

## **Student Mental Health Agreement**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER**

#### **For decision**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is for review and then approval from the Board.

### **2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) shares the mental health and wellbeing initiatives and activity that the College and Students' Association will work in partnership on during 2024/25-2025/26.
- 2.2 The SMHA is shaped by student and staff voices and structured in 4 parts using NHS Borders: 6 Ways to be Well as inspiration for the sections. In each section key areas have been identified for the BCSA and College to work together on. The Success Measures for each section intend to give an idea of what success could look like but are flexible to whatever activity is undertaken.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION(S) REQUIRED**

- 3.1 I recommend that the Regional Board: -
- 3.1.1 Review the document and share any feedback on required changes or considerations for the agreement.
- 3.1.2 Approve the agreement which will then be signed by the Student President and Principal.

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The SMHA is a project undertaken by Colleges and Universities across Scotland hosted by NUS Scotland's Think Positive campaign since 2015. This SMHA has been reviewed for feedback by the Think Positive team and their recommendations have helped shape the agreement.
- 4.2 Focus groups were held with college staff and students to understand what the SMHA should look like and contain. BCSA asked students what has supported their mental health and wellbeing at college and what could be done to improve this.

Through these conversations, it was highlighted that the SMHA should connect to regional and national work currently underway to support mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, the NHS Borders: 6 Ways to be Well have helped shape the document.

- 4.3 Once approved the SMHA will be published on the College website and shared on the Think Positive website.
- 4.4 A small steering group of college staff and BCSA will monitor any work undertaken which is outlined in the SMHA to track success and address any actions required. This group will feed into the Equalities & Inclusion Committee.
- 4.5 The SMHA will remain in place for 2 academic years and its success will be evaluated in the next SMHA.

## **5.0 Student Mental Health Agreement**

- 5.1 See SMHA as Appendix.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

### **6.1 Financial Implications**

- 6.1.1 No direct implications.

### **6.2 Learner Implications**

- 6.2.1 The SMHA was created in partnership with learners and reflects their needs and concerns related to mental health and wellbeing. The activity outlined in the agreement will help improve the mental health and wellbeing of students.

### **6.3 Staff Implications**

- 6.3.1 Although the SMHA focuses on the mental health and wellbeing of students, it was created with a whole college approach to mental health and wellbeing in mind. The agreement acknowledges the importance of staff mental health and wellbeing in order to best support our students.

### **6.4 Equality and Diversity Implications/Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.4.1 An equality Impact Assessment was carried out by the EDI Officer, Students' Association Support Officer, Student President, and Director of Student Support Services.

### **6.5 Sustainability/Environmental Implications**

- 6.5.1 No direct implications.

## 7.0 RISK COMMENTARY

- 7.1 The risk of not approving the SMHA is that it is not in place for students returning in August.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The agreement will be signed by the Student President and Principal and shared for students and staff for the next two years. Physical copies can also be printed. The SMHA supports the partnership that exists between the College and Students' Association and demonstrates how valuable this partnership is for the student experience.

Eilidh Forrest

Students' Association Support Officer

Chris Alder

Borders College Student President

12/06/24

### Previous Board or College Committee Approvals:

Equalities & Inclusion Committee

Student Experience Committee

SLT

### Alternative formats

If you need access to a college document in an alternative format, for example, accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording and braille:

- Complete an accessibility request form by [clicking on this link](#).
- Call [01896 66 26 00](tel:01896662600) and ask to speak with the Marketing Team.

We will consider your request and get back to you within 5 working days.

### Translate documents from this website into other languages

You can download any of our published documents and translate them into many languages. Please click this link to use [Google Translate](#)

For publication <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>	Not for publication <input type="checkbox"/> If not, why not?
--	--

# Borders College Student Mental Health Agreement 2024/25-2025/26



## Introduction

The Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA) project has been hosted by NUS Scotland since 2015 under the Think Positive campaign. The Borders College SMHA outlines the range of mental health and wellbeing initiatives the College and Students' Association will work on in partnership throughout 2024/25 and 2025/26.

In order to best represent the experience of Borders College students, student voices helped shape the SMHA. Borders College Students' Association (BCSA) worked with 24 students to create this Agreement. BCSA heard about their experience of mental health and wellbeing support at college, what they believe has supported them and what we could do to improve the student experience in relation to mental health and wellbeing.

The SMHA is structured by 4 parts using the NHS Borders 6 Ways to Be Well as inspiration. This allows the Agreement to connect with ongoing regional work to improve mental health and wellbeing in the Scottish Borders. Underpinning the Agreement is also the commitment to becoming a Trauma Informed College.

