

POLICY FOR THE RETURN TO SCHOOL OF A HIGH-RISK BOY AS A BOARDER



ST ANDREW'S COLLEGE

We aim to facilitate an environment in which each boy feels safe, confident and able to interact with his peers in a way that ensures mutual well-being. However, we are obliged to consider the needs of all the boys in our community; that of your son along with the other boys and staff with whom he will be interacting.

As such, we have a protocol for boys whose health is deemed to be at high risk for returning to school after receiving treatment.

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A high-risk boy is deemed to be one whose psychiatric or psychological difficulties have become such that they affect his ability and functioning in school or cause significant distress to other boys at St Andrew's College. This necessitates his returning home to receive treatment or for admission to a suitable treatment unit. Reasons a boy may need to leave St Andrew's College include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Substance abuse/addiction/substance use
- Mood/Anxiety or Psychotic disorder (Depression, Bipolar disorder, etc.)
- Attempted suicide /suicide ideation/ suicide intent & planning
- Cutting or self-harm
- Eating disorders

While St Andrew's College welcomes a boy who has recovered back to school, there are certain factors that need to be considered. Being a full boarding school, a boy cannot receive the level of monitoring he receives from his parents or has had from the professionals who have aided his recovery. In order to ensure the best interests of the pupil and the other boys at the school, the following conditions need to be met before a boy at risk may return to St Andrew's College.

1. The boy must have been admitted to a clinic/psychiatric unit and have been thoroughly assessed by a psychiatrist and/or must have seen a psychologist/psychiatrist for a least 4 sessions.
2. A doctor's note and / or a written report from the assessing psychologist that is no older than seven days, confirming that the boy is fit to resume schooling **in a full boarding school environment** must be submitted to the Head of Wellness or School Psychologist.
3. Where medication has been prescribed to treat anxiety, depression or mood disorders, the medication must be taken as prescribed. On return to school, the matron needs to report any default to the Housemaster and the SAN and this needs to be addressed immediately. Your son may be asked to leave boarding if non-compliance to taking medication occurs repeatedly. The SAN must report this to the Wellness Team.
4. The boy and his parents must undertake that he attends once-weekly therapy with a suitably qualified psychologist in Grahamstown for a minimum period of three months. This undertaking must be given in writing.
5. In consultation with the boy's psychologist, the school reserves the right to have a medically qualified person examine those boys prone to cutting.
6. There shall be a probation period of one term during which time the boy and his parents give their consent for the school to contact any professionals who may be involved with him for relevant information or updates.
7. Before the boy is re-admitted, the parents/legal guardian must meet with the Head of Wellness/School Psychologist for the handover of the above provisions.
8. If however, a boy who has suicidal ideation needs to be accompanied to the San, the school doctor will be called and the boy will be admitted to St George's / Greenacres Hospital for observation. From here he will be transferred to the care of his parents / guardian / admitted to a psychiatric facility.

Whilst the school will do its best to ensure that your son is as well cared for as possible, it must be recognised that we are not able to monitor a pupil all the time. As such, we cannot with the same effect as an inpatient unit, monitor a boy's drug use, alcohol consumption, drug abuse, cutting, suicidal ideation or attempts, etc. and therefore cannot accept liability for the reoccurrence of such behaviours in an at-risk boy.

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Head of Wellness