



Gravesend Grammar School (GGS)

Job description

Student Support Officer (SSO) Initially working in Key Stage 3 (11-13 years old)

Responsible to: Head of Key Stage (HOKS) **or** Inclusion Lead on matters of high level Safeguarding.

This is a non-teaching role that focuses on the pastoral and emotional support of students within Key Stage 3. The role is diverse and requires exceptional communication skills, patience, resilience, integrity, confidentiality and organisation.

Fundamentally, the most important part of the role is to support young people in their pastoral development. At times this could mean working with children with very high levels of anxiety or low mood. The SSO will be working with the most vulnerable students and families in the school and coordination across a number of stakeholders will be a core element of the role.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

Interaction with young people

The SSO office must be seen as a safe space for young people. It should be an environment where students are comfortable discussing their issues in a calm setting.

It is essential that a SSO is not regarded as a disciplinarian but as a 'wise head' that will help support, guide and advise students in their pastoral development. A student should feel listened to.

Liaison with Parents

The SSO will be required to frequently liaise with parents. Some issues will be directed by the HOKS team, the Inclusion Lead, or will come directly from parents or students. It is

important that the SSO can triage the issues that are most important and deal with them within effective timescales. Issues will be very wide ranging and some will be highly emotional and challenging.

It is important that communication with parents is logged and can be referred to at a future time.

The SSO must close the loop by giving clear feedback to relevant parties as directed.

Liaison with multiple agencies

At times the SSO will be required to liaise with a number of external agencies to support individual students. This may include the Police, Children's Social Services, Early Help, Health, Specialist teachers and other education institutions.

It is essential that all conversations are recorded and feedback is given to relevant parties and case owners.

Therapeutic

It is important that the SSO is able to offer therapeutic support to students in their emotional development. Training will be given to individuals with less experience. The SSO team should be able to deliver the following strategies to students across the school;

- mental health first aid
- bereavement and trauma
- de-escalation
- anger management
- restorative justice
- anxiety management

Behaviour management

The SSO plays a key role in supporting both students and teachers in behaviour management. Behaviour management remains the responsibility of teaching staff and senior leaders, but the SSO will be directed to support students as and when required. The SSO may be asked to undertake a number of different roles;

- Listener
- Investigator
- Communicator with parents, staff and students
- Resolver and restorer
- Coordinator of outcomes

- Recorder and Archivist

At times the SSO will be required to support a student that has been excluded from school. In this case the SSO adopts a neutral position, provides the students with work and provides an opportunity to discuss issues further in a non judgemental environment.

At times the SSO may be required to support a student who has been exited from a lesson.

Safeguarding

Whilst the Inclusion Lead and the Designated Safeguarding Officers will deal with the majority of high level Safeguarding issues, it is highly likely that the first contact from students and parents will come to the SSO. It is vitally important that the SSO follows the school's safeguarding procedures.

The SSO may be asked to deputise at MARAC, Core group or Strategy meetings on the strict proviso that this has been agreed by the Inclusion Lead.

Continued Professional Development

Due to the ever changing demands on young people, it is essential that the SSO keeps abreast of contemporary developments and seeks CPD so that they can deal with issues arising effectively. This may well be directed by senior staff, but the SSO is encouraged to identify training needs and relevant training.

Academic intervention

At times the student's pastoral and academic needs overlap. The SSO may be used as a student's key worker to support them in organising catch up or missing work that would be detrimental to their progress. The SSO may be asked to support the KS4 team to

- Monitor student participation in intervention programmes
- Contribute to student cases and support them through the intervention programme
- Liaise with subject teachers to consider personalised strengths and areas to improve
- Liaise with parents to share feedback and adapt individual personalised programmes
- Contribute to centralised key stage team documents to track progress.

Students with short term medical needs

At times students may have medical issues that restrict their movement around the school (such as a broken leg or a panic attack). These students will be based in student support and the SSO will help to provide them with work and accessibility to welfare facilities.

Attendance

The SSO will support the HOKS with students who are below the necessary attendance. This will require regular contact with parents and, at times, home visits. The SSO will be particularly involved with school refusers.

Cover

On very rare occasions SSO's may be asked to cover lessons for absent teachers. This will not be routine but an ad hoc duty in exceptional circumstances. This would require the safe supervision of students during teacher absence.

Person Specification

- Highly organised
- Excellent communication skills for a range of audiences
- Passionate about supporting young people to succeed that are facing difficult circumstances or trauma
- Good ICT skills, Google platforms; MIS, SEND and Child Protection interfaces etc
- To work as part of a large team
- A friendly people person

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