

ADO RIVER VALLEY POST-16 HANDBOOK

Company Operations

ADO SERVICES C.I.C.

Version 1.5 ©2024

Current Version Valid from 1st January 2024

Next Review In September 2024



2023-2024

ADO RIVER VALLEY HANDBOOK FOR POST-16- FOR ALL TO READ AND ADHERE TO.

ADO River Valley is run by ADO Services C.I.C. (ADO), a Not For Profit Community Interest Company.

This handbook is designed to provide important guidelines to key areas for stakeholders to follow and forms part of your acceptance to all the main ADO River Valley Terms and Conditions, and Operational Procedures. For any young people that join our school, we request that they, their families and any professionals associated with them adhere to our procedures and way of working.

ADO River Valley reserves the right to take necessary action should we feel our Handbook, and internal Code of Conduct are not being followed by stakeholders. We must emphasise that caregivers, and young people must be on board with our processes to promote a successful placement at our school. ADO River Valley staff will ensure that they have it in writing that families have read, understood and agree to the contents of the handbook.

This handbook is designed for Post-16 students to read.

We hope it will be able to provide important guidelines to key areas for you to follow and form part of your acceptance to all the main ADO River Valley Terms and Conditions and Operational Procedures.

1. Operating Hours and Site Access

The ADO River Valley hours of operation are from **9.00am** to **3.30pm**.

Site access for vehicles is via the main gate entrance on Keats Road, where there is drop off and pick up parking spaces. The car park is accessible from **8.30am** for students. We request that vehicles are not parked on Keats Road and our car park is utilised. Do not block any of our residential neighbour's driveways.

If you have a vehicle of your own, please ensure that you park on nearby streets, as opposed to parking in our small car park or on Keats Road. All neighbouring streets are not restricted.

Please note: Vehicle owners park in the customer car park at their own risk. We cannot be held responsible for injuries or vehicle damage in the car park zone, we ask that you park offsite.

The main reception area opens at **8.30am** to ensure prompt access for you. However, please note that due to our thorough risk assessment procedures in the morning, we are unable to welcome you into the main learning spaces until **9am**. To access the main reception, leave the car park on foot by walking out the small green pedestrian gate, before walking past the goat enclosure and then through the green customer reception door.

Staff members will then mark you as 'present' on our register, and you will then be invited into the relevant learning zone to start your day. It really is as easy as that!

If you arrive onsite early, it is recommended staying in your transport vehicle for safety in the car park until the main reception opens.

Our ADO River Valley site is on a residential street, therefore it is not advised that you wait in the street or that transport takes up street parking for residents. Please respect our local residents and support the community by using our facilities and not blocking driveways. We have two bike storage areas on site which we encourage students to use.

If you have not arrived on site by **9:15am** and ADO River Valley has not been advised accordingly by telephone or email, the ADO River Valley office will generate a SMS which contacts your caregiver and supporting professionals to advise that you have not yet arrived. If ADO River Valley has been advised of absence by the caregiver, we will forward the relevant information to the supporting professionals for their attendance records (upon request from individual Local Authorities).

For more information and further guidance on attendance, please refer to our **Attendance Policy**.

2. The School Day

2.1 The Assessment Process

The first step at our school starts with the assessment. The assessment stage is an important part of joining our school so that we can fully assess the diverse needs of the individual, prior to them starting with us. This is a standalone trial, to fully assess the individual with their caregiver or professional. The assessment stage is a fact-finding time, not only for us but also for the individual too. We are very alternative, and it may be that we are not what you envisaged! With that in mind, the assessment is a stand-alone fee. After the assessment we will provide our feedback and recommendations to the network.

Individuals who would like to join our school will be required to attend a two-day practical assessment (maximum of two caregivers attend for first two hours of day one). The rest of day one will be supported by our staff, providing exposure into different subjects we deliver. For day two, this is when individuals are fully immersed into the school day with our students.

Please note, all phones and devices are to be locked away upon arrival, for the full duration (as per our policies and procedures). More information can be found on this in section 7.3.

2.2 The Student Timetable

The school day begins at **9.00am**. You will have 15 minutes from **9.00-9.15am** AM registration where you will put your belongings away and prepare for the day.

Students then have one lesson from **9.15-10am** with a morning snack break and assembly from **10-10.20am**. This is then followed by a further two lessons.

Students break for lunch at **11.50am** for 30 minutes, with the afternoon register being taken from **12.20pm**.

From **12.20-1.05pm** is the first afternoon lesson, followed by the next lesson from **1.05-1.50pm**

From **1:50-2:00pm** there is an informal break before the final lesson at **2:00-2:45pm**.

2:45pm-3:00pm During mindfulness time is where you are supported by our staff and have the opportunity to engage in therapeutic activities that focus on

the present moment which helps to help calm and reground you prior to going home.

3:00-3:30pm is extracurricular club time. **3:30pm** is home time. You can be collected by your transport or parent-carers once you have collected all of your belongings and have exited the site safely.

However, please note, that standard procedure for any student is to leave site independently and if this is not possible due to individual risk factors and student presentation then it is the responsibility of relevant professionals-care givers to notify ADO River Valley of this and provide a written reason for this request to refuse independent student exits from school.

2.3 Peer Mentoring

At ADO River Valley we actively encourage and promote 'Peer Mentoring' on site. This means that we encourage older students to spend focussed periods supporting those who may require help and support. By doing this, we see a positive effect throughout the setting including, more responsible attitude of older students and better social bonds across the board.

Peer Mentoring is an important part of our mission to promote 'Mutual-Respect' amongst students and mitigate any forms of prejudice or bullying.

2.4 Curriculum and Interventions

In our Post-16 provision, we encourage our students to play a big part in the subject choices. We appreciate that each of our students may be learning at a different pace and therefore we allow you as individuals to take some responsibility and ownership over subject pathways.

We feel confident that education and therapy should be treated with equal importance. With this in mind, you will have access to a variety of therapeutic interventions throughout the week. You are provided with specialist lessons in line with our ethos, which may include (but not subject to) the following:

- Animal Science
 - General Science
 - Equine Studies
 - Adventure Sport
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- PSHE
- British Values
- Creative Education
- Functional Skills (Mathematics/English/ICT)
- Business Studies
- Health and Social Care
- Countryside and Environment
- Bushcraft / Forest Studies
- *Mindfulness & Relaxation (daily intervention)*
- *Zones of Regulation (weekly refreshers)*
- *1:1 Therapeutic Intervention- Equine (weekly)*
- *Group Art Therapy (weekly)*
- *Group Adventure Assisted Activities (weekly)*

Dependent on the individual student and their functioning levels, they will have access to recognised courses which could lead to relevant qualifications such as BTECS, and Functional Skills. Relevant pathways will be discussed with students and caregivers-professionals at the point of the assessment and throughout 'Individual Learner Plan' meetings. Termly careers guidance will also be organised as a 1:1, with wider focused conversations on careers within the PSHE curriculum.

All of our lessons are predominantly led outside and are adapted to be appropriate to the year groups and key stages that the student is working at.

There is exposure to acceptable levels of risk through outdoor education in the security of supervised groups, which will support students to learn about risk and how to keep themselves safe.

2.5 Collection

(Local Authorities Only) If transport is late for pickup, ADO River Valley reserves the right to apply an additional charge for the resource time of a member of staff to wait with the student/s if they are known to be too vulnerable to wait in the