



**The Castle School**  
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**Drop-in Clinic Policy**

**Date: November 2024**

CEO: Lorraine Heath  
Headteacher: James Lamb

Due for review: Autumn Term 2025

## **PURPOSE**

Teenagers typically find difficulty in accessing medical support, advice and guidance through surgeries and clinics. A drop-in centre will encourage students to become more independent and take greater responsibility in terms of their health and well-being. The drop-in centre is a natural extension of the excellent support our students receive from other agencies. Access to a School Nurse will allow students to find out information, discuss a range of issues, seek treatment in specific areas or be directed to a more appropriate professional. The drop-in centre is very much in line with the Trust's ethos of caring for children and keeping them safe.

## **KEY POINTS**

- To provide a non-judgemental, safe, friendly and trusting environment and service
- To provide a drop-in service without appointments, where follow-up appointments may be made if necessary
- Referral to and from other agencies
- To promote communication between young people, health services, parents and school
- To provide health information in a range of formats about young peoples' health issues
- To involve young people in the development and review of the clinic to ensure their needs are met
- Confidential records are kept with verbal feedback given to school on issues as appropriate
- Working within the local child protection procedures to ensure that the child's welfare is paramount

## **Why do we need a school-based health drop-in centre?**

Young people learn best when they are free from worries or concerns. Concerns over health or emotional issues can be significant barriers to learning and educational attainment. Whilst the Trust has excellent pastoral support structures, there are occasions when young people do not feel able to discuss situations with school staff or when school staff are not the appropriate professionals to offer advice or information. By extending the access young people have to professional advice and support from the Health Service, we can support them quickly and appropriately in the school setting as well as offer preventative health care on a number of issues.

The need for a drop-in centre has been identified by students as important. Students particularly felt that access to a professional adult who is not a teacher is important with issues of emotional health which would be difficult to discuss with pastoral staff with whom there may be strong relationships. Boys in particular felt this was important.

The Trust has very good Personal, Social, and Health Education, which is delivered to groups of students. It is important to provide a service which enables individual young people to seek information, clarification and advice confidentially (within strict safeguarding protocols).

## **What services may be offered**

The drop-in centre will have information and advice available on a wide range of issues which may include:

- Healthy eating
- Smoking cessation
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Relationships
- Sexual health
- Emotional health
- Stress
- Weight issues

Sexual health services that may be offered through the drop-in centre to older students include:

- Condom-card (see Appendix 1)
- Emergency hormonal contraception
- Free pregnancy testing
- Chlamydia screening and follow-up treatment

Any school nurse working at the drop-in centre offering sexual health services will have been fully accredited by Somerset NHS and will operate within strict child protection guidelines, always reporting any child at risk. Any young person accessing these services will be involved in a full discussion, including advice to talk to parents and follow up appointments. This, in the Trust's view, provides a more supportive service which takes into account the welfare and well-being of the young person more so than if they were to access these services via other available providers.

### How the drop-in centre will be run

The drop-in centre will run for one lunchtime a week, where there is capacity from the School Nursing Team, to enable any child to access it. Follow up appointments may be made at other times appropriate to the young person's timetable and availability of a School Nurse.

Students are made aware of the ChatHealth text messaging service, where students can contact the School Nursing Team. This is an extension of the drop-in clinic. Below is a summary of the service:



**Discreet and quick. If you're 11-19 it only takes one text to start making a difference. You'll get confidential advice from your School Nursing Team and you don't have to give your name if you don't want to. 07480 635516**

From the 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020, Somerset County Council School Nursing is launching a new mobile health service to provide help and support to young people in Somerset and make it easier for them to get help and advice. ChatHealth is available Monday-Friday from 9am-4pm, automatic replies will be sent to any message received out of hours. For medical help and advice outside of these hours please contact your GP or call 111.

Anyone aged 11-19 can receive confidential advice on a wide range of issues such as bullying, emotional health and wellbeing, sexual health as well as illnesses.

## **Monitoring the drop-in centre**

The School Nurse will keep confidential records of those attending the clinic. The School Nurse will meet weekly before and after the drop-in lunch with the School Welfare Officer to ensure that there is timely discussion about use of the clinic.

The School Nurse will ensure that any concerns about a young person who may be at risk are shared with the School Welfare Officer that same day. These will be logged on MyConcern by the Welfare Officer and actions taken as appropriate.

The link Governor for Safeguarding will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, to monitor the use of the drop-in centre. Any concerns will be brought to the attention of the Governors.

The Somerset C-Card is a totally free service offering free condoms and sexual health information and is available to all young people in Somerset. To join the C-Card a young person may visit one of the places listed in Issue Point and have a chat with a C-Card issuer.

At the initial visit the School Nurse will tell the young person how the C-Card works and issue a C-Card if the young person is willing to engage in discussion and will listen to the following advice and guidance:

- How to use a condom correctly
- Some information about sexually transmitted infections, unplanned pregnancy and how to avoid them
- Know what to do and where to go if your condom splits or you didn't use one
- Where else you can go to get free condoms and talk about other sexual health services
- The chance to ask the C-Card issuer any questions you may have around sex and relationships.

The young person will be asked for date of birth, ethnicity and post code. This information is confidential but it can be seen by other C-Card Issuers so ethnicity and post code are voluntary. The card can be used at any participating C-Card Issue Point up to ten times, the number of times will be at the discretion of the School Nurse. After the tenth time or after one year the card will expire and a follow-up meeting will be necessary. The C-Card issuer will then decide whether to reactivate the card.

Young people under 16 are encouraged to talk to their parents. If the young person is deemed to be at risk or harm or exploitation the School Nurse will refer either to the School Designated Safeguarding Lead or the School Nurses Designated Safeguarding Lead and Safeguarding procedures will be followed.