

A collaboration between: Sutherland Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), NSW
Department of Education, Sydney Catholic Schools and South Eastern Sydney Local Health District School Link

PLANNING TOGETHER FOR SAFETY AND SUPPORT

How to engage a student in their safe return to school through ongoing collaboration with their family, the school and external mental health supports.



Acknowledgements

Main project partners

Sutherland Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

NSW Department of Education

Sydney Catholic Schools

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District School Link

With input from Be You

Supporting partners

Counselling, Violence Prevention & Response | Child, Youth and Family Services, Population and Community Health, South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Department of Education Child Wellbeing Unit

Sydney Catholic Schools Child Safety Team

Hunter New England Local Health District School Link

Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District School Link

South West Sydney Local Health District School Link

Western NSW Local Health District School Link

Consulted groups

Aboriginal Mental Health Coordinator, South Eastern Sydney Mental Health District Office Clinical Support

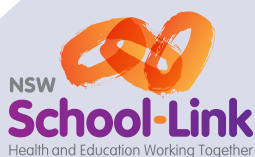
Advance Diversity Services

Key Health and Education stakeholders in St George

School staff and young people of the Sutherland Shire

This document has been designed specifically for use in high school settings. It aims to increase collaboration between mental health services, schools and families to support young people to return to school after a hospital presentation. It is not designed for general use across other settings and circumstances.

"Everyone working together gives me the best chance of a great outcome."



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Introduction

At times students may present with significant mental health needs which impact upon their own safety and/or the safety of others at school, and which may require a hospital admission or other urgent assessment of a mental health concern. To effectively support a student in their safe return to school, the goal should be to engage the child or young person, their family, their external mental health supports and the school in an ongoing collaboration.

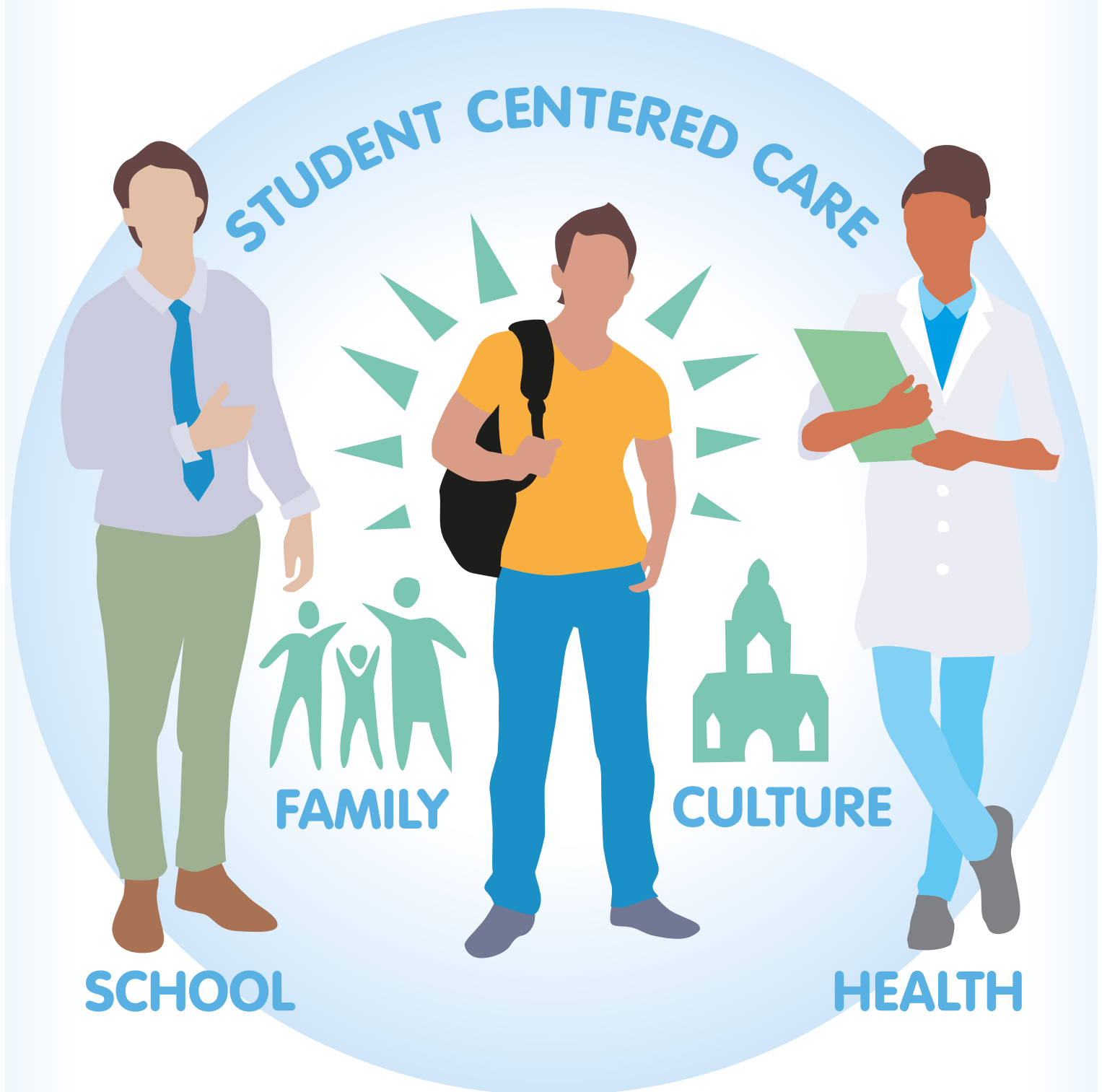
There are many different understandings and experiences of mental health. This resource would like to acknowledge the valid experiences of all people. It's important that when schools work with families they keep individual family perspectives clearly in mind. Mental health may be experienced and managed differently across a variety of cultural contexts, be they culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, or others. This can impact the way in which parents and caregivers may support their child. We recommend the use of interpreting services whenever necessary (for more details please see the References section of this resource).

