon.horner@mpw.ac.uk), Vice Principal (Academic), oversees applications for Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry. Applicants for Art College or Creative Arts degrees should consult the Head of Art, Greg Ioannou. The college UCAS Co-ordinator is Duncan Chamberlain who is also available to offer advice on applications.

9 Notice boards

Students should check the electronic noticeboards around the college for forthcoming events and deadlines.

10 Student Cards/Oyster Photocards



Student cards are available from through the NUS website at <https://app.totum.com/login/>. You will need to provide one passport photo. Your student enrolment number is your computer login at MPW.

All students are eligible to apply for a TFL student oyster cards, and they can do so by registering online via the TFL website at <https://photocard.tfl.gov.uk/account> using their MPW log-in (e.g. LON23adent01) when a password is requested.

11 Student council

The student representative panel meets regularly throughout the year. Details of how to become a member and when Council

meetings take place are listed on the Student Common Room noticeboards.

12 Student conduct

Students must be courteous and respectful to fellow students and staff, and our neighbours. Smoking, including e-cigarettes, is forbidden in any of the college buildings

and the surrounding areas. The common room, canteen and classrooms must be kept tidy and litter-free.

13 Health and Safety

Medical and First Aid

All students with pre-existing medical conditions are required to complete a college Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) which should be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to their Director of Studies as soon as possible.

The college has a nurse alongside other trained staff who are permitted to administer basic first aid. Students feeling unwell should alert a member of staff or present themselves to reception or the sick bay (91.G2).

Please note that the college is not allowed to administer any form of drugs or medication without written parental consent. In the case of a serious accident or illness, the college will call for an ambulance and inform the parent or guardian as soon as practicable. Should a student need to be taken to hospital, he or she will always be accompanied by a member of staff until a parent or guardian arrives.



Emergency evacuation instructions for students

All students are expected to familiarise themselves with the fire action notices displayed throughout the college.



14 Finding Your Way Around

Each room is identified by a number which shows: a) which building it is in; b) which floor it is on; and c) which room on that floor it is. For example, 90.23 means that it is in 90 Queen's Gate on the second floor; and 92.B3 is in 92 Queen's Gate, in the basement.

Lessons take place in Queen's Gate and also at the Harrington Road site (adjacent to South Kensington station) and Queen's Gate House (situated on the corner of Cromwell Road and Queen's Gate).

Below is a list of some useful room numbers:

- **Staff Room**
91.22
- **Registry**
90.G2
- **Directors of Studies' Hub**
90.23 and QGH
- **Libraries**
90.11, 91.11 and 92.11

15 Changes of circumstances

It is very important that our student records are completely up to date at all times. Students must therefore inform their Director of Studies of any changes of address, of telephone contact numbers (for themselves or their parents/guardians) and of any changes in the health information provided on the college registration form as soon as they happen.





What's on your **MIND?**

YOUNG MINDS

A guide to emotional wellbeing and mental health provision for young people

Introduction

This section looks at what we mean by 'mental health' and 'emotional wellbeing' and suggests when and how to seek support. It also provides a broad outline of some mental health conditions suffered by young people, coupled with helpful links for further information to registered charities and the NHS.

We hope the following information will be useful in raising awareness of some common health conditions with clear advice on the support (such as the counsellors, Director of Studies system) available at the college. For any medical condition it is always recommended that further medical advice is sought as well.



Pastoral Support at MPW

There are a variety of ways in which each student supported at MPW:

- A Director of Studies will usually be the first point of contact for all pastoral and academic matters.
- The Designated Safeguarding team are also on hand led by Dee Robins.
- The College Nurse and trained first aiders are always on hand for any immediate concerns.
- The counselling service is available Monday - Friday during term time.

College Counsellors

Our counsellors are Jemima Marriott, Catherine Gillet and Eleanor Chasser. They are available Monday - Friday from 9-5pm.



What is counselling for?

Counselling can offer you a space in which to explore any difficulty you may be having in your life. If you are worried, down or confused, talking things over can help you to make sense of how you feel and find new ways of dealing with problems, without being judged or told what to do.

Counselling is not about being given advice but rather helping you to find your own answers and gain more control in your life. Examples of issues you might bring to counselling include:

- lack of confidence or low self-esteem
- issues around sex and sexuality
- family problems
- loneliness/feeling homesick
- worries about appearance
- eating problems
- self-harm
- stress and anxiety
- making difficult decisions
- bereavement and loss
- traumatic experiences
- depression
- managing change and transition
- anything that is causing difficulty in your life.

