

**Policy name: Mental Wellness and Health Standard Operating Procedures (Students)**

**Approved: 25th November 2016**

**Revision 1 approved 10th March 2017**

**Revision 2 approved**

**Revision 3 approved by Trinity Academic Council 13th May 2020**

## **1. Context**

- 1.1 The Royal Irish Academy of Music, hereinafter referred to as RIAM or the Academy, has a duty to respect and support the rights, needs, and privacy of students experiencing mental health difficulties and provides a supportive environment that assists students with mental health difficulties to realise their full potential and to fully complete their course. However, notwithstanding this, it is also the duty of students to look proactively after their own mental health and wellbeing.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 To direct students with diagnosed mental health difficulties or concerns about their own or a friend's mental health to advice and information on the professional supports which are available and how to access these supports.
- 2.2 To direct staff to procedures that should be followed if they encounter an emergency arising from a student's mental health difficulties, or they suspect a student might be suffering from a mental health difficulty, but where there is no apparent emergency.
- 2.3 To affirm the Academy's continuing efforts to support the learning, development and well-being of all students through specialised professional supports.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all RIAM students and staff in their role of enacting the procedures set out below. However, RIAM also has to balance the rights of students experiencing mental health difficulties with the overall duty of care it has for all of its students and staff.
- 3.2 If a student experiencing mental health difficulties also presents with another permanent or long-term disability, he/she will, in respect of this condition, be covered by the terms of RIAM's Disability Support Service Code of Practice, in addition to any relevant terms of these Operating Procedures.
- 3.3 Whilst it is committed to providing a supportive environment, the services provided by RIAM are not intended to replace services that already exist in the community or through the HSE.

## **4. Benefits**

- 4.1 This policy helps to achieve RIAM's aim, which is to nurture and develop the unique creative potential which is inherent in each member of its community, staff and students alike.
- 4.2 Students' emotional, psychological and mental health needs are RIAM's priority as it strives to provide them with an inspiring environment in which to develop as artists and professionals. This policy provides important support for these needs.

## 5. Principles

- 5.1 RIAM wishes to create a culture which encourages mental wellness in its students and staff.
- 5.2 Where relevant and appropriate, if the operation of these procedures fail to resolve issues a student has that impact on his/her capacity to fulfil the requirements of the programme of study concerned in an acceptable manner, it may be necessary to consider the case as a matter of 'Fitness to Study' (see 6.2 below). In such instances, the procedure to be followed is set out in section 8 below.

## 6. Definitions.

- 6.1 **Disability:** The Equal Status Acts 2000-4 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2004 define disability as follows:
- (i) the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body;
  - (ii) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness;
  - (iii) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body;
  - (iv) a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction; or
  - (v) a condition, illness or disease which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behavior.
- 6.2 **Fitness to Study** means being able to participate, with reasonable accommodations, where necessary, in the programmes of study and/or research that the Academy provides and having the skills, knowledge, health and character necessary to undertake and complete a programme safely and effectively without negatively impacting the safety or well-being of themselves or others. Fitness to study relates to an individual's capacity to participate fully and satisfactorily as a student, in relation to life generally at the Academy. It does not solely relate to academic studies, it also relates to the ability to live independently and safely whilst at the Academy.

## 7. Policy

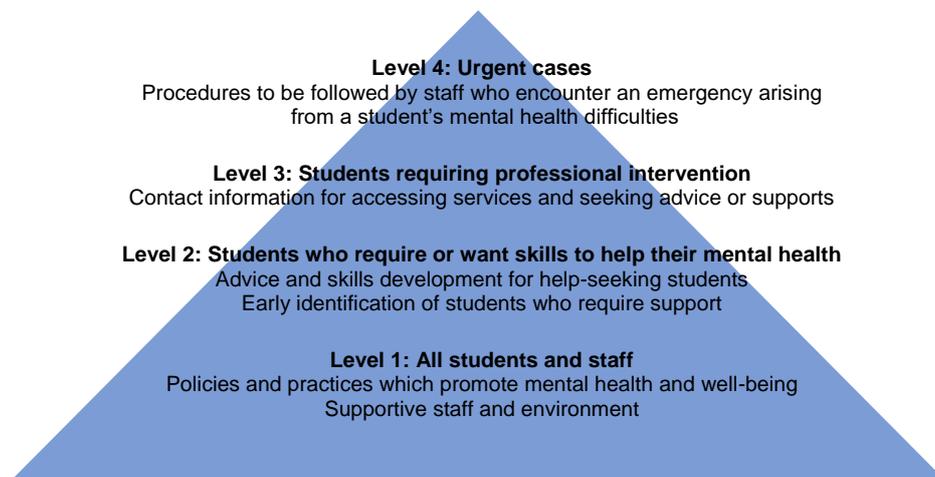
- 7.1 Confidentiality
- 7.1.1 Students can expect that RIAM will treat information about their mental health in confidence and in accordance with the requirements of the [General Data Protection Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679](#) (GDPR).
- 7.1.2 Information is only shared with a student's consent and the student will be told who the information is being shared with and the reasons for sharing this information.
- 7.1.3 There are limited exceptions to this rule, for example:
- (i) where a student is considered a danger to themselves or others;
  - (ii) where a crime is being investigated;