Attending school can be a very strong protective factor and a great source of security and support for many students (Be You: Suicide Prevention and Response. See References "Be You / Beyond Blue suicide prevention resources" on [page 24](#)). Having a safe and jointly developed pathway for students to re-engage with their school and their learning is an optimal way forward in meeting the needs of the student, their family, and their school community.

About this resource

This **Planning together for safety and support** resource is a joint initiative of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District School Link, Sutherland Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), NSW Department of Education and Sydney Catholic Schools staff in the local Sutherland Shire area. It aims to provide schools with a framework and strategies for use where additional safety and/or wellbeing support may be needed for a young person. It seeks to promote a collaborative approach between all stakeholders that places the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person at the forefront of consideration, and recognises the need for expert contribution from multiple parties, including the young person and family, to attain the best possible outcome.

**Student and family
+ school
+ mental health supports
= safe return to school**



How to use this resource

Planning together for safety and support

outlines a collaborative process. Our suggestion is that your school wellbeing team, including your school counsellor/school psychologist, use the **Planning together for safety and support** resource to inform your school's individual approach to supporting students. You will find strategies, suggestions and templates within the resource. In the spirit of furthering collaboration, you can also use this resource as a catalyst to contact your local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) to establish a working relationship in advance of the need to support a particular student's wellbeing. This resource should be used in conjunction with your own school and system policies and procedures, as well as disability legislation e.g. the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Australian Government, 2005).

Planning together for safety and support is designed to support schools to identify strategies needed to be put in place for students, in Stages 3 to 6, returning after a significant mental health concern. Health and Education have worked closely to ensure that all students presenting to an Emergency Department (ED) are supported from point of intake to their transition back to school.



What this resource contains

This resource contains background information for schools on what is put in place to support a young person upon presentation at an Emergency Department (ED), the guidance recommended to parents and caregivers on how to communicate with the young person's school and resources for the school itself to develop a plan to support the young person's transition back to learning.

Items which schools may find informative include:

- a School or home to Emergency Department mental health emergency pathway (see *"Mental health Emergency pathway" on page 14*) which traces intervention by the health system from point of intake to discharge;
- guidelines for information sharing amongst school staff;
- a letter from the mental health service (see *page 27*) given to parents and caregivers and the young person in the Emergency Department to facilitate their reaching out to the school when transitioning back; and
- school protocols for managing their transition.

Items which schools may find more practical include:

- a newsletter article (see *page 9*) to circulate in their communication with parents and caregivers, encouraging a collaborative approach;
- a Return to School Support Plan template (see *page 18*) to assist assigned staff, the parent and caregivers and young person on planning how exactly the young person will be supported upon transitioning back to school and scripts for executive staff guiding the extent of information sharing within the school.

Staff wellbeing

When a student behaves in a way that puts themselves or others at risk of harm, it can be distressing and often traumatising for school communities. It can affect staff in profound and unpredictable ways, both professionally and personally. In light of this, it is essential that school staff look after themselves and each other. School leaders need to be aware that some staff members have personal experiences and vulnerabilities that need to be considered in the school's response. Consultation, review, debriefing, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and referral to support services are all important support options to consider. The [Educator Wellbeing](#) section of the Be You [website](#) is a thorough starting point to access self-care resources and information for any school staff member.



Information sharing

Thoughtful and considered sharing of information is critical in the context of a student returning to school.

