



Eating Disorders Policy

Bancroft's

Independent Co-educational Day School 7–18

Eating Disorders

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Eating disorders are treated as a safeguarding issue and will be handled by the Pastoral Team with input from the School Nurse as appropriate.

Aim of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Raise awareness about eating disorders
- Help staff to recognise symptoms and potential problems early
- Demonstrate how our school will support pupils affected by eating disorders and their parents/carers
- Outline procedures the school will follow to ensure the protection of pupils and their information
- Offer tools for support and prevention

What is an Eating Disorder?

Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses affecting 1.6 million people in the UK. They are most likely to develop in the teenage years and although more girls are affected, around a quarter of the population affected by an eating disorder at school age are boys. People from all types of background, gender and ethnic groups can suffer from eating disorders.

Here are some of the symptoms:

Physical signs	Behavioural signs	Psychological signs
Anorexia Nervosa	Anorexia Nervosa	Anorexia Nervosa
Severe weight loss Periods stopping (Amenorrhoea) Hormonal changes in men and boys Difficulty sleeping Dizziness Stomach pains Constipation Poor circulation & feeling cold Downy hair on body	Wanting to be left alone Wearing big baggy clothes Excessive exercising Lying about eating meals Denying there is a problem Difficulty concentrating Wanting to have control Restricted eating Scheduling activities during lunch Excessive chewing of gum Excessive drinking of water	Wanting to be left alone Wearing big baggy clothes Excessive exercising Lying about eating meals Denying there is a problem Difficulty concentrating Wanting to have control Preoccupation with food Sensitivity about eating Fear of gaining weight Self-dislike
Bulimia Nervosa	Bulimia Nervosa	Bulimia Nervosa
Sore throat / swollen glands Stomach pains Mouth infections Irregular periods Dry or poor skin Difficulty sleeping Sensitive or damaged teeth Callused knuckles	Eating large quantities of food Being sick after eating Being secretive Visits the toilet immediately after meals	Feeling ashamed, depressed and guilty Feeling out of control Mood Swings Fear of gaining weight Self-dislike
Binge Eating	Binge Eating	Binge Eating
Weight gain	Eating large quantities of food Eating inappropriate food Being secretive	Feeling depressed and out of control Mood swings

Conditions as complex as eating disorders mean that there are variations in the typical signs, and not all symptoms will apply to all people. Some pupils may feel that they have a mixture of anorexia and bulimia, or alternate between them. Some pupils also find they are affected by an urge to harm themselves or abuse alcohol or drugs.

Eating Disorders do not include food allergies, selective eating issues or disorders of the digestive system

A General Practitioner should be the first point of call for eating disorders.

How we aim to support pupils with eating disorders

Bancroft's School recognises that eating disorders are a way of coping with feelings that are making the person unhappy or depressed.

Early intervention and professional help are essential. (Refer to the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy)

- The child's welfare must be paramount
- The child's interests must always come first
- All agencies concerned with the protection of children must work together in the best interests of the children
- Confidentiality must be subordinate to the need to protect the interest of the child

The core team of Heads of Houses, Head of Junior, Middle and Senior School, Heads of Pastoral Care, and School Nurse are available for consultation and support.

Education plays an important role in delivering issues around healthy lifestyles and emotional literacy. Nutrition, dieting and eating disorders may be discussed as part of the Learning for Life programme.

The Eating Disorders Association states that, "experience shows that support from school, friends and family can really help young people to recover even when they are receiving professional help and advice."

It is important to remember that anyone with an eating disorder must get proper medical advice and help.

How do you know if a pupil is at risk?

There are no guidelines available on how to judge the level of risk a student may be facing. Staff must exercise their best judgement when making such decisions about a pupil.

Pupil Confidentiality

Staff have a duty not to give out information about pupils to anyone, except in exceptional circumstances. These exceptional circumstances are when the staff member feels the health, safety or welfare of the student or others is at risk. Staff should always inform pupils that they could never agree to absolute confidentiality.

What do you do if you think a pupil is at risk?

- Student should be spoken to regarding concerns by Pastoral Lead/School Nurse
- Encourage the pupil to agree to inform their parents/carer through Pastoral Lead, Housemaster/Mistress, or School Nurse.
- A parent/carer interview should be arranged, as a matter of urgency, with the pupil, Pastoral Lead, Head of House and School Nurse if appropriate.
- Parents/Carer will be advised to seek consultation with GP and to inform school of the outcome within a nominated period of time.
- School is given permission by parents to have feedback from GP.
- If no follow up occurs with the GP and the school remains concerned, the school may refer directly to CAMHS.
- Follow up meetings are arranged between parent/carer and senior staff so that progress can be assessed and any targets reviewed.
- Timetable changes, such as suspension of PE/Games lessons are likely to occur.
- Based on medical feedback, the suitability of the student's continuing attendance at school will be assessed and this will include break and lunch time supervision if necessary.
- If the pupil concerned refuses to inform their parents, then the member of staff must immediately inform the Pastoral Office (Liz Channer or James Barr) or School Nurse (Aileen Hancock). Try to inform the student of the action you are taking as a sign of respect, support and to avoid conflict.
- The designated member of staff will make a formal decision about whether or not the student concerned is at risk. If the designated member decides the pupil is at risk they have the right to inform the relevant parties of the situation in order to get the pupil the help they need.
- If concerns about a pupil have been raised by a friend/s, it should be decided with the pupil what feedback is given to the friends about the action the school will be taking on their behalf. The school will also ensure that any friends presenting needs will also be supported either through recommended websites and resources.

Students Undergoing Treatment/Recovering from Eating Disorder

The decision about how, or if, to proceed with a student's schooling while they are suffering from an eating disorder should be made on a case by case basis. Input for this decision should come from discussion with the student, their parents, school staff and members of the multi-disciplinary team treating the student.

This may include, but is not limited to, stopping PE/games, a reduced timetable and supported meal times, if feasible and in discussion with Eating Disorders Team and parents. School may facilitate supervised lunches/snacks by providing a space, or the student to be out of school to meet a parent at lunch time, for example.

- The reintegration of a student into school following a period of absence should be handled sensitively and carefully and again, the student, their parents, school staff and members of the multi-disciplinary core team treating the student should be consulted during both the planning and reintegration phase.
- Attendance on trips during recovery should be discussed with the specialist team. Trip leaders should be aware and additional insurance may be required for the trip.

Where a pupil has already been diagnosed with an eating disorder, their confidentiality will be respected and staff will only be informed on a "Need to Know" basis. For this reason, it is essential that staff are consistent in delivering the caring ethos of our school in their interactions with all pupils.

Further Considerations Any meetings with a student, their parents/CYPS or their peers regarding eating disorders should be recorded via CPOMS, including:

- Dates and Times
- An action plan of support
- Concerns raised
- Details of others informed

Support

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/eating-problems>

<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/behaviours/eating-disorders/overview/>

This NHS website offers a more detailed overview of the nature of eating disorders, the signs to look out for and how and where to seek help:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/eating-disorders/>