

# SAFEGUARDING AND WELLBEING



Issue 2



The Sutton Academy

For issue 2 of our safeguarding and wellbeing bulletin we are going to continue with the topic of mental health, this week we will be focussing on eating disorders and support that Students and Parents can access.

## What is an Eating Disorder?

Eating disorders are serious mental and physical health conditions associated with extreme changes to a person's eating behaviour. Eating disorders can affect people of all ages, genders, races, ethnicities, and body shapes. Some eating disorders affect a person's feelings about food and its relationship to their body weight.

**Anorexia nervosa:** This disorder involves the intentional and severe restriction of food intake, a fear of gaining weight, or an extreme desire to lose weight.

**Bulimia nervosa:** People with this condition can cycle between eating large quantities of food and purging, fasting, or over exercising to "compensate" for eating.

**Binge eating disorder:** This condition causes someone to eat large quantities of food, often in a short space of time, when alone, or when not hungry. Afterward, people often feel disgusted by or ashamed of their behaviour.

### Symptoms of eating disorders include:

- spending a lot of time worrying about your weight and body shape
- avoiding socialising when you think food will be involved
- eating very little food
- deliberately making yourself sick or taking laxatives after you eat
- exercising too much
- having very strict habits or routines around food
- changes in your mood

### You may also notice physical signs, including:

- feeling cold, tired or dizzy
- problems with your digestion
- your weight being very high or very low for someone of your age and height
- not getting your period for women and girls

## Parents/Carers - General Tips for Supporting Someone

- Recognise that you are not to blame.
- Acknowledge to your loved one that they are not to blame.
- Recognise how distressing the illness is for your loved one.
- Educate yourself about eating disorders where you can.
- Ask your loved one how they are feeling and what they are thinking, rather than making assumptions.
- Avoid discussing weight, shape, food, and diets in front of your loved one, and model a balanced relationship with your own food and exercise.
- Remind yourself that things can change and reassure your loved one that recovery is possible.
- Ask your loved one what you can do to help – for example, helping them to stick to regular eating, putting in boundaries following meal times, having a space to talk about how they are feeling. Your loved one may respond that you can just "leave them alone" or that you can't do anything to help, so here it can be helpful to remind them you can hear their distress and how difficult things are, and you are there if they need you.

## Accessing Support

There are lots of places to go to for support if you or someone you know is struggling with an eating disorder.

**ABC (Anorexia Bulimia Care)** is a national charity that provides personal advice and support to anyone affected by anorexia, bulimia, binge eating and all kinds of eating distress.

Their website [www.anorexiabulimiacare.org.uk/](http://www.anorexiabulimiacare.org.uk/) includes information about eating disorders. They also have a helpline (03000 11 12 13).

**BEAT:** [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/) 'We are the UK's eating disorder charity. Founded in 1989 as the Eating Disorders Association, our mission is to end the pain and suffering caused by eating disorders.'

**Our Helpline services are open 365 days a year.**

**Weekends and Bank Holidays: 4pm-8pm**  
**Weekdays: 9am-8pm**

DMs open  
Webchat via website  
Helpline: 0808 801 0677  
Studentline: 0808 801 0811  
Youthline: 0808 801 0711

**Beat**  
Eating disorders

## Introducing our Emotional Well-being Practitioner



Sian-Smith-Naylor is an experienced school nurse, who is going to be providing support in improving emotional well-being across the borough for school students. If you feel that meeting with Sian would be beneficial for your child, please contact the school to make an appointment.

As always, if you have any issues around your child's mental health and well-being, please contact a member of the safeguarding team, or your child's Head of Year.