- (iii) where disclosure is required by law; or
- (iv) where procedures of the Mental Health Acts 2001-2009 are invoked, for example for the purpose of an involuntary admission to an approved centre such as a hospital.

## 7.2 Levels of Intervention Required

7.2.1 RIAM has identified four levels of intervention when dealing with concerns related to mental health. The response should vary depending on the perceived urgency of the case.

### 7.2.2 Four Levels of Intervention



7.2.3 Detailed procedures to be followed by staff, and guidelines for students have been drawn up and are set out in the Appendix to this policy.

## 8. Fitness to study

- 8.1 The Academy is committed to fostering a supportive community of learning where students are able to participate fully in their academic studies. It provides a positive and supportive approach to the management of physical and mental health to support academic achievement and the student experience. Academy students are expected to act responsibly and to behave in ways that do not compromise either their own wellbeing or that of other members of the Academy community. However, if the operation of this approach and its associated procedures fail to resolve issues a student has that impacts on his/her capacity to fulfil the requirements of the programme of study concerned in an acceptable manner, it may be necessary to consider the case as a matter of 'Fitness to Study'.
- 8.2 Where a member of staff or other appropriate individual has a concern that a student's situation may have reached a point that it has, or may soon become, a matter of 'fitness to study', they should refer the student's case, in the first instance, to the Administrative Officer (Registry), who will refer the matter to the Fitness to Study Sub-Committee of the Board of Studies, which shall consist of three members of that Board.

- 8.3 A student appearing before the Sub-Committee is entitled to be accompanied by a member of Academy staff, and a member of the Academy's administrative staff may be in attendance at meetings of the Sub-Committee for the purpose of formal minute taking.
- 8.4 In the event that the Sub-Committee decides that there are grounds for the concern, it may take any of the following actions, according to the specific circumstances of an individual case (not all of which may be relevant or appropriate):
- (i) Caution the student in relation to the matter.
  - (ii) Require the student to undergo testing, at the Academy's expense, in respect of suspected drug or alcohol addiction. Where a student fails to comply with this requirement or where whose tests confirm drug or alcohol addiction, they may be required by the Sub-Committee to withdraw from their course or interrupt their studies until such time as they are certified by an appropriately qualified person to be fit to continue with their studies.
  - (iii) Require the student to undergo a medical examination or assessment (including a psychiatric assessment) by a doctor or specialist nominated by the Sub-Committee at the Academy's expense for the purpose of obtaining an opinion as to the student's medical fitness to continue with their studies. Where a student fails to comply with this requirement, or where they are assessed to be unfit to continue with their studies, they may be required to withdraw from their course or interrupt their studies until such time as they are certified by an appropriately qualified person to be fit to proceed with their studies.
  - (iv) Suspend the student until such time as they are certified by an appropriately qualified person to be fit to proceed with their studies.
  - (v) Require the student to withdraw permanently from their course.
- 8.5 An appeal against the decision of the Sub-Committee should be heard by a fresh Sub-Committee of the Board of Studies consisting of a Chair who is a member of the Board of Governors and two members of Academy staff who have not been involved in the case prior to appeal.
- 8.6 Students affected by decisions made under this Code of Practice policy may, depending on the circumstances, have recourse to the Equality Tribunal or to the Ombudsman.

