

Policy Title:	Mental Health Policy
Description:	This policy identifies the appropriate and timely support that MIE provides for students to ensure that emergencies are dealt with in an appropriate manner.
Author (Position):	President
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Approved By:	MIE Governing Body
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Mental Health Policy

1 Policy Statement

1.1 Context

Marino Institute of Education (MIE) is committed to an inclusive education for all, welcomes diversity and promotes equal opportunities to enable students to thrive academically and personally. To this end, the MIE student mental health policy enables the Institute to fulfil its caring, education and legal responsibilities to students, heightens awareness and increases understanding among the MIE community about mental health, and promotes informed and constructive attitudes to mental health issues.

Student mental health is a shared responsibility, which requires a full campus response, where the Institute, the staff, the student body and individual students work in partnership in relation to mental health issues. This policy identifies the appropriate and timely support that MIE provides for students, provides guidance for all to ensure that emergencies are dealt with in an appropriate manner, and supports staff and students on how to make appropriate referrals and interventions for student who may have mental health difficulties.

While respecting the rights of individual students and the student body, this policy also addresses the right to confidentiality within specified guidelines. MIE acknowledges its responsibility to ensure its policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of students in mental distress or experiencing a mental illness. The primary responsibility for the provision of community mental health services lies with the [Health Service Executive \(HSE\)](#).

1.2 Relationship to Other College Policies

MIE has a number of other policies, codes, and procedures which should be read in conjunction with this policy:

- i. [Dignity and Respect Policy](#)
- ii. [Disciplinary Policy](#)
- iii. [Fitness to Study Policy](#)

1.3 Scope of the Policy

Section 2 outlines the meaning of the term, 'mental health' and explains the difference between 'mental health difficulties' and 'mental illness'.

Section 3 outlines the Institute's procedures in relation to admissions¹, assessment², disciplinary issues³, where these are relevant to students experiencing mental health problems.

Section 4 provides guidance to members of MIE staff and students on how to seek assistance for students experiencing mental health difficulties. The issue of student confidentiality is also addressed in this section.

2 Definitions

What is mental health?

Mental health, mental health difficulties and mental illness lie on a continuous spectrum and are not distinct points.

2.1 Mental Health

The term 'mental health' refers to how a person thinks feels and acts when faced with life's situations. It describes a sense of well-being, implies that someone has the resilience to deal with challenges that life and study present, and have the capacity to live in a resourceful and fulfilling manner.

2.2 Mental Health Difficulties

These are the problems that affect a person's thoughts, body feelings, behaviour and ability to function. These may occur as a reaction to a painful event or arise due to internal or external pressures. Some mental health difficulties come from within. In some instances, they may resolve of their own accord.

A student experiencing mental health difficulties that interfere with their capacity to function, or which are persistent, may benefit from engaging with a member of the

¹ See [Admission, Access and Transfer Policy](#)

² See [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#)

³ See [Disciplinary Policy](#)

[MIE Student Support Services](#) (Tutor⁴, Counsellor, Chaplain, Student Union Welfare Officer or General Practitioner).

Mental health difficulties are as common as heart disorders and three times more common than cancer. Although figures and definitions vary, it is clear that thousands of people in Ireland will themselves encounter difficulties or know someone encountering difficulties. However, if severe, mental health difficulties may signal the onset of mental illness.

2.3 Mental Illness

Mental illness is the term used to refer to severe mental health difficulties. Mental illness includes conditions such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety/panic disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders, eating disorders and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Students who experience mental illness will require treatment and support from a health professional such as a Psychiatrist, Counsellor or General Practitioner.

3 Academic and Administrative Procedures

3.1 Admission

Irish and other European Union (EU) students apply for admission to undergraduate courses at MIE through the [Central Applications Office \(CAO\)](#). Non-EU students apply directly through the Admissions' office or through the Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin (hereafter referred to as Trinity) [International Office](#).

Postgraduate students apply through the Admissions Office⁵. Applications are welcome from students from non-traditional learning backgrounds, including students with disabilities, from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and mature students (age over 23). Further information is available at www.mie.ie/admissions

⁴ See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

⁵ See [Admission, Access and Transfer Policy](#)

3.2 Disclosure

Disclosure of a disability, including a mental health condition is voluntary. Disclosure enables MIE to prepare in advance the necessary supports that it may need to put in place to provide a student with full access to education⁶.

