



WELFARE STATEMENT

1 Introduction

1.1 The Queen's College is committed to providing a setting within which every student can flourish and fulfil their potential. Reporting to the Governing Body, the Tutor for Welfare collaborates with the Senior Tutor, Dean and Domestic Bursar to ensure that the College's policies and practices reflect this commitment.

1.2 Academic success and personal development are interdependent. The College facilitates and promotes good mental health and wellbeing by providing the opportunity to pursue social, cultural and sporting fulfilment as well as creating the conditions for the direct pursuit of academic excellence.

1.3 The College has a specific legal responsibility towards students who have conditions that fall within the definition of "disability" under the Equality Act 2010. It subscribes [to The Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students](#).

1.4 Students have to adjust to different circumstances when they arrive at university, start a new course, come to Oxford, or begin to live more independently. These changes offer exciting opportunities but, in some instances, they can be challenging, or exacerbate challenges that a student already faces. 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, some Junior Members experience emotional, psychological or health difficulties that are more persistent and that inhibit their ability to participate fully in College life. The College welfare team is available to all Junior Members of the College, within the limits laid out in 4. Limits to Welfare Provision. The term Junior Member refers to all undergraduate and postgraduate students.

2 Welfare support at The Queen's College

2.1 Day to day, responsibility for promoting welfare and providing non-specialist individual welfare support is delegated to the College welfare team, and to those in academic and professional roles who interact with students—particularly, in the case of undergraduates, their moral tutors. The welfare team is available to listen to student concerns and offer non-specialist support and signpost to further assistance.

2.2 The welfare team consists of the Tutor for Welfare, the Welfare Officer, four Junior Deans, and the Chaplain. The Welfare Officer is the primary coordinator of welfare work and the Tutor for Welfare leads on welfare matters on the Governing Body. The welfare team liaises with the elected JCR and MCR welfare representatives but the latter are not part of the College welfare team.

2.3 The College believes that specialist support is the responsibility of, and is best delivered by the established local and national support services, as these have the expertise to deal effectively with the wide range of needs and circumstances that may arise. In addition to signposting students to these services, the College contributes to and collaborates with the [University Counselling Service](#) so that students have access to a range of professionally qualified and accountable practitioners who are familiar with the University setting and a variety of practices that can be matched to student needs.

2.4 Some students will be taking responsibility for their own health for the first time, and many international students will encounter a system of health care provision that is new to them. The College has formal links with the National Health Service General Practice at [19 Beaumont Street](#) (referred to as the College Doctors) and all students are requested to register with this Practice, but they may register with any other practice in Oxford. Although College Doctors are independent general practitioners who respect doctor-patient confidentiality, they know the College system well. They 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. In addition, they can provide medical certificates (for example 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.

2.5 Alongside health, the College welfare team can also act as points of contact to help students access and navigate relevant College policies and practices such as those related to [equalities](#), [harassment](#), [financial support](#) and [disability](#). In addition, the College has two [Harassment Officers](#), an [Equalities Officer](#), and a [Disability Coordinator](#).

3 Confidentiality

3.1 Junior Members with personal or health concerns might be reluctant to seek help unless they are assured that the information they provide will be treated confidentially and that the fact they are seeking help or raising concerns will not harm their academic standing. We respect the confidentiality of information shared with the welfare team, and we will not normally share this information with anyone, without explicit consent.

3.2 The College cannot promise complete confidentiality to Junior Members in all circumstances. There are circumstances when the duty of confidentiality can be overridden, for instance where maintaining confidentiality would put someone, including the student themselves, at risk of significant harm.

3.3 The welfare team encourages students to allow them to share information with relevant officers and staff within and outside the College, if this is in the best interests of the individual and/or others. Any such sharing of information will be carried out with discretion and will be limited to those who need to know and to facts that are pertinent to the current situation. If the Junior Member does not give permission to share relevant information, then they will be given a clear explanation that their choice is likely to limit the support and services that they will receive.

4 Limits to welfare provision

4.1 The welfare team will signpost students to specialist services where appropriate. We are aware that it may sometimes be difficult – even impossible – to access specialist services, but the College cannot fill the gap by providing services beyond its competence and even to attempt to do so may be harmful both to students and to staff. Where specialist support is unavailable, the welfare team will help the student to access alternative support where possible and appropriate.

4.2 The College does not fund private medical care or counselling (other than through the University Counselling Service).

4.3 The College is not equipped, nor does it have the expertise or a duty, to offer consistent support if a student's difficulties are so serious that constant monitoring is required. In addition, the College welfare team is not equipped to provide emergency support, in place of the emergency services, either during or outside term time. The Junior Deans provide on-call overnight support between 0th-9th week and can help students access emergency support.

4.4 The welfare team provides support to students, but its role does not include acting as a student's advocate or proponent with respect to other College officers or departments. College departments take account of welfare considerations where it is appropriate to do so and, where necessary, the Tutor for Welfare raises general welfare concerns with the Governing Body.

4.5 The College is committed to supporting students to manage difficulties that may arise during their time at the College through the support systems outlined above. However, where there is evidence over time that a Junior Member's physical, mental, emotional or psychological health or state requires a level of support which is not practicable alongside their studies, or poses an unsustainable burden on others (including staff and students), it will consider whether to take action under the College's [Fitness to Study](#) policy.

4.6 The College welcomes the fact that many students wish to support their peers, either as friends or in the capacity of JCR/MCR welfare representatives or peer supporters. However, the College does not expect students to provide a level of support to others which goes beyond that of a friend, impacts on their own welfare or academic work, or which substitutes for medical care and supervision. Junior Members are encouraged to seek the support and advice of the welfare team if they are struggling with supporting others.

4.7 For students who suspend their studies, the College's welfare support is among the College facilities that cannot be accessed during the period of suspension. However, prior to a confirmed return to studies following a period of suspension, Junior Members can access the College welfare team to support their return to study. This support is usually accessible in the term preceding the student's return to studies.

4.8 The College does not usually provide welfare support for students outside of full term. Undergraduates given permission to reside in College during vacations are advised that the absence of welfare support must be considered when applying for vacation residence. In general, the full range of services that the College provides cannot be guaranteed outside of term and this is also the case for services offered by the welfare team. The Junior Deans are on duty from 0th – 9th week and the Welfare Officer and Chaplain cannot be assumed to be available between terms. Graduate student College Advisors are available year-round, subject to holidays. The welfare team will indicate where alternative support can be found during the vacations.

[May 2021]