## 9. Office of the Ombudsman

- 9.1 If a student feels that they have been unfairly treated or are not satisfied with the decision on a complaint, it is open to students to contact the Office of the Ombudsman. By law the Ombudsman can investigate complaints about any administrative actions or procedures as well as delays or inaction in dealings with the institution. The Ombudsman provides an impartial, independent and free dispute resolution service.

## 10. Responsibility

- 10.1 The Head of the Administrative Office (Registry) is responsible for overseeing this policy and its operational procedures in relation to all students.

## 11. Legislation and Regulation

- 11.1 [Mental Health Acts 2001-2009.](#)
- 11.2 [Qualifications and Quality Assurance \(Education and Training\) Act 2012.](#)
- 11.3 [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area \(2005\).](#)
- 11.4 [Code of Practice for Provision of Education and Training to International Learners \(2015\).](#)
- 11.5 [National Framework of Qualifications \(NFQ\).](#)

## 12. Related Documents

- 12.1 Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy (Staff)
- 12.2 Disability Support Service and Reasonable Accommodations Policy

## 13. Document Control

Approved by Board of Studies 25th November 2016.  
Revision 1 approved by Board of Studies 10th March 2017.  
Revision 2 approved.  
Revision 3 approved by Trinity Academic Council 13th May 2020.  
Next review: Academic year 2020/21.

## Appendix: Procedures for staff and guidelines for students

[Note: A list of available resources can be found at section 4 of this Appendix.

### 1. Directions for Staff in Urgent Cases (Level 4) (see 7.2.2 above)

#### 1.1 If you have reason to think a student might be a danger to themselves or to others:

If you think this is a life-threatening emergency, you should contact emergency services:

- (i) Overdose or definite threat of self-harm: Request Ambulance 999 or 112.
- (ii) Student violent, armed, aggressive, or threatening: Contact Gardaí 999 or 112.
- (iii) If you find after incident you are affected, you should talk to Administrative Officer (Registry), who can outline RIAM supports for staff.
- (iv) If the student withholds consent to contact medical services, consider contacting the services anyway.
- (v) Advising the student to contact their family is strongly recommended and, in urgent cases, contacting the family directly may need to be considered.
- (vi) The student's wellbeing or safety and the wellbeing and safety of others take precedence over issues of confidentiality. Therefore, information may be passed on in these circumstances without the student's consent.

#### 1.2 If there is no immediate threat, but the student still requires medical intervention.

The student might be:

- (i) Expressing suicidal thoughts or wishing they were dead.
- (ii) Threatening to self-harm.
- (iii) Expressing bizarre thoughts or ideas.
- (iv) Unduly agitated or behaving in a bizarre manner.
- (v) If possible, consult with The Administrative Officer, Registry, or a colleague. Explain your concern to the student and ask would it be possible to contact someone on their behalf (unless you think these actions will exacerbate the situation).
- (vi) **During Office Hours**, seek consent of student to contact one of the following:
- (vii) The Administrative Officer, Registry  
Phone: 01 632 5312  
Email: franceshogan@riam.ie
- (viii) The student's GP (details can be obtained from the General Office: 01 632 5300).
- (ix) **Out of Office Hours**, seek consent of student to contact one of the following:
- (x) DUB DOC, Mon-Fri 6-10pm, Sat-Sun and Bank Holidays 10am- 6pm,  
Phone: (01) 454 5607.

- (xi) St. Vincent's University Hospital Accident and Emergency, Merrion Rd, Dublin 4,  
Phone:(01) 221 4000.

### 2. Directions for Staff in Non-Urgent Cases (Levels 2 and 3) (see 7.2.2 above)

- 2.1 If you are concerned that a student is showing signs of distress: ***Do not avoid the situation!***
- 2.2 Ask yourself: Do you think they are an immediate danger to themselves or others?
- (i) If yes, proceed to Section 1 above (Directions for Staff in Urgent Cases).
- (ii) If no, proceed to 2.3:
- 2.3 Be aware that the student may want to discuss sensitive issues with you and you should arrange to discuss matters with them in a setting where they can be assured of their confidentiality.
- 2.4 Inform the student about your concerns and reasons for them and listen to the student. The process of listening itself might be helpful for the student.
- 2.5 Be clear about what you can and cannot do:
- (i) You should not be expected to solve the problem.
- (ii) Try and ascertain the extent of the students' problem and which one of the services might be appropriate to refer the student on to.
- 2.6 Ask yourself: Are you still concerned about the student?
- (i) If you are not sure, consider seeking advice from The Administrative Officer, Registry on further steps. If the student has disclosed information to you, you should protect their confidentiality by talking in general terms without naming them.
- (ii) If anything has given you reason to be concerned about the safety of the student or anyone else, you should treat this as urgent. See 'Directions for Staff, Urgent Cases' (level 4)
- (iii) If you do not think there is an immediate danger, but you think the student would benefit from additional assistance, consider the options outlined at the end of this document.
- (iv) If you are satisfied that the student's situation has improved, thank the student for meeting with you, and invite them to raise any future concerns with you or other RIAM staff or services. Consider arranging a follow-up meeting to keep the lines of communication open.