Disclosure of a disability, including a mental health condition, enables the Institute to prepare, in advance, the necessary supports that may need to be put in place to enable the student to enjoy full access to education. Duties under The [Equal Status Act, 2000-2018](#) require MIE to make reasonable accommodation for persons with a disability, provided that the cost is within the resources available.

If a student requires particular support or arrangements (for example, mental health support or examination support), it is important that the student contacts the Access Officer well in advance of submitting their application to discuss their needs. Applicants will then be in a better position to make an informed decision as to whether or not MIE can provide the support and environment they require.

3.3 Fitness to Study Issues

Disclosure of mental health difficulties or mental illness will not adversely affect a person's application to MIE or their legal rights in any way⁷. Students attending a course at MIE should:

- a. Familiarise themselves with the course requirements;
- b. Have the ability to cope with the demands and workloads of a third-level course as special arrangements and accommodations do not remove all difficulties;
- c. Be aware of the demands of the course. They are advised to discuss the demands of each year of their course with the Course Director or other appropriate member of staff;
- d. Not be a risk to themselves or to other students or staff.

Occasionally an issue may arise as to a student's ability or suitability to participate in a particular course. MIE's procedures for dealing with such issues are set out in the [Fitness to Study Policy](#).

⁶ See [Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities](#) and [Consent to Disclose and Share Disability Information](#)

⁷ See [Fitness to Study Policy](#)

3.4 Disciplinary Procedures

Any student who behaves inappropriately may be in breach of MIE's [Disciplinary Policy](#). This may include students with mental health difficulties. Cases of student mental ill-health should not normally be dealt with as matters of discipline. Instead, in such cases, where a student constitutes a clear and reasonably imminent danger to themselves or to others, the Registrar may suspend the student from the Institute. The Institute will supply all possible supports before suspension and will do this where professional guidance is warranted.

3.5 Discussion with the Medical Advisor or Counsellor: Going Off-Books, Withdrawing and Re-Admission

Students who are unable to continue their studies, or who need to interrupt them on health grounds (including mental health grounds), may be given permission by the Registrar to go 'off-books' or to withdraw from their course. Students should discuss their needs with their Tutor⁸ and their medical advisor before seeking to go off-books. The Tutor submits the application to the Registrar on behalf of the student and supporting documentation from the health professional is also required.

Students wishing to return to MIE after a period off-books on medical grounds need to apply for re-admission before they return (by the 1 August in the case of Junior Freshman students), using the Letter of Recertification form available from the [Registrar's Office](#) and [Fitness to Study Policy](#). This form is a certificate of fitness completed by a medical referee who may be nominated by the Registrar.

Continuing care 'off-books' is not guaranteed, and the student may be referred to local services.

3.6 Examination arrangements

Where the performance of a student with mental health difficulties would be impacted if they took the examination or assessment in the normal manner⁹, alternative arrangements for examinations or assessments may be provided. If the student is registered with the [Disability Service](#), then the Service is responsible for

⁸ See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

⁹ See [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#)

making these arrangements in conjunction with the Examinations' Officer. In all other circumstances, students should approach their Tutor⁸ (if the student is an undergraduate), their supervisor or course director (if a postgraduate) to discuss special arrangements.

4 Experiencing Mental Health Difficulties

The aim of this section is to provide MIE staff and students with information and advice on how to deal with students who are experiencing mental health difficulties and, in particular, on how and where to seek professional help. Issues surrounding confidentiality are discussed in Section 4.3.

4.1 Guidelines for Staff

Guidance on how to respond to a student experiencing mental health difficulties is given in the flow diagram in Figure 1

4.1.1 How urgent is the situation?

Firstly, a professional e.g. General Practitioner or counsellor must try to establish how urgent and serious the situation is:

- a. Is the student at risk of hurting themselves or others?
- b. Is there a risk of suicide?
- c. Is the student out of touch with reality?
- d. Is the student behaving bizarrely?
- e. Is the student confused, drowsy or ill (possibility of overdose)?
- f. Has the student's behaviour, mood or personality suddenly changed?
- g. If you are concerned about any of the above, please follow the emergency guidelines in Section 4.1.2 (daytime) or Section 4.1.3 (out of hours) below.
- h. If the above questions do not apply, then you may be concerned about a student because of their:
 - Lack of interaction, isolation or withdrawal from staff or peers;
 - Difficulties with daily functioning (eating, sleeping, mood, physical activity, personal appearance);
 - Attendance problems¹⁰;

¹⁰ See [Attendance Monitoring Procedure](#)

- Changed academic performance;
- Missed deadlines;
- Significant weight loss/gain.

