

Court Fields School
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Chat Health and School Nurse Policy

Date: February 2024

Due for review: Spring Term 2025

Headteacher: Polly Matthews

CEO: Lorraine Heath

PURPOSE

Teenagers typically find difficulty in accessing medical support, advice and guidance through surgeries and clinics. The use of Chat Health run by Somerset County Council, linked with the School Nurses will encourage students to become more independent and take greater responsibility in terms of their health and well-being. Chat Health is a natural extension of the excellent support our students receive from other agencies. Access to a School Nurse via Chat Health will allow students to find out information, discuss a range of issues, seek treatment in specific areas or be directed to a more appropriate professional. Chat Health is very much in line with the school's ethos of caring for children and keeping them safe.

Chat Health is a text service for parent and carers to confidentially ask for help about a range of issues from a school nurse. From parent advice and support to healthy lifestyles, school transitioning to emotional health. The service is staffed by qualified school nurses who have a wealth of experience of working with young people and parents. The service is also available for parents on a separate line. Chat Health is managed by School Nursing staff using the Chat Health web platform. It aims to encourage young people to start conversations early, therefore preventing problems escalating. The hope is that the service will enable the School Nursing Service to make connections with hard to reach young people, especially those who are home educated.

Young People (11-19 years) can text: 07480 635 516

Parents of children aged 5-19 years can text: 07840 635 515

Disclaimer: this is not an emergency service; it operates Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm and is only available by using a UK mobile number. Your messages are stored on our secure system and can be seen by the School Nursing Team who run our ChatHealth Service. Although this is a confidential service, in the event of a safeguarding issue the School Nurse has a duty of care to act on this and may escalate the concern. (<https://www.somerset.gov.uk/send/chathealth-5-19-2/>)

KEY POINTS of Chat Health

- To provide a non-judgemental, safe, friendly and trusting environment and service
- To provide a text message service without appointments, where follow-up appointments in school may be made if necessary
- Referral to and from other agencies
- To promote communication between young people, health services, parents and school
- To provide health information in a range of formats about young peoples' health issues
- To involve young people in the development and review of the service to ensure their needs are met
- Confidential records are kept with verbal feedback given to school on issues if a safeguarding concern arises
- Working within the local child protection procedures to ensure that the child's welfare is paramount
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Why do we need the Chat Health Service?

Young people learn best when they are free from worries or concerns. Concerns over health or emotional issues can be significant barriers to learning and educational attainment. Whilst the Trust has excellent pastoral support structures, there are occasions when young people do not feel able to discuss situations with school staff or when school staff are not the appropriate professionals to offer advice or information. By extending the access young people have to professional advice and support from the Health Service we can support them quickly and appropriately in the school setting as well as offer preventative health care on a number of issues.

The need for access to school nurses has been identified by students as important. Students particularly felt that access to a professional adult who is not a teacher is important with issues of emotional health which would be difficult to discuss with pastoral staff with whom there may be strong relationships. Boys in particular felt this was important.

The Trust has very good Personal, Social, and Health Education, which is delivered to groups of students. It is important to provide a service which enables individual young people to seek information, clarification and advice confidentially, within strict safeguarding protocols.

What services may be offered

The text messaging/phone call/email service provided by Chat Health will have information and advice available on a wide range of issues which may include:

- Healthy eating
- Smoking/Vaping
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Relationships
- Sexual health
- Emotional health
- Stress/Anxiety
- Weight issues

Sexual health services that may be offered through Chat Health to older students include:

- Condom-card (see Appendix 1)
- Emergency hormonal contraception
- Free pregnancy testing
- Chlamydia screening and follow-up treatment

Any school nurse working via Chat Health offering sexual health services will have been fully accredited by Somerset NHS and will operate within strict child protection guidelines, always reporting any child at risk. Any young person accessing these services will be involved in a full discussion, including advice to talk to parents and follow up appointments. This, in the Trust's view,

provides a more supportive service which, takes into account the welfare and well-being of the young person more so than if they were to access these services via other available providers.

Monitoring the Chat Health and Any In School Appointments

The School Nurse will keep confidential records of those attending the clinic.

The link Governor for Safeguarding will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to monitor the use of the Chat Health and in school appointments Any concerns will be brought to the attention of the Education Committee.

Any concerns over a young person at risk will be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead via My Concern.

APPENDIX 1: THE C-CARD

The Somerset C-Card is a totally free service offering free condoms and sexual health information and is available to all young people in Somerset. To join the C-Card a young person may visit one of the places listed in Issue Point and have a chat with a C-Card issuer.

At the initial text message to Chat Health will provide information and a further visit by the School Nurse will tell the young person how the C-Card works and issue a C-Card if the young person is willing to engage in discussion and will listen to the following advice and guidance:

- How to use a condom correctly
- Some information about sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancy and how to avoid them
- Know what to do and where to go if your condom splits or you didn't use one
- Where else you can go to get free condoms and talk about other sexual health services
- The chance to ask the C-Card issuer any questions you may have around sex and relationships.

The young person will be asked for date of birth, ethnicity and post code. This information is confidential but it can be seen by other C-Card Issuers so ethnicity and post code are voluntary.

The card can be used at any participating C-Card Issue Point up to ten times, the number of times will be at the discretion of the School Nurse. After the tenth time or after one year the card will expire and a follow-up meeting will be necessary. The C-Card issuer will then decide whether to reactivate the card.

Young people under 16 are encouraged to talk to their parents. If the young person is deemed to be at risk or harm or exploitation the School Nurse will refer either to the School Designated Safeguarding Lead or the School Nurses Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding procedures will be followed.