Is it confidential?

Yes. Nothing you say will be shared with anyone else without your permission. The only exception to this rule is if you or someone else is in danger. The counsellors will clearly explain the limits of confidentiality in your first session.

What happens at the first appointment?

You will be told a bit more about the service and asked a few questions about what is troubling you, your history and what you hope to get out of counselling. This is also an opportunity to ask any questions you might have.

How long does counselling last?

After your initial appointment, you will be offered some more sessions if you want them at the same time each week. Sessions last 45 minutes.

Where is the Counselling Service and how do I get an appointment?

The Counselling Service is based at the Harrington Road building. The service is available Monday - Friday.

If you would like to book an appointment to see a counsellor or if you have any questions, then contact counsellor@mpw.ac.uk or speak to your DoS.

What do we mean by mental health?

There is often a lot of confusion about what we mean when we talk about mental health. Many people immediately start thinking about mental health problems or mental illness – but this is only one part of the picture.

Everyone has 'mental health' and this can be thought of in terms of:

- how we feel about ourselves and the people around us
- how we handle stress and make choices
- how we relate to others and maintain relationships
- our ability to learn from others and to develop psychologically and emotionally.

Being mentally healthy is also about having the ability to overcome the difficulties and challenges we can all face at times in our lives – to have confidence and self-esteem, to be able to make decisions and to believe in ourselves.

Dealing with life's ups and downs

Having said that we all have mental health, it's also important to understand when you might need to get some help or support with how you are feeling – or to know when perhaps you may be experiencing a more serious problem.

It is quite normal to sometimes feel worried, anxious or upset when things don't go as you hope – everyone faces pressure in their lives at certain times and these can include:

- college life & exams
- getting into university/work/getting a job
- growing up and becoming more independent
- friendship and relationship issue

Knowing when to get help

What to look out for:

If someone is experiencing worries, anxieties and difficult feelings to the extent that they are seriously interfering with their everyday life, for instance...

- being able to study and go to school
- being able to eat or sleep as they normally do
- being able to go out with their friends or take part in their favourite hobbies

...and these feelings are becoming persistent, that is lasting for a few weeks or more, then it might be that they have a mental health problem or disorder and need to get some further help.

'When 'I' becomes 'We', Illness becomes Wellness'

The first step to overcoming any mental health issue is to talk to someone you can trust. This might be a friend, family member, your DoS here at MPW or a college counsellor.

The next section identifies some common mental health problems affecting young people today. If you identify with any of them or believe a friend may be suffering - please consider reaching out to someone to talk.



Anxiety/Stress

Anxiety is a normal, if unpleasant, part of life, and it can affect us all in different ways and at different times. Whereas stress can be a temporary visitor determined by an external factors (such as work, exams, relationships etc), anxiety is something that can persist whether or not the cause is clear to the sufferer.

Anxiety can make a person imagine that things in their life are worse than they really are, and prevent them from confronting their fears. Some people have an identifiable cause for their anxiety (such as a traumatic incident, moving house, divorce, having surgery), however some do not. A helpful way of understanding anxiety is to imagine an individual's stress levels as being like a bucket of water. If we keep adding stressors to the bucket, over time it fills up until one day it overflows.

This can be a helpful way of looking at anxiety as it explains why sometimes it can seem to come out of the blue with no significant trigger.

There will inevitably be periods of intensity and potentially stress-provoking situations for any student e.g. during the real and mock exam periods and deadlines/regular testing at the college.

Relationships both at college and at home can also be stressful at times. Adequate preparation for exams can often reduce the stress felt surrounding them (particularly for anxious students) and the student/parent should always contact the Director of Studies over any concerns. The college also runs regular study skills workshops to help students navigate through stressful periods and provide ongoing support for each individual.

It is important that students try to maintain a healthy balance between academia and exercise, with regular breaks during studying. A healthy diet is also important with regular sleeping patterns and if possible a quiet space at home in which homework can be completed without interruption.

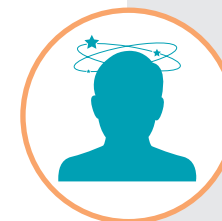
Treatments for anxiety include psychological therapy (such as cognitive behavioural therapy, applied relaxation techniques) as well as medication.