Although these may be an indication of mental health difficulties sufficiently serious to require referral and support, there may not be an urgent crisis. In such cases, please follow guidelines for referral and intervention in Section 4.1.4.

4.1.2 Emergency Guidelines (During Daytime)

Where staff think a student presents a potential emergency situation, they must take immediate action on behalf of the Institute. Some guidelines on what to do and who to contact are given below. Staff should not try to deal with the emergency alone. If a member of staff is uncertain about what to do, they should consult with a member of the [Trinity Student Counselling](#):

Student Counselling Service, Trinity College Dublin.

Phone: +353 1 896 1407

Email: student-counselling@tcd.ie

Staff should:

- Locate and talk to the student themselves or arrange for another member of staff to do so, e.g. a Tutor¹¹ (the student's Tutor's name is available on [MAESTRO](#), the Lead Tutor Dr Gerry O'Connell (etx 5124), the Dean of School or the MIE Chaplain. (You should confirm subsequently that this person has in fact contacted the student)
- The student's attendance at counselling is confidential; if this information is given by a student voluntarily, it should be held in strictest confidence. If the student is already seeing a professional within MIE (counsellor, psychiatrist or General Practitioner):
 - If yes – seek the student's consent to contact this professional, explain your concerns and the level of the student's distress and arrange an urgent appointment.

¹¹ See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

- If no – seek the student’s consent to arrange an emergency appointment for them in the [Fairview Health Centre](#) (01 833 9856) or in the [Counselling Service](#) (01 896 1407). Emergency appointments are available in both services on a daily basis. Contact either service and explain the seriousness of your concerns.
- iii. Accompany the student to the [Counselling Service](#) (41/2 St Patrick’s Building on-campus or 7-9 South Leinster St. Dublin 2) or [Fairview Health Centre](#) (37-39 Fairview Strand, Dublin 3). (Note that physical force of any kind must not be used when accompanying student to the [Counselling Service](#) or [Health Service](#)).
- iv. If the student is not prepared to attend the [Health Service](#) or the [Counselling Service](#), explain to them gently that, as you have concerns for their welfare, or that of others, you will have to consult with the [Counselling Service](#) (01 896 1407) or [Fairview Health Centre](#) (01 01 833 9856), other staff and/or talk to their family or next of kin. Give the student a choice as to who they would prefer you to contact in the first instance. However, it is a matter for the student to choose whether to accept a referral, and to avail of the supports offered. In exceptional circumstances, the [MIE Disciplinary Policy](#) (see Section 3.4 of this document) and/or the provisions of the [Mental Health Act, 2001](#) regarding involuntary detentions may need to be implemented (see Appendix E).
- v. Follow up your actions by:
 - Liaising with the Service as to the outcome of the assessment.
 - Arranging to see the student again if appropriate.

4.1.3 Emergency Guidelines (Out of hours)

With permission of the student, inform the course leader or supervisor. Staff should not deal with any emergency alone. You should contact another member of staff who may be able to support you.

If the student is distressed but there are no safety concerns, please:

- Contact D-Doc Phone 1850 22 44 77, Monday to Friday 6:00pm - 8:00am, Saturday/Sunday/Public Holidays 24 Hours
- Outside of these hours, or if advised by D-Doc, go directly to the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department, Beaumont Hospital 01-8093000. If you and the

other staff member are happy to do so, you may jointly accompany the student- it is not advisable to do so on your own.

- Otherwise, ask Security to call an ambulance;
- Establish with the student if they wish you to contact their family/next of kin;
- Inform the Student's Tutor¹², supervisor, or Course Leader of the situation at the first available opportunity.

If the student is aggressive or considered to be a risk to themselves or others:

- Seek assistance by contacting the Security Staff (ext. 7700). They will contact emergency services (the ambulance and/or the Gardaí) to arrange transfer of the student to a place of safety.
- If the student is unwilling to go to hospital or another place of safety, Security will ask the Gardaí to make an assessment of the situation, in the interest of safety of everybody involved. The Gardaí will advise whether it is appropriate to accompany the student;

Other useful places to get help outside of college hours include:

- Samaritans (24 hours) 1850 609090, e-mail:jo@samaritans.org
- AWARE's Depression Line (10am—10pm) local: 1890 303 302
- Emergency services (fire brigade, Gardaí, ambulance): 999 or 112.
- Remember: if on campus, ring the Reception/Security number first: ext. 7700

4.1.4 Guidelines for intervention and referral for non-urgent concerns

If you are uncertain what to do you should consult with the student's own General Practitioner, a member of the Student [Counselling Service](#) (01 8961407) or the [Fairview Health Centre](#) (01) 833 9856). In this situation, you can consult without disclosing the student's name.

