

# SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE



## INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

The School Mental Health Service (SMHS) is funded by the Department for Education and sits within Student Support Services. It is independent from the school but works closely with school staff to support young people with mild to moderate or emerging mental health concerns.

Practitioners may provide a range of services, including:

- assessing student mental health needs and concerns
- developing targeted therapeutic intervention to address mental health and wellbeing difficulties
- supporting students to develop strategies to manage distress, promote positive behaviour change and maintain their mental health
- counselling support
- supporting referrals and linking to external support services as required
- developing and promoting mental health initiatives on the school site

Practitioners have formal training in psychology, social work or occupational therapy and experience working in mental health related services. They work collaboratively with students and families, education staff, and other service providers to support young people to improve their emotional wellbeing.

### How does the service work?

The SMHS provides a brief intervention service – that is, short term, time-limited support.

The practitioners work alongside the student and family to identify difficulties and collaboratively develop goals. This information is then used to design their therapeutic intervention.

There is often a focus on skill building, developing coping strategies and assisting students and families to understand their current situation.

### What if the student requires longer term support?

If longer term or more intensive supports are needed, the practitioner will work with the student and their family to identify and link in with an appropriate service.

### Are parents and carers involved in the service?

Where possible, the practitioners will take a family-based approach. This means that as parents or carers, you may be asked to contribute to the assessment and intervention.

### Is there a cost?

The SMHS is free. The SMHS is fully funded by the Department for Education.

### What is the referral process?

Schools have a range of programs in place to support student mental health and wellbeing. If your child has mental health or wellbeing concerns, these should be discussed with your child's teacher or the school's Wellbeing Leader in the first instance.

The Wellbeing team will consider the needs of the individual student and service eligibility to explore if the SMHS is a good fit for the student.

Students do not need to see a general practitioner or get a mental health care plan to access the SMHS.

### How does the service maintain confidentiality?

The SMHS offers a confidential service. Relevant information may be shared with School Leaders (with parent and student consent). Details about

confidentiality and information sharing will be discussed further at the initial appointment.

When issues of safety are identified, the practitioner will provide information to the school, the parent/carer and relevant services to ensure students are supported.



### Where can I go for more information?

For more information about the SMHS, visit [www.education.sa.gov.au/SMHS](http://www.education.sa.gov.au/SMHS)