Schools and families

Paragraph for school orientation

The following is an example paragraph which may be used in your school enrolment and orientation pack to encourage communication between parents and caregivers and school around their child's mental health.

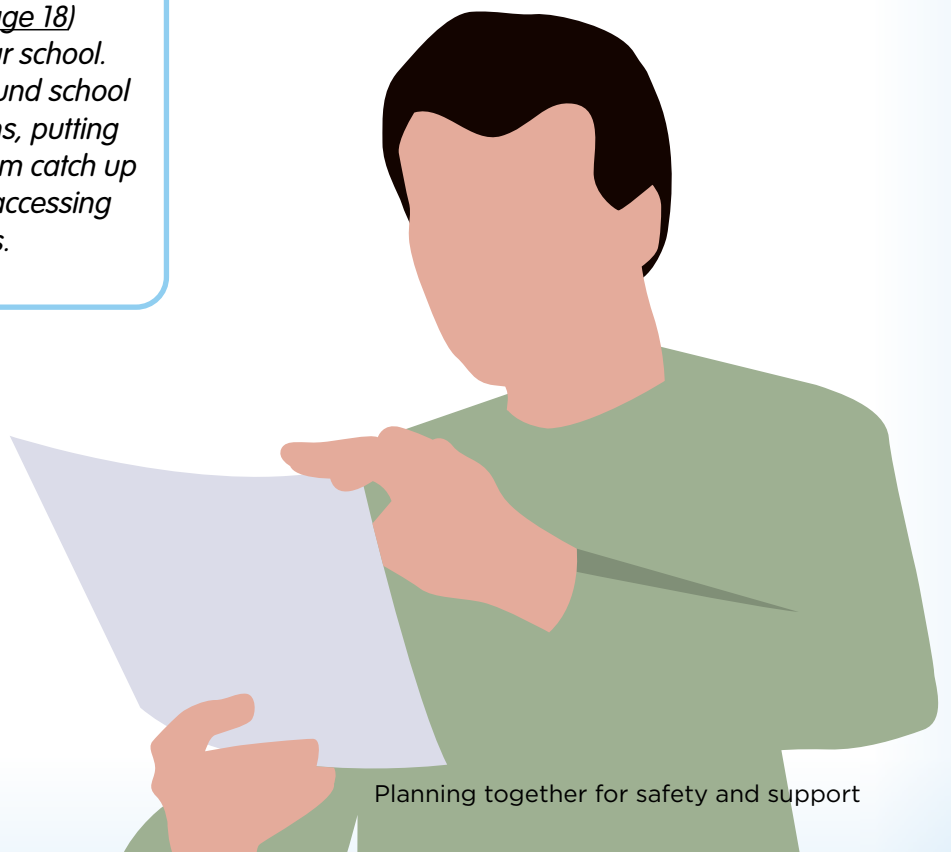


(School Name) invites all parents and caregivers to work in partnership with our school to keep our young people safe. Should your child experience a physical or mental health concern, particularly if it resulted in presentation at a hospital Emergency Department, we highly recommend that you work with us to ensure that they are supported and cared for when returning to school. We would like to work closely with you, your family and your child to develop a Return to School Support Plan (see [page 18](#)) to help stay connected with our school. This may include flexibility around school hours, homework modifications, putting assistance in place to help them catch up with their schoolwork and/or accessing support from outside agencies.

Newsletter articles for parents and caregivers

We have included two articles we recommend placing in your school newsletter. These articles provide an example of one way to educate and encourage parents and caregivers to work collaboratively and share information with the school around their children's mental health needs. It is great practice to combine these with face-to-face discussions with families at information evenings and so forth.

As a suggestion, the full newsletter article could appear twice a year, and the short newsletter article could be used once or twice per term as a reminder. If these communications are used routinely in the same way that information is communicated around physical health issues (e.g., anaphylaxis, asthma, cold/flu etc.), parents and caregivers will become more aware of the pathways available to support their child's mental health at school.



Full newsletter article:

Reproduced and adapted with permission from Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District School Link – *Share the care with schools* Flyer.



Share the care with your school

Changes in your child's physical or mental health can affect their schooling and relationships. Support is available for <school name> students experiencing either mental health or physical health concerns.

We understand that this may be a challenging time for you and your family, and our aim is to support and work with you as well as to respect your privacy.

Please let us know here at <school name> if your child has presented at or been admitted to hospital or an emergency service for any physical or mental health concern so that we can discuss further support with you.

You and/or a support person can speak with the Principal, <Deputy/Assistant Principal>, <Year Advisor/Year Coordinator>, <Head Teacher Welfare/Pastoral Care Coordinator> or <School Counsellor/School Psychologist>, <Aboriginal Education Support Worker> to develop a plan together.

