THE PERSE
UPPER SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE

What to do if something is seriously concerning you – Pupils' Guide

The Perse Upper School

September 2026

INTRODUCTION

We want everyone to feel part of a safe and supportive community. It is important to be able to talk about our problems – **the biggest problems occur when we don't talk.** Some problems are good to share with friends, but it may make it difficult for them if they do not have the skills to help you – it might be best to find an adult to help.

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

EXAMPLES OF CONCERNS

Here are some examples of concerns which we encourage you to talk to an adult about:

- You are having difficulty with one or more of your school subjects.
- You feel upset, down, that you don't quite feel right.
- You think that another pupil is not eating properly or may be harming themselves.
- You think you may be ill and are too afraid or embarrassed to tell anyone.
- You or another pupil is being bullied.
- You are worried, angry, or hurt about something happening in your life.
- You are caught in a serious situation that you don't know how to get out of e.g. to do with drugs, alcohol, money, or sex.
- You feel you are being treated unfairly because of your age, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, race, colour, religion, belief, pregnancy or maternity or because you have a disability or learning difficulty.
- You feel that a member of staff has treated you unfairly.
- You think that another pupil has done, or is about to do, something seriously wrong or dangerous.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

It will probably help to talk to an adult about it a poster is provided for all form notice boards at the start of the academic year), even if you feel you can handle the situation yourself. There are a number of different people who will be very happy to talk to you and to help you try to find a solution to the problem. It may help to talk first with your parents.

Sometimes it can be difficult to raise concerns about a friend as it may feel as if you are 'betraying' their friendship. Experience shows that issues such as self-harm, suicidal thoughts, disordered eating (e.g. missing meals, picky eating), low mood/depression, OCD, drug, and/or alcohol use are best mentioned to a member of staff as soon as possible as these can escalate out of control without professional intervention. It is also important that you do not take on the role of 'counsellor' or sole support for a friend as you are unlikely to have the skills or support to manage the risks appropriately.

However, sometimes you need the help and support of a teacher or other professional. Choose whoever you feel most comfortable and safe talking to, for example:

- Your Tutor
- Your Head of Year
- Your Head of Section

- The School Counsellors
- The Emotional Wellbeing Support Worker
- Mr Machin Senior Tutor
- Miss D'Asaro, Senior Tutor
- Mrs Jones (Mental Health Lead)
- Mrs Rothwell
- The School Nurses
- Mr Wiseman
- Miss Cockerill (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- Any other teacher

However, if you do not feel able to speak to a member of staff, other paths for support and advice are:

Support

- If someone is in immediate danger or requires urgent medical assistance, call 999 or go to A&E
- Your GP – for physical or mental health concerns.
- NHS Mental Health First Response Service – call: 111 and press option 2. Mental health crisis service for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough
- ChatHealth (Cambridgeshire number: 07480 635443) – NHS-based secure and confidential text messaging service for young people (11-19). Open Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm and they aim to respond within 24 hours
- Childline (0800 1111) – support, information, and advice for young people via phone, online chat, and email
- Young Minds Crisis Messenger – free crisis support 24/7. Text YM to 85258 and you will be provided with confidential crisis help from a trained volunteer
- Kooth (www.kooth.com) – free, safe, and anonymous online support for young people.
- Samaritans (Call: 116123) – free support, open all hours
- Centre 33 (https://centre33.org.uk/ and hello@centre33.org.uk, 0333 4141809) – free and confidential support and information for young people
- Ormiston Families Stars (Ormiston Families Stars - Ormiston Families, 01223 292276) – supporting young people in Cambridgeshire facing grief and dealing with loss
- CASUS (CASUS, casus, Cambridgeshire child and adolescent substance use service, | CPFT NHS Trust) – information, support and specialist treatment in Cambridgeshire for young people under 18 around drug and alcohol use.
- Relate (www.relate.org.uk) – providing relationship support
- Cogwheel Trust (www.cogwheel.org.uk) – provide counselling and psychotherapy support for people in Cambridgeshire
- The Mix (www.themix.org.uk, 0808 8084994) – support for young people up to 25 years old.
- Papyrus (www.papyrus-uk.org, Hopeline UK 0800 0684141) - confidential help and advice to young people and anyone worried about a young person at risk of suicide.

- Beat (www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk , fyp@beateatingdisorders.org.uk), 0808 8010711, – helpline, support, and information around eating disorders
- The Elms Sexual Assault Referral Centre (https://www.theelmssarc.org/, 0800 193 5434) – open 24/7. This is confidential for those who self-refer, offering support for victims of sexual assault.
- NSPCC (NSPCC | The UK children's charity | NSPCC 0800 136663, help@nspcc.org.uk) – dedicated helpline offering support to people who have experienced sexual harassment or abuse in an education setting.

Advice

- www.sheffieldsuicidesupport.co.uk - Help for young people aged 12-18 to understand and support their friends through difficult times. Specialist content by Sheffield CAMHS
- www.keep-your-head.com/cyp – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough mental health website with advice on a range of mental health topics
- www.youngminds.org.uk – advice on mental health topics
- A more comprehensive list of websites for specialist support is available on The School's intranet under welfare.

Reporting concerns of abuse or neglect

- NSPCC (0808 800 5000) – reporting a concern about a child
- Cambridgeshire Social Services (0345 045 5203) – reporting abuse or neglect

CONFIDENTIALITY

We understand that you may wish to talk about a problem only if it is kept secret. In some cases, this is possible but there are circumstances where we have a duty to pass on information to ensure that the correct action is taken and that you are safe.

Do not let this stop you from raising concerns or saying when you are worried or upset. Most pupils who find the courage to speak up, say afterwards that it helped them enormously and that the problem did not seem quite as bad once they had a chance to talk it through with someone experienced and helpful.