

# **Parkstone Grammar School**



## **IDENTIFICATION AND MANAGEMENT OF STUDENTS EXHIBITING SIGNS OF EATING DISTRESS AND DISORDER POLICY**



# Policy for the Identification and Management of Students Exhibiting Signs of Eating Distress and Disorder

Parkstone Grammar School is committed to each student achieving their academic potential. Alongside this the school also works to facilitate the emotional and social wellbeing of each student.

Developing a healthy relationship with food is a vital part of a student's socialisation. Careful health education needs to take account of the balance between healthy eating, the pressure to diet and the focus on attaining the thin ideal espoused by most aspects of the media to which all young people are exposed. Without that students will get confused messages about what constitutes a healthy diet and are likely to develop emotional links to foods. This will lead to the use of food as comfort or compensation. That in turn can lead to obesity and eating distress.

Eating distress and disorders are a physical manifestation of emotional distress and can often be the only sign of problems. It is vital therefore that all staff are aware of how these problems appear in individuals and what action to take to facilitate the best outcome for each individual student.

The perceived pressure each student experiences to succeed and to conform can result in vulnerable individuals needing a mechanism to handle the stress. That mechanism may be any behavioural or mood change. Any sense that the student is not reaching a standard that they believe is expected of them, or that they expect of themselves results in a loss of self esteem and self worth making the individual vulnerable to that stress.

Students spend much of their waking time in the school environment, in addition to which school staff are in a unique position to have an objective view of a student's behaviour. They are therefore ideally placed to spot the early signs of problems and to intervene in a positive way.

The following protocol can be used for any individual exhibiting characteristics described above and the process can be implemented at the earliest stage to ensure action is taken in a timely fashion.

The process is represented in the form of a flow chart.

It is suggested that a core group of the following staff members is set up to deal with the process either in person or in support of key members of staff with the best relationship to communicate with the student. The core group is Key Stage focussed.

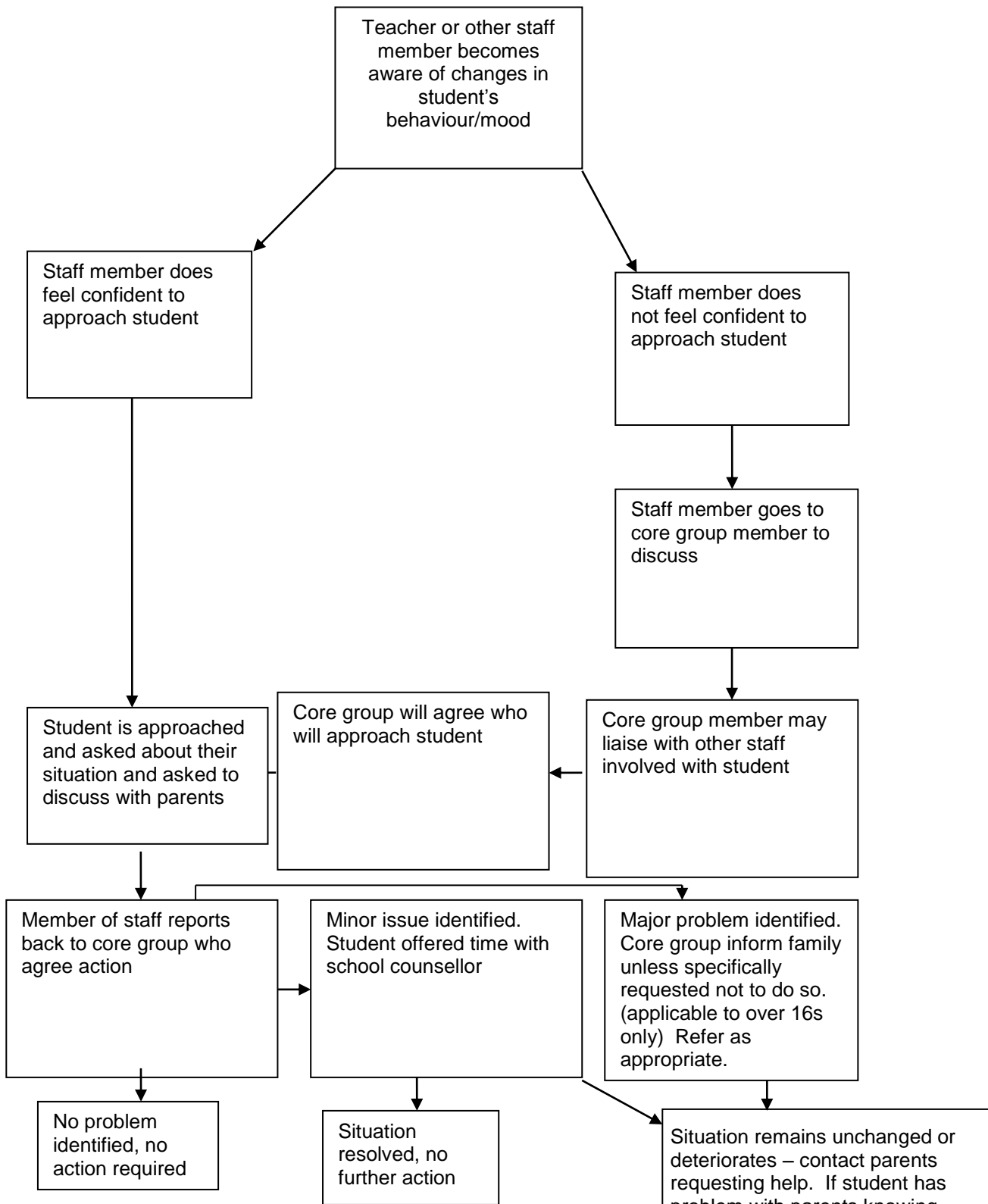
Appropriate Deputy Head/Leadership Group

Appropriate Head of Year and Assistant Head of Year

School Counsellor

School Nurse

The team is then supplemented by staff directly involved with the student.



Once referral to parents has taken place school staff to be made available to attend care planning meetings if school attendance is to continue to agree school contribution to care plan. School may feel able to offer supervised meals, limitation of access to physical exercise, academic support, reduced attainment targets. School to make reports and staff available for monitoring progress, attending meetings etc.

Situation remains unchanged or deteriorates – contact parents requesting help. If student has problem with parents knowing may need to involve social services if student thought to be at risk