The normal steps would be:

- Arrange to talk to the student or for another member of staff known to the student (such as their Tutor¹²) to do so.
- Explain your concerns to the student.

¹² See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

- If they agree with your concerns, check if they are attending a professional source of help within MIE or outside
- If they are attending a professional, seek their permission to liaise with this person.
- If they are not attending a professional, seek his or her permission to arrange an appointment for him or her with either the Student [Counselling Service](#) (01 8961407) or the [Fairview Health Centre](#) (01) 833 9856. Contact either Service and explain your concerns and make an appointment for the student.
- If appropriate, give the student handouts on MIE support and out of hours support.
- Arrange a follow-up appointment with the student to keep the lines of communication open.

4.2 Guidelines for Students

- 4.2.1 Students concerned about the wellbeing of a friend should talk to a member of MIE staff such as their own tutor or supervisor, their friend's Tutor¹³, a lecturer or a head of department or a dean, any of the staff in the [Registrar's Office](#) staff (01 853 5133), Counsellors (01 8961407), or doctors at [Fairview Health Centre](#) (01) 833 9856. Students may also choose to contact the MIE [Students' Union](#), normally the Welfare Officer, who will assist you in contacting the appropriate support services.
- 4.2.2 The [Counselling Service](#) provides emergency slots every weekday and can be booked by telephoning 01 8961407 or emailing student-counselling@tcd.ie. It is important that students share and discuss their worries and concerns with a staff member (see above) and obtain appropriate professional advice – it is not advisable for students to take on too much responsibility for dealing with such concerns themselves. Liaison with the relevant professional services will also enable the student they are concerned about to get the necessary supports.

¹³ See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

4.3 Confidentiality

The purpose of this section is to inform students and staff of the principles guiding the flow of information about a student's mental health. Confidentiality is considered under the following subheadings:

- General principles regarding confidentiality
- Professional codes of ethics (Doctors, Counsellors, Chaplains, Disability Officers, Occupational Therapists)
- Basic principles on sharing information
- When consent is not given
- Case conferencing
- How to respond to general requests for information from third parties i.e. parents and external bodies
- [Freedom of Information Act, 2014](#).

4.3.1 General principles regarding confidentiality

The important principles are:

- MIE is committed to respecting the right to confidentiality of all students and all information disclosed by students relating to a person's mental health will be treated as confidential. Confidential information will only be disclosed with the person's consent. It will only be accessed and/or made available to others on a need-to-know basis for the purpose of the provision of, or access to, services, with the student's consent.
- The principle that no confidential information will be passed on to third parties without the express permission of the student concerned applies unless
 - a. there is a serious concern that there may be a threat to the safety or life of the student or of others or
 - b. it involves the investigation of a crime or is otherwise required by operation of law.

- Information held by MIE complies with the requirements of the [Data Protection Act, 2008](#) and the [Freedom of Information Act, 2014](#) and relevant MIE policies¹⁴.

In order to comply with the above principles, MIE staff must take all necessary precautions to ensure the safekeeping and accuracy of all records containing personal information about students¹⁵.

Where information is recorded or shared, the terminology used must be respectful of the student and should focus on their needs rather than on labelling.

4.3.2 Professional Codes of Ethics

In addition to the above general MIE principles regarding confidentiality, student services staff (including doctors, counsellors, chaplains and disability officers) are bound by their respective professional codes of ethics. These codes are available on the services' websites as follows:

- [Trinity Disability Service](#)
- [Fairview Medical Centre](#)
- [Trinity Student Counselling](#)

4.3.3 Basic principles on sharing information

Information is shared with other services or third parties only with the student's consent (see exceptions above) and for a defined purpose, such as accessing additional supports and services for the student. Information is shared on a need-to-know basis; the level and nature of the information shared will vary according to who needs it and for what purpose.

In obtaining the student's consent for information to be shared, it is important that staff clarify what the purpose is, and who will be given particular information, so that students can give their informed consent.

4.3.4 When Consent is not Given

Students are entitled to refuse consent and such a decision should be respected. In such cases, students should be made aware of the implications of their choice in

¹⁴ See [MIE Privacy Policy](#)

¹⁵ See [Record Management Policy](#) and [MIE Records Retention Schedule](#)

terms of accessing supports. Students may review their decision at any stage during their time at MIE.