Common symptoms:

- Panic attacks
- Increased heart rate
- Increased muscle tension
- Tingling in the hands and feet
- Hyperventilation (over breathing)
- Dizziness
- Feeling sick
- Tight band across the chest area
- Tension headaches
- Increased perspiration
- Dry mouth
- Shaking
- Choking sensations
- Palpitations

- **NHS:**
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/anxiety-fear-panic/>
- **Support groups:**
<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/get-help/anxiety-uk-courses-and-groups/>
- **Charitable support:**
<http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>
<https://www.supportline.org.uk/>
- **Royal College of Psychiatrists:**
<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/anxiety-panic-and-phobias>



Depression

Depression has more recently been referred to as the 'common cold of mental health problems' and is on the rise. Government statistics have shown that one in eight teenagers will suffer depression at some point during their adolescence.

Depression is a common mental disorder that causes people to experience a depressed mood and symptoms such as a loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy, and poor concentration. In some cases, depression can be so severe that it dominates an individual's life, preventing them from coping and fully functioning as they used to. Depression is an illness and needs treatment.

Common symptoms:

- Depressed or low mood, loss of energy
- A loss of interest and enjoyment in life
- A lack of drive or motivation that makes even simple tasks or decisions difficult or impossible
- Loss of concentration
- Feeling tired all the time
- Agitation or restlessness
- Loss or gain in appetite with loss or gain in weight
- Sleeplessness or excessive sleeping
- Loss of self confidence, avoiding people
- Feeling useless, inadequate, helpless or hopeless
- Feeling guilty or worthless, a burden on loved ones
- Suicidal thoughts, self harm
- Avoidance, isolation

Treatments for depression include antidepressants, mood stabilising medication, counselling, herbal remedies, psychological therapy (such as cognitive behavioural therapy) and other forms of psychiatric and psychological support.

- **NHS:**
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Depression/Pages/Treatment.aspx>
- **Royal College of Psychiatrists:**
<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/depression>

- **Charitable support:**
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/depression/useful-contacts/>
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk>

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a serious anxiety-related condition where a person experiences frequent intrusive and unwelcome obsessional thoughts, often followed by repetitive compulsions, impulses or urges.

OCD presents itself in many guises, and certainly goes far beyond the common perception that the condition involves only hand washing or repeatedly checking light switches. In general, OCD sufferers experience obsessions which take the form of persistent and uncontrollable thoughts, images, impulses, worries, fears or doubts. They are often intrusive, unwanted, or

disturbing and interfere with the ability to function on a day-to-day basis as they are incredibly difficult to ignore.

People with OCD often realise that their obsessional thoughts are irrational, but they believe the only way to relieve the anxiety caused by them is to perform compulsive behaviours, often to prevent perceived harm happening to themselves or to a loved one. Even if it is difficult to put an obsession into words, people with OCD may find themselves avoiding a wide range of situations or activities to prevent triggering the obsession.

Common symptoms:

- Being unable to stop hoarding
- Compulsive buying
- Paranoia
- Obsessive checking, tidying and cleanliness
- Repeatedly performing tasks, including repeated questioning or confessing to others
- Repeatedly arranging or ordering objects or activities
- Perfectionist tendencies

Treatments for OCD include antidepressants, herbal remedies, psychological therapy (such as cognitive behavioural therapy) and other forms of psychiatric and psychological support.



- **NHS:**
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/obsessive-compulsive-disorder/ocd/overview/>
- **Support groups:**
<https://ocdaction.org.uk/i-need-support/local-support/>

- **Charitable support:**
<http://www.ocdsymptoms.co.uk/>
- **Royal College of Psychiatrists:**
<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/obsessive-compulsive-disorder>

Self-Harm

Self-harm is a broad term for any behavioural pattern which can cause serious damage to your health. This can involve over-eating, taking drugs, smoking and drinking too much as well as causing intentional injury to yourself known as deliberate self-harm.

Deliberate self-harm is a way of expressing deep distress. It can be seen as a means of communicating what cannot be expressed through words. Self-harm is usually conducted at times of anger, distress, fear, emotional worry, depression or low self-esteem in order to manage negative feelings that cannot be dealt with in a rational or logical way by the self-harmer.

It can also be a way to self punish and an attempt to gain control. Afterwards, often self-harmers feel better able to cope with life again, for a while. People who self-harm often feel ashamed by their actions and try to conceal what they are doing rather than draw attention to it.