### 3. Advice for Students who are concerned about their own mental health or the mental health of a fellow student.

- 3.1 *It is an emergency if:*
- (i) You think you might hurt yourself or others, or you think your fellow student might hurt themselves or others.
- (ii) You or your fellow student is seriously ill.

- (iii) You or a fellow student is at risk of suicide.
- 3.2 If it is an emergency, contact The [Administrative Officer, Registry](#) in the General Office 01632 5312 or Secretary/Finance Officer [Kevin Kelleher](#) 01632 5302.
- 3.3 If there is an overdose or definite threat of self-harm: Request Ambulance 999 or 112.
- 3.4 If the student is violent, armed, aggressive, or threatening: Contact Gardaí 999 or 112.
- 3.5 If assisting a fellow student, once help is on its way, if it safe to do so, reassure your fellow student and wait with them until help arrives.
- 3.6 After the incident:
- (i) Talk about it with friends or family while respecting the confidentiality of the affected student.
  - (ii) Consider talking to Frances Hogan about the possibility of receiving counselling.
  - (iii) Talk to your Head of Faculty about what has happened - you might need to take a few days away from your studies or arrange an extension, for example.
- 3.7 If you are concerned about your own mental health:
- (i) Resources are available in RIAM to inform you about mental health issues and to help you regain mental wellbeing. See the list of Resources below.
  - (ii) Communicate your needs and seek support (remember, seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness).
  - (iii) Consider seeking professional support. There are a range of services affiliated to RIAM, or you can talk to your GP.
  - (iv) If you have a diagnosed mental condition and require assessment/exam accommodations or academic supports, you should contact, Administrative Officer (Registry) in the General Office on 01 632 5312. Remember, RIAM needs this information to offer you support.
- 3.8 If you are concerned about a fellow student:
- (i) Be aware of your personal limitations.
  - (ii) Express your concern to your fellow student, and encourage them to seek support.
  - (iii) You can direct them to the RIAM supports which are available.
  - (iv) You can talk to a Student Liaison Officer, a Head of Faculty or the the Administrative Officer (Registry) about your concerns.

#### 4. Related Documents and resources

4.1 Web Resources:

- (i) [Please Talk](#) provides information on available resources.

(ii) The HSE provides advice through [Your Mental Health](#) and #LittleThingsMatter campaign - search for LittleThingsHub on Facebook and Twitter.

(iii) [Samaritans](#)

#### 4.2 Library Resources:

Books on mental health and wellbeing are available in the RIAM Library.

#### 4.3 Mental Health Professionals

All students are welcome to avail of counselling services at the [Clanwilliam Institute](#) 01 6761363 [Email](#) or with [Virginia Kerr](#). The first four sessions are free of charge, and RIAM will not be informed of the identity of anyone availing of these services.

#### 4.4 Mentoring/coaching

All students are welcome to avail of coaching/mentoring to support their mental wellness. As above, students may contact the [Clanwilliam Institute](#) (01 6761363 or [Email](#)) (or [Paul Roe](#)). The first 4 sessions are free of charge and the RIAM will not be informed of the identity of anyone availing of these services.

#### 4.5 Student Support Leaders

The names of Student Support Leaders (Staff and Students) are placed in the Student Common Room of RIAM. The SSLs are on hand to offer informal advice on a range of issues to do with your course.

#### 4.6 A GP:

Westland Row Medical, 44 Westland Row. Phone: (01) 9010176 ext. 62969.

#### 4.7 Alcohol and Addiction Counselling

This is available from [MyMind](#) in Ranelagh.