Once a person is over the age of sixteen, they may give an effective consent to surgical, medical or dental treatment and it is not necessary to obtain any consent from their parent or guardian.

In some very exceptional circumstances (risk to someone's life or criminal investigations), information may be given to the appropriate third parties without the student's consent. In such circumstances, members of staff should consult the [Registrar's Office](#) (ext. 5133), the [Fairview Health Centre](#) (01) 833 9856, the [Counselling Service](#) (018961407), their line manager or their Head of Department. Where possible, staff should inform the student of their intended actions; however, protecting the student's safety or the safety of others takes precedence.

4.3.5 Case Conferencing

When there are concerns for the safety of a student or of others, a Case Conference may be called for all staff involved (i.e. Lead Tutor/relevant Dean/Assistant Registrar/General Practitioner/Head of Counselling and Disability, relevant academic staff, Tutor¹⁶, and relevant others) to identify the most appropriate way of assisting all concerned and ensuring their safety. Where possible, this should be undertaken with the knowledge of the student.

4.3.6 How to Respond to Requests for Information from Third Parties

MIE will not disclose any information to third parties (including parents) unless the student gives their explicit permission to do so or there is a serious concern that there may be a threat to the safety or life of the student or of others, or if it involves the investigation of a crime or is otherwise required by operation of law. Occasionally, staff may receive calls from worried and concerned parents, friends or landlords. While it is entirely appropriate to listen to their concerns and to act on them if there is an at-risk issue, it is not generally appropriate to divulge any information. If unsure of what to do, staff should immediately consult the

¹⁶ See [Tutor System Policy](#) and [Tutor System Procedure](#)

[Registrar's Office](#) (ext. 5133), [Fairview Health Centre](#) (01 833 9856), the Student [Counselling Service](#) (018961407), their line manager or their Head of Department.

4.3.7 Freedom of Information Acts

MIE is subject to the terms of the [Freedom of Information Act, 2014](#), which provide:

- a. A right for each person to access records held by public bodies;
- b. A right for each person to have official information relating to themselves amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading;
- c. A right to obtain reasons for decisions affecting themselves made by a public body.

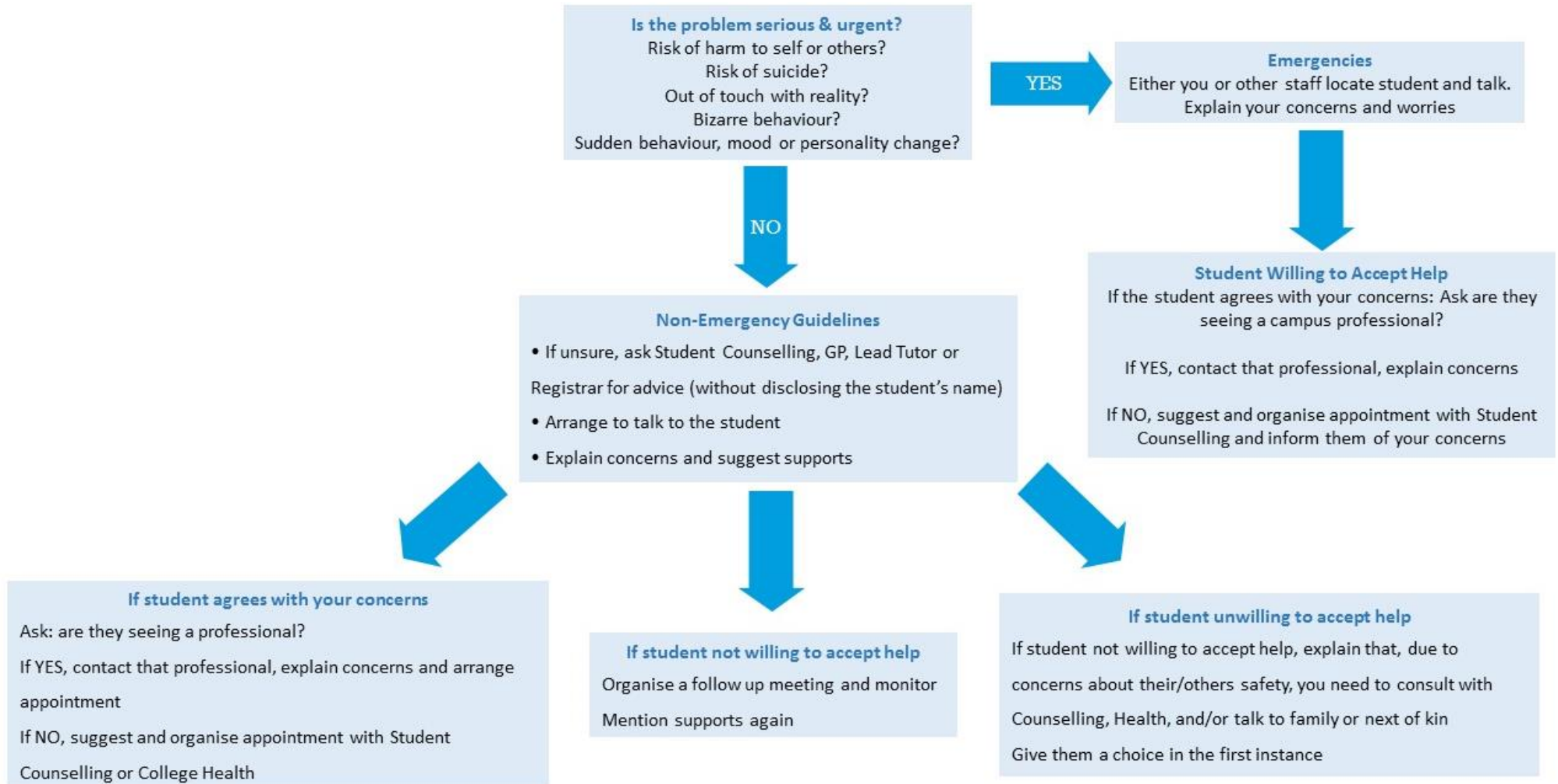
There are also a number of exemptions from the right of access to information, such as the Exemption applying to the personal information of other individuals.