Ask us for help with:

- *Keeping your child safe*
- *Returning to school following a physical or mental health incident*
- *Identifying school staff your child can talk to*
- *Developing an agreed plan to help stay connected with school during tough times. This might include flexibility around school hours, homework or catching up with schoolwork*
- *Accessing support from the school and outside agencies.*

We know that looking after your children is your number one priority - and it's ours, too. We value and welcome your help and input. Let's work on it together.

Short newsletter article: *(to follow the original article in successive newsletters)*

Reproduced and adapted with permission from Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District School Link – *Share the care with schools* flyer.



Share the care with your school

Reminder to parents/ caregivers: If your child presents to hospital outside of school hours due to either a physical or mental health concern you are strongly encouraged to inform the school prior to your child returning. We understand that this may be a challenging time for you and your family, and our aim is to support and work with you as well as to respect your privacy. We would like to ensure the right supports are put in place to help your child successfully return to school.

Health and schools

The successful use of this resource relies on communication and collaboration between Health and Education providers, and the care and protection of children and young people is dependent upon shared information.

Access to accurate, relevant information will assist Health workers, Education staff and other organisations working with children and young people to assess risks, make decisions and to identify, coordinate and deliver appropriate services.

Chapter 16A of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 allows you to share relevant information about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person provided you do so in accordance with Chapter 16A and in good faith.

For further information see www.health.nsw.gov.au/parvan/childprotect/Pages/info-exchange-safety-child-youth.aspx and the relevant policy from your organisation.



Why shared language is important

To effectively support a student in their safe return to school following a significant mental health concern, the goal should be to engage the child or young person, their family, their external mental health supports and the school in an ongoing collaboration.

In undertaking this process, schools are required to assess and manage risk, and in doing so it's helpful when school staff also maintain an awareness that health personnel assess risk under different parameters to schools. Health personnel need to consider the risk of immediate and significant harm to a child or young person in the moment, as circumstances can and do change quickly for individuals outside of the assessment environment. Schools, on the other hand, must consider the overall risk/likely risk in a much broader sense than just in the moment and as it pertains to that one individual. Schools must place it within the context of their community and consider and mitigate associated risk for others as well. Variations in understanding, or in the terminology used by Education providers and Health providers, can negatively impact the planning process.

The notion of a '*clearance letter*' for a student to return to school is one example which has come up, and a '*student's right to return to school*' is another. A '*clearance letter*' doesn't actually provide schools with information that will help keep a young person safe. The reality is that a young person may be deemed safe to return home following a presentation to hospital, however risk is fluid and can change quickly depending on the situation. What helps is a commitment to providing ongoing collaboration, advice and strategies, and preferably within the context of provision of therapy if indicated.



School staff could consider using the following language when collaborating with mental health clinicians.

Rather than asking a mental health clinician for a 'clearance letter', you could ask:

'Is it best for the student to be returning to school now?'

'Do you currently feel that the student needs to engage with Mental Health supports?'

'Can you help us to manage the risk by working with us and providing advice?'

And if told by the treating clinician that 'The student has a right to return to school' or something similar, then:

'Respectfully, the student has a right to return to school safely, and we'll need the help of his treating professionals to work collaboratively with the student and their family to be sure that we can do this.'

and again 'Can you help us to manage the risk by working with us and providing advice?'

"Your school wellbeing team can assist you further if you require help to navigate a collaborative partnership with mental health clinicians."



Within schools

Advice for school Executive on information sharing within the school

When a student presents with a significant mental health concern, it can be difficult to find the balance between protecting confidentiality of the student and sharing enough information with the school community to ensure the safety of the student and school community.

In the appendices (see [page 26](#)), we have included a Communication sheet for distribution to general school staff. This is a guideline only for your consideration, but addresses some of the more common concerns expressed by school staff when managing these situations. Every staff member can play a role in supporting a student as they return safely and successfully to school. Using this communication sheet may assist in finding the balance between providing sufficient information for the student to be supported without compromising confidentiality.

The following phrasing may be one way in which you can reassure staff members that Return to School Support Plans are being developed in collaboration with the appropriate services, and that the school and family are closely involved in this collaborative process.



"We will be working in consultation with the student, family, mental health clinicians, and the school counselling teams [insert any other relevant parties] to develop a Return to School Support Plan for [student]. We will determine what information needs to be shared with staff and students and who needs to be made aware, to protect the confidentiality of the student and the safety of other members of our school community.

It's likely to take us some time to process this information and will affect us all in different ways. For this reason, if you need additional support, please let [assigned staff member] know and this will be arranged accordingly. The following are important support options for you to use if needed [list the available support options for staff e.g. EAP support, local GP, lifeline 13 11 14]."



