Life at Shrewsbury School is founded upon a close partnership between staff, parents and pupils to promote the strength of family life, and foster the moral responsibilities of living in a caring community. All the pastoral care offered by the school is built on these relationships and the understanding and knowledge of a pupil who is nurtured during their time here.

The trust which parents place in us by sending their children to Shrewsbury involves us in a responsibility which exceeds any notion of care that can be defined by law. However, the school is conscious of its proper obligations under the Children’s Act, KCSIE and particularly its responsibility ‘to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of pupils in our care.’ The innocence of childhood is precious, and the teenage years are a time of rapid growth. Shrewsbury seeks to preserve the innocence of school days but also to nurture its students in their formative years so that they can take the next stage of their development and education with confidence, security and good judgment.

Shrewsbury’s House system lies at the very heart of our pastoral approach and within this the role of the HSM is crucial. HSM’s are directly responsible for the pastoral care of the pupils in their charge. All pupils should feel able to talk about anything that might be concerning them and the role of HSM is one of being ‘in loco parentis’. They are supported in this role by their partners, the matron, the Assistant HSM, the House tutor team.

In addition to this overarching approach to pastoral care there are also specific areas of support for pupils who experience emotional, psychological and mental health issues.

The school employs a professional Psychotherapy and Counselling Agency, Merulae, http://www.merulae.org/ who manage the emotional and psychological needs of our pupils who may need additional support over and above a teaching member of staff’s professional ability. All Merulae Associates are qualified and are Registered and/or Accredited by National Professional Organisations. The clinical assessment and monitoring of this service for Shrewsbury School is overseen by Wendy Brook, who can be contacted directly by the pupils through the email address (counsellor@shrewsbury.org.uk) or by mobile phone (07874 033042). These contact details are clearly displayed in all Houses. Appointments can be made directly by pupils or through HSM’s, matrons, parents, members of staff or the Medical Centre.

Pupils are assessed at entry level to the service and referred to the most appropriate Merulae Associate to support them. Merulae are responsible for all decisions made at a clinical level and they keep the school’s safeguarding team and HSM involved on a “needs to know basis”, allowing
full confidentiality to the pupils in their care. Upon completion of the set piece of work with a pupil there will be a further assessment to ensure progress is being made. At this point work may cease and pupils return within the pastoral capabilities of teaching staff, or be referred onwards. The monitoring and auditing of pupils in this system of care is the responsibility of Wendy Brook.

A Merulae Associate will work primarily with the pupil. Appointments are bound by confidentiality. This will be kept by the Associate unless the pupil expresses a wish to involve parents/or members of staff, or if there are significant and immediate Safeguarding concerns. In this case the Associate will contact one of the “Designated Safeguarding Leads” and the school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

Standard appointment times are flexible and responsive to the pupil’s timetable and needs. The school is committed to meeting the cost of the initial consultation. Where an additional programme of professional support is recommended then parents would be expected to pay for this, and this is managed by Wendy Brook directly with parents.

When appropriate, the Merulae Service, on behalf of the school, may make use of a number of external specialist counsellors, psychotherapists, psychologists, psychiatrists and or agencies (CAMHS) who are able to help pupils who may be experiencing a diverse range of difficulties. Referrals to these more specific supports can be made via the school medical officer or privately. While not an exhaustive list, difficulties might include: depression, behavioural difficulties, stress related illness, disordered eating, bereavement, self-harm, anxiety as well as problems more directly associated with academic progress and development.

It often takes time for a relationship to be built between pupil and professional support. Therefore, on occasion, pupils may say that they do not want to return to support or to report sessions as “unhelpful”. The evidence of how helpful sessions are should be based on a longer-term view rather than one or two sessions. Real change can take longer than anticipated. Different pupils will have different needs, and if one professional is not the right fit for a pupil the school and Merulae will endeavour to find the right assistance. Clear communication from both HSM and parents to Wendy Brook, the DHP or Senior DSL is crucial in this respect.

Wendy Brook meets regularly with a member of SLT to review the school’s provision for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

**Timelines and Cost.**

After an Initial Assessment indicates that an intervention is needed, parents / carers will be informed by Meruale's Service Manager, or her delegate, of the level of intervention proposed, and the session cost of that intervention. This will normally be done within ten term time days, and prior to the first intervention session appointment.

Where a student makes a strong case that parents / carers are not to be informed, and where this is supported by the findings of the initial assessment, the Service Manager, or her delegate, will contact the Deputy Head (Pastoral) within ten term time days to discuss payment of the proposed intervention. The intervention costs for School Approved Work will be in accordance with those set out in the Service Level Agreement.
[The above will apply in the vast majority of situations, but there are a few cases where the student is so fragile that a discussion of parents / carers being informed (along with intervention costs) is not bearable for the student at that time, given the impact of the presenting issue(s). It may take up to two sessions before they are ready to face that discussion, and then parents / carers can be informed and payment discussed. In these rare situations it may be that the school may be requested to bear the cost, following a brief discussion initiated by the Service Manager or her delegate.] 

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