Decisions on the exercise of one's rights under the [Freedom of Information Act, 2014](#) are made by the Freedom of Information Officer, who is the designated decision maker in MIE, with provision for review by more senior MIE staff.

In relation to a record of a medical or psychiatric nature relating to a requester, the Freedom of Information Officer is permitted to refuse access where disclosure to the requester might be prejudicial to their physical or mental health, well-being or emotional condition but in such a case the requester must be advised that, if they wish, access will be offered to a relevant health professional specified by the requester. Students have the right to request access to their counselling records.

It should be noted that MIE is not the final arbiter regarding access to information and requesters have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner and to the Courts.

5 FIGURE 1: How to Respond to a Student Experiencing Mental Health Difficulties



6 Related Documents

- 6.1 [Dignity and Respect Policy](#)
- 6.2 [Disciplinary Policy](#)
- 6.3 [Fitness to Study Policy](#)
- 6.4 [Admission, Access and Transfer Policy](#)
- 6.5 [Academic Assessment and Academic Progression](#)
- 6.6 [Tutor System Policy](#)
- 6.7 [Tutor System Procedure](#)
- 6.8 [Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities](#)
- 6.9 [Consent to Disclose and Share Disability Information](#)
- 6.10 [Attendance Monitoring Procedure](#)
- 6.11 [MIE Equality Policy](#)
- 6.12 [Record Management Policy](#)
- 6.13 [MIE Records Retention Schedule](#)

Appendix 1: Student Support Services

Student Counselling Service, Trinity College Dublin,

3rd floor, 7-9 South Leinster Street

Trinity College, Dublin 2

Phone: +353 1 896 1407

Email: student-counselling@tcd.ie

Confidential Student Helpline – Niteline

Thursday to Sunday, 9.00pm – 2.30am during term time only

Freephone: 1800 793 793

Samaritans National Helpline

1850 60 90 90

Also 116123

Samaritans Dublin Branch

Tel.: (01)872 7700

AWARE's Depression Line

loCall: 1890 303 302 (10am-10pm)

Emergency Services

Phone (Fire Brigade, Gardaí, Ambulance): 999 or 112

Remember: if on campus, ring the Reception/Security number first: ext. 7700

D-Doc

Phone 1850 22 44 77 Monday to Friday 6:00pm - 8:00am

Saturday/Sunday/Public Holidays 24 Hours

Policy Identifier: Mental Health

Beaumont Hospital

Beaumont Rd, Dublin 9

Tel: 01-8093000

www.beaumont.ie

Fairview Medical Centre

37 - 39 Fairview Strand, Dublin 3

(01) 833 9856

Chaplaincy Service

Dr Marie Whelton, (01) 8535158

Marie.whelton@mie.ie

Lead Tutor

Dr Gerry O'Connell (01)8535124

Email gerry.oconnell@mie.ie

Student Union Welfare Officer

Email sucontact@mie.ie