Common symptoms:

- Unexplained cuts, bruises or cigarette burns, usually on wrists, arms, thighs and chest
- Covering skin even in hot weather
- Low mood, tearfulness or a lack of motivation
- Changes in eating habits or being secretive about eating, any unusual weight loss or weight gain
- Low self-esteem
- Signs they have been pulling out their hair
- Other abusive behaviour: signs of alcohol or drug misuse

Immediate medical help for any personal injuries due to self-harm is crucial. A first aider is always available at the college. Other treatments could include sessions with a counsellor, as well as psychiatric and psychological help.

- **NHS:**
<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Self-injury/Pages/Treatment.aspx>
- **Royal College of Psychiatrists:**
<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/problems-disorders/self-harm>
- **Charitable support:**
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/self-harm/#.W4gY0ZKNKhBw>



Frequently asked questions

What shall I do if I would like to discuss a personal matter with a member of staff or I am concerned about a friend at the college?

Your first point of contact is your Director of Studies who is responsible for student welfare at the college and is available to discuss any concerns that you may have. You can book a meeting with your DoS in 90/91 reception or visit their office directly. If the matter is urgent and they are unavailable, please contact another member of staff on the premises who will be able to help you. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Dee Robins. Dee is based in 91.G2.

If you would like your DoS meeting to be in confidence, we can easily arrange this. We encourage all students to book in to see us on a regular basis.

I would like to see a counsellor to discuss my concern – how shall I arrange this?

If you would like to book an appointment to see either counsellors or if you have any questions please contact send an email to counsellor@mpw.ac.uk or speak to your DOS.

What shall I do if I want to remain anonymous but still want to share my concerns?

You can raise any concerns anonymously via the the safeguarding reporting app Whisper.

I would like to see a first-aider today, what shall I do?

At MPW there is always our College Nurse and a trained first aider on hand – please go to reception or the sick bay (91.G2). A first aider will be assigned to you to assess your needs and take necessary, appropriate action.

I am very upset at the moment and I can't find my DoS – who can I talk to?

We hope that you approach another DoS or another member of staff who will be able to help. Please remember you can also approach the DSL (Dee Robins) or a member of her team (Nikki Morris, Egle Plioplyte, Erica Stillwell, Rachel Sherman, Jonny Dobbs-Grove).

I am worried about an incident or issue that happened off school premises – can I still talk to a member of staff about it?

Yes absolutely – please approach your DoS or a member of staff about anything that concerns you.

I would like to speak to somebody out of school hours, who can I talk to?

We would encourage you to speak to your parents or someone you trust (a relative, a friend's parents) if you feel comfortable. There are plenty of helpful charities who offer advice to young people:

CHILDLINE:

0800 1111

<http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home>

SAMARITANS:

116123

<http://www.samaritans.org/>

MIND (MENTAL HEALTH):

0300 123 3393

<http://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/helplines/>

GET CONNECTED

(confidential helpline for young people):

0808 808 4994

<http://hatw.co.uk/helpline/get-connected/>

“A problem shared,
is a problem halved.”

Further resources on mental health and wellbeing:

- **Mental health charity providing support and information**
<http://www.mind.org.uk>
- **Samaritans**
helpline available 24/7 call free (UK): 116 123
<http://www.samaritans.org>
- **Providing a range of information, advice and support for students**
<http://www.studentsagainstdepression.org>
- **International service: supporting those in distress**
<http://www.befrienders.org>
- **Support for the under 25s**
<http://www.themix.org.uk>
- **For those struggling with self-harming behaviours**
<http://www.harmless.org.uk>
- **App for Sleep, Meditation and Relaxation**
<http://www.calm.com>
- **Website dedicated to all things mindful**
<http://www.freemindfulness.org>
- **Online guide to mental health and wellness**
<http://www.helpguide.org>
- **Meditation website with App**
<http://www.headspace.com>
- **Campaign Against Living Miserably - Support for young men suffering from depression**
<http://www.thecalmzone.net>
Helpline: 0800 58 58 58
- **Workbook on social anxiety**
<http://www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk/shynesssocialphobia.asp>
- <http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk>
Helpline: 03444 775 774
Text: 07537 416 905
- **Additional Covid-19 support:**
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#.XmdCMLzgXtV.twitter>
<https://www.studentminds.org.uk/coronavirus.html>





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