Collaborative planning

Why use collaborative planning?

Returning to school can be a protective factor for young people and can be helpful in their recovery, especially when the school has worked to create a supportive and protective environment.

Returning to school after a significant mental health concern that has resulted in a critical incident can be a difficult time for young people. They may feel anxious about what other people are thinking, nervous about how they'll cope or they may be worried about catching up on the work they've missed. Once they've returned, the priority is to ensure they feel supported and able to return to their normal routine.

A Return to School Support Plan can help the school to establish a safe and supportive learning environment for the young person. It can assist a young person's successful transition back to school as well as considering the needs of other students and staff members. It should include strategies that aim to keep the young person safe, supported and connected with staff and peers. It outlines situations the young person might find difficult and how these can be managed for them to feel safe and supported.

It is imperative that the young person has ownership of their Return to School Support Plan and that all sections are written with their involvement. The Return to School Support Plan is ideally negotiated with the young person, their family and caregivers, school wellbeing staff and any mental health professionals involved in the young person's care before the young person returns to school, keeping in mind that returning to school can be a protective factor and can be helpful in their recovery.

Additional support services may also be appropriate to include here. There are multicultural supports available in the community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and a range of other culturally relevant organisations. Please see Resources and links ([page 24](#)) for more information.

Suggested protocol for schools

Processes may differ across schools. When there has been a significant mental health concern that has resulted in a presentation to Emergency Department (ED), it is recommended that the first point of contact at the school is the principal. The Intake Officer from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) will therefore contact the principal or delegate for a verbal handover of any young person who has presented at ED and would be requiring follow up support. The principal may then identify a mental health/wellbeing staff member and communicate this to all staff as the appropriate person to manage situations outlined in this resource. It is recommended that this person be a consistently available executive staff member such as a deputy principal, wellbeing coordinator/head teacher welfare or other Executive staff member.

As an important part of returning to school, a meeting should be organised to develop appropriate support for the young person, and a Return to School Support Plan be discussed. The young person, parent, or caregiver, identified contact person in your school, mental health clinician, school counsellor/school psychologist, year advisor, deputy principal, culturally appropriate support person and any other significant individual can attend this meeting. It is strongly recommended that the support team includes the young person in developing an individual Return to School Support Plan to assist their return to school.

Usually if the young person is a hospital inpatient, discharge will be planned while the young person is still in hospital. Ideally, a school support person would be involved in return to school planning at this stage to support the young person's return to school.

Mental health Emergency pathway

1. Call to ambulance 000



- ☒ Provide information (including any completed risk assessment) to Ambulance Officer
- ☒ Assessment and decision made by Ambulance Officer re: transport to hospital

School or home to Emergency Department

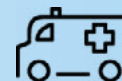
Before calling an ambulance: School options for support prior to calling an ambulance might include: consultation with the school counsellor/school psychologist; call to a student's parent or caregiver; liaison with external service(s) supporting the student; call to the **Mental Health Line** on **1800 011 511**.

Schools may be unsure of the pathways in Health or what happens when a young person goes to Emergency. The following flowchart helps explain the process.

Returning to school and daily routine/s will assist the student's recovery and wellbeing in almost every case. Students discharged from hospital (without a medical certificate) have been assessed as safe to return home with a plan for ongoing follow up and support. To best support the student, at this point it is crucial for school staff and treating professionals to be in contact for joint support planning.

NOTE - discharge from Emergency may occur after hours and/or during the weekend. Families may also decline to engage with follow up services.

2. Transport to hospital



- ☒ Student transported to closest available Emergency Department

Emergency Department triage

- ☒ Assessment by Emergency Department nurse
- ☒ Physical assessment completed
- ☒ Emergency Department referral to Mental Health Acute Care / Psychiatric Emergency Care Centre (PECC)

3. Mental health Assessment



- ☒ Emergency Department referral for mental health assessment
- ☒ Comprehensive mental health assessment completed by mental health clinician

Admission

- ☒ Decision to admit or discharge - overseen by attending psychiatrist

Discharge

- ☒ Student discharged from hospital into care of parent/carer

4. Post discharge



Follow up may include:

- ☒ Referral to the local mental health acute care team for follow up
or
- ☒ referral to Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
or
- ☒ referral to GP or other external support/service
- ☒ Information may be sought from health services by education staff, provided consent has been obtained or in accordance with Child Protection legislation Chapter 16A

Support Plan

How to use the Return to School Support Plan

Completing a Return to School Support Plan with a student prior to their return to school is a helpful way to gain an understanding of what difficulties the student is experiencing and how these difficulties may present in the school environment. Completing this plan gives school staff an opportunity to problem-solve together with the student and family around these difficulties and increases the chance of a successful transition back to school.