This Agreement not only demonstrates the valuable partnership that exists between Borders College, BCSA and students, but it also highlights the importance of mental health and wellbeing to the Borders College community. We work to create a culture where mental health and wellbeing is discussed without judgement and our College community is a place where we can all feel supported, and prepared to succeed as Global Citizens.



### Signed:

---

Chris Alder  
**Borders College Student President**  
xx/xx/xx

---

Pete Smith  
**Principal & CEO of Borders College**  
xx/xx/xx





**Nurturing**

## Nurturing

Borders College understand the value of a successful start and end to college life which helps create a positive student experience. Students shared with BCSA that building trusting relationships with other students and staff allows them to feel supported with their mental health and wellbeing. Creating a nurturing environment and journey through college allows students to feel welcome and supported.

### Supporting positive transitions in and out of college.

- Work to support students joining Borders College to ensure they have a smooth transition into college life.
- Promote pathways to employment and other progression opportunities post-College.

### Leading with empathy.

- Review the language used across our policies and procedures to ensure it is accessible and inclusive to the Borders College community.
- Continue to build positive relationships between students and staff so individuals trust the support processes at Borders College.

### Building partnerships to provide wrap-around support for staff and students.

- Work with our local partners to enhance the support available to our college community.

## Success Measures

- Increased engagement in Quiet Introduction & Supported Enrolment events which take place through summer to deliver additional support to incoming students.
- Develop a range of progression support for students to become informed about what's next for them.
- Support a range of local and national organisations to visit college throughout the academic year to share the services they offer.
- Increased number of students who know their Student Support Officer is for their curriculum area.
- Be conscious of the language used when writing and reviewing our policies and procedures to ensure inclusivity.





**Belonging**



## Belonging

Meeting other people, enjoying new experiences, and feeling a sense of belonging is an important part of college life. Borders College will work to ensure our students and staff feel like they are part of the college community.

### **Creating safe spaces for our staff and students.**

- Develop our spaces to help improve wellbeing at college.

### **Organising events to build our college community.**

- Host a range of relevant events throughout the year to support mental health and wellbeing and have fun.

### **Success Measures**

- Undertake a Trauma Informed walkthrough of the college to assess the safeness of our spaces so that they are appropriate for the needs of our students and staff.
- Consult students sitting on the Student Support Forum and wider student body when creating student wellbeing spaces.
- Host a Winter-Wellbeing Fair after the festive break to ensure students are aware of mental health and wellbeing support available to them in their local area and services available at college (counselling service, Campus Pantry, wellbeing advice etc.)
- Deliver 1 event each month which promotes and raises awareness for a range of important wellbeing topics.





**Being Active**



## Being Active

Students and staff engaging in physical activity and actively participating in our feedback procedures is important. We understand how beneficial physical activity is for mental health and wellbeing. We also work to listen to the voices of students and staff to help create positive change to college life

### **Promoting physical activity for all.**

- Encourage student and staff involvement in a range of inclusive physical activities to improve mental health and wellbeing.

### **Encourage staff and student involvement in shaping mental health and wellbeing activity.**

- Develop new and existing opportunities for students and staff to share their voices.
- Work with students to design and shape mental health and wellbeing services at college.

### **Success Measures**

- Increased number of students and staff engaging in physical activities delivered at College.
- Increased engagement in focus groups, the Student Support Forum, survey numbers.
- Consult with students to help shape what support is available at college to ensure it is relevant.
- Create a steering group to monitor the Student Mental Health agreement.



**Being Aware**



## Being Aware

Understanding the different experiences of others is important for us to be able to appropriately support our college community. Whether it's being trauma informed or engaging in opportunities to upskill and learn about the range of challenges that some of our students face, awareness supports staff to continue to meet the needs of our students. The wellbeing of staff is vital when having a college-wide approach to mental health and wellbeing.

### Staff training and awareness.

- Staff are provided with a range of opportunities to improve their personal wellbeing and their ability to support our college community.

### Building a whole college approach to wellbeing.

- Work towards becoming a trauma informed college to better support and recognise the needs of our college community.
- Encourage staff and students to actively campaign for change on matters relating to mental health and wellbeing.

### Transparent information.

- Provide regular and understandable information to students and staff about mental health and wellbeing opportunities and services at college or in their local community.

### Success Measures

- Deliver a range of awareness raising, training and supportive opportunities to staff so that they feel confident supporting students.
- Continue work with the College Development Network to become a Trauma Informed College and see this work shape college life.
- Support currently available to students is communicated throughout the year and any changes to what is offered is clearly communicated.