A staff member who has knowledge and skills in student wellbeing is best suited to complete the Return to School Support Plan with the student: this may be the school counsellor/school psychologist or head teacher welfare/pastoral care coordinator. If the student has an external mental health clinician, they can also be asked to contribute to the plan. There are multicultural supports available in the community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and a range of other culturally relevant organisations (*see Resources and Links page 24 for suggestions*).

This resource includes a Return to School Support Plan template (*see page 18*) that school staff can complete with students. ***The template is intended to be a tool to guide a conversation rather than just a checklist to fill out. The examples provided under the headings can act as conversation starters to help students consider the different aspects of school life and in what situations they may require support.***

"Recognition of personal, social, cultural, linguistic, environmental, and other factors can help a young person feel connected and supported at school".

The staff member completing the plan will need to consider if any modifications need to be made for the student. They need to ensure the student can access the plan in a way that is understandable for them. The 'Keeping me well at school' page (*see page 22*) is an example of a shorter version that can be used instead of the more comprehensive version. Deciding which plan to use should be based on the needs and preferences of the student.

In planning with young people and their families it must always be a priority to consider the context of the young person to best support their individual needs. Identity is an important developmental consideration. Personal, social, cultural, linguistic, environmental, and other factors need to be taken into account as part of every young person's experience. Recognition of these can help a young person feel connected and supported at school.

It is important to reassure the family that you understand that this may be a challenging time for them. The aim is to listen to their needs, respect their privacy, support them, and keep their child safe.

How to use the Return to School Support Plan

Solutions, strategies and reasonable adjustments for student care and support need to be considered within the capacity and capabilities of local policies and school resources.

Using this plan with a student...

1. This plan is designed to act as a prompt for a supportive and relational conversation.
2. It's not about checking boxes, it's about making the student feel safe with you; exploring what's going on with them; and coming up with a way to keep them safe and well at school which works for the school and for them.

Student at the centre:

1. It can be a challenge to work under the plans of others.
2. This plan needs to be about what matters to the student if we hope for them to follow it and engage in keeping themselves safe. As their trusted support at school, you need to genuinely listen and collaborate in its creation.

Exploring their needs:

1. This section of the plan allows you to explore and document their priorities, which can help considerably with their buy-in.
2. You can discuss and make note of protective factors which will help them to regulate (e.g. When you have a good day at school...).
3. This is a chance to be very practical and specific about things like the timetable, etc. Uncertainty can be a significant trigger for some mental health difficulties.
4. Encourage them to be up front and honest about things with you – and remember, they may not be used to adults actually listening to them.

transition. As situational triggers are different for everybody the next section identify what is relevant to you and strategies you may find helpful.

In class	
Triggers	Coping/Support
Overwhelmed by work	Work
Poor concentration	St
Increasing frustration	
Being behind/not being able to catch up on work/homework	
Assessment tasks	
Noise	
Being asked to speak/answer questions out loud in class	
Specific students _____	
Specific subjects _____	
Specific teachers _____	
Casual teachers _____	
Changes to timetable without notice	Ch
Not being able to sit where I'm comfortable	Acc

Potential triggers and supports:

1. Remember that triggers may be situational, and as a result seem inconsistent sometimes.
2. They may be hard to identify, and the student may not even consciously know what they are – so try to explore possibilities with them gently.
3. You can use their past experience to explore potential support strategies – e.g. what have you done in the past that's helped you when you feel _____?
4. Focus on support strategies they have used successfully or will be able to use.
5. Consider including a backup plan and/or person for when the chosen strategies aren't enough.

Communication, contacts, review:

1. It's important that plans are communicated confidentially to each of the stakeholders who need to respond to the student's needs.
2. Clearly identifying these people can also alleviate student and family concerns.
3. The identified contacts may be school staff, or may also be external supports should the student become highly dysregulated. Using other students as support is not appropriate nor safe.
4. This plan should have a clear date for review. Circumstances change and the plan will need to change in response. It's important that the student doesn't feel like THIS is now their school life from here on in.

If my school support persons become worried about me, we have contact the following people so that I get more support:

Name	Role	Contact

Evaluation and review date:

Student signature:

Parent/caregiver signature:

School support staff signature:

Copies of plan provided to:

Keeping me well at school:

1. This shorter version provides a one page option as an alternative, which may help with accessibility.
2. You may choose to use this version alone after working through the previous pages to gather the information or you may choose to use both for different audiences.
3. Factors to consider when using the shorter version may include the student's age, their current social and emotional capacity, their cognitive functioning or their language skills.

Keeping Me Well at School
 A shorter version of the plan, designed to be used as an alternative to the full plan, which may help with accessibility.

Name: _____ Date: _____

My Strengths
 I'm good at: _____
 I enjoy: _____
 Things I can do to help myself: _____
 (e.g. relaxation techniques)

My Stressors
 Things that make me: _____
 When I feel: _____
 Signs and symptoms: _____

My supports
 People I can talk to at school I can rely on: _____

Others can help by: (adjustment) _____

Contacts
 e.g. parents or carers: _____

Plan
 What to do if I become: _____
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____

Signed
 Date: _____

In urgent situations call: 1800 011 011 Mental Health Line

20 Planning together for safety and support

Return to School Plan -
Reproduced and adapted with permission
from HNELHD CAMHS School-Link

Return to school support plan

Student name _____ Date _____

What matters to you?



It is important for the people around you to understand what really matters to you. This could be your connections with friends, achieving academic success or getting back into attending school. It might be doing art, playing sport or listening to music. Or it might be knowing that you are safe and cared about. Please take some time to think and talk about what really matters to you so that your team can work towards helping you achieve these things.

**** For the staff member helping to complete this section: Please take this opportunity to listen deeply and to understand the student perspective.**

What are the things that are important to you while you are at school?	What would you like to achieve, personally or academically?
Seeing my friends Being able to concentrate Being up to date with my work Feeling safe Feeling supported Feeling connected to my culture Other: _____	Completing HSC Completing ROSA Passing my subjects Meeting attendance requirements Other: _____
When you have a good day at school, what are the things that make it good?	Is there anything else that is really important to you for your support team to be aware of?
Spending time with my friends Getting along with my teachers Attending my favourite classes Feeling on top of my workload Other: _____	



** Print off student's timetable to explore and if relevant and attach to Return to School Support Plan (include periods/classes to attend; recess/lunch)**

Completed: Yes No

While school is a key part of getting back into your normal routines, it can be a place that triggers strong emotions and feelings. A graduated/considered/planned return to school and preparing and practicing coping strategies is an essential part and empowering way of managing this transition. As situational triggers are different for everybody the next section is designed to help you identify what is relevant to you and strategies you may find helpful.

In class	
Triggers	Coping/Support strategies
Overwhelmed by work Poor concentration Increasing frustration Being behind/not being able to catch up on work/homework Assessment tasks Noise Being asked to speak/answer questions/read out loud in class Specific students _____ Specific subjects _____ Specific teachers _____ Casual teachers _____ Changes to timetable without notice Not being able to sit where I'm comfortable Using technology/ not having access to technology Having to ask for help with understanding work Needing to go to the toilet during class time Negative thoughts Getting homework Feeling isolated Other: _____	Work with Learning and Support Teacher/ SLSO to create an Individual Learning Plan to address issues related to work: catch up plan, work overload, homework plan, modified assessment tasks etc. Teachers aware not to ask me questions or 'put me on the spot' Seating plan to address position in classroom and students to be or not to be near in each lesson Modified participation in practical lessons as appropriate Planned morning check-in to be updated on changes to daily routine including room changes, casual teachers etc. Access to laptop for work Negotiate with class teacher prior to return to school regarding communication for clarifying questions etc. Specific techniques/ grounding/ fidget toys/ mindfulness apps _____ In-class time out to colour in/write in journal/read Pass out/Time out for toilet or to go to nominated support person as negotiated Other: _____

Transition times (e.g. changing classes, rooms)	
Triggers	Coping/Support strategies
Noisy corridors Crowded spaces Not being sure where I need to go Room changes not timetabled Using change rooms Needing to bring/carry extra clothes/ equipment to school Other: _____	Leave just prior to end of class to avoid noisy/crowded corridors Morning check in with support person to clarify time table changes etc. Know seating arrangements for all rooms Walk with nominated friend to each class Ask friend to distract me with talking about something fun Provide separate change room if necessary Provide locker/ safe place to leave gear if necessary Specific techniques/ grounding/ fidget toys/ mindfulness apps _____ Other: _____
Playground/recess/lunch breaks	
Triggers	Coping/Support strategies
Canteen/ordering food Unstructured social times Playground areas Excessive noise Feeling overcrowded Conflict with peers Feeling isolated from a friendship group Other: _____	Pre-order food and pick up before the beginning of recess/lunch Have designated area of playground for my friends so I know I have a safe place Use the library with friends at recess/lunch Use computer room/activity clubs that are available Other identified quiet space made available Know the teacher on playground duty and stay nearby Morning check –in notifies me of changes to teacher duty roster Specific techniques/ grounding/ breathing techniques/fidget toys/ mindfulness app _____ Other: _____

There may still be times when you feel you need more support.



When I know I am unable to manage the situation I am in, I will use my time out card as arranged and go to my support person as noted on my time out card.

I have completed this Return to School Support Plan with my school support person/s. This plan will help me to feel safe and supported when I return to school. This Return to School Support Plan will only be seen by the people at school who need to know this information to assist me. Their names are listed below:

School staff needing to see plan:

Name	Where I will meet them	When I will meet them

If my school support persons become worried about me, we have agreed that they will contact the following people so that I get more support:

Name	Role	Contact details



Evaluation and review date:

Student signature:

Parent/caregiver signature:

School support staff signature:

Copies of plan provided to:

Keeping Me Well at School

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Name.....

D.O.B Year

My Strengths



I'm good at.....

.....

I enjoy.....

.....

Things I can do to help myself:
(e.g. relaxation techniques)

.....

.....

.....

My supports



People I can talk to at school
if I'm not ok:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Contacts



(e.g. parents or clinician)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

In urgent situations call:

1800 011 511 Mental Health Line

My Stressors



Things that make me

.....

.....

When I feel I:

(signs and symptoms to watch out for)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Others can help by: (Adjustments at school)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Plan



What to do if I becomeat school

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



Signed:

Date:

"It's not about checking boxes, it's about making the student feel safe with you."



Resources and links

The following websites and suggestions were available and active at the time of going to print. This is not an exhaustive list. Please consider that these links may change and there may be further resources and supports available by the time you are accessing this document.

Be You / Beyond Blue suicide prevention resources

beyou.edu.au/resources/suicide-prevention-and-response

Your local general practitioner (GP)

Your local Aboriginal medical service

Your local CALD service

Mental Health Line

NSW Health 24 hr mental health referral and advice 1800 011 511

Lifeline

www.lifeline.org.au
131114

Kids Helpline

kidshelpline.com.au
1800 55 1800

Parent Line

www.parentline.org.au
1300 1300 52

New Access

www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/newaccess

Qlife

www qlife.org.au
1800184527

headspace

headspace.org.au

The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)

www.tisnational.gov.au
131 450

If you are sharing these resources with parents, please add any local services you may be aware of here (Your local Primary Health Network may be a good starting point):

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References

Australian Government, 1992. Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Australian Government, 2005. Disability Standards for Education 2005.

Beyou.edu.au. 2022. [online] Available at: <https://tinyurl.com/5b2f9evp>

The following School Link resources were reproduced and adapted with permission for use in this resource:

Return to School Support Plan – Reproduced and adapted with permission from Hunter New England Local Health District CAMHS School-Link

School to Emergency Flow Chart – Reproduced and adapted with permission from Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District School-Link and South West Sydney Local Health District School Link

Share the Care with Schools Flyer – Reproduced and adapted with permission from Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District School-Link

Wellbeing Plan – Reproduced and adapted with permission from a School-Link Project in collaboration with the School-Link Steering Committee Dubbo & Region, & Dubbo School of Distance Education. Reproduced and adapted with permission.



Appendices

Appendix 1: Communication sheet - for distribution to staff

Student name:

Date:..... Year group:.....

Presenting concern:

Recent loss

Family issue

Health issue (physical)

Studies issue

Peer difficulty

Health issue (emotional)

Other:

May present as:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Helpful strategies:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Strategies to be avoided:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Year Coordinator/Advisor:

Appendix 2: Emergency Department Letter

This letter is an example of what is completed and given to families by the mental health team in ED, following assessment. We have included it in this resource so that you are able to familiarise yourself with it and can recognise it should a parent/caregiver bring one in to the school.

Dear Parent / Caregiver,

The Sutherland and St George Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) work in partnership with families and schools to ensure that young people receive follow up support after an acute mental health assessment.

For this reason, you are asked to give this letter to a staff member at your child's school so they are aware your child has presented to hospital and can put the necessary supports in place before they return to school.

Schools are very aware of the sensitive nature of this information and will discuss any concerns that you may have regarding confidentiality.

Dear Principal / Deputy Principal / Year Advisor

School.....

The following student.....

was assessed by the Sutherland / St George Hospital Mental Health Team on.....

They presented with.....

Following assessment, it was deemed that they were safe to return home with their parent/ caregiver.

• A recommendation was made to follow up with the service(s) listed below:

• CAMHS

• headspace

• Private Practitioner

• G.P.

• Culturally appropriate support service

• Other

If you require further information, please call Sutherland CAMHS on 9540 7800 or St George CAMHS on 8198 7300 during business hours and ask to speak with the CAMHS intake officer. For after hours or urgent assistance please contact the Mental Health Line on 1800 011 511.

Student and family
+ school
+ mental health supports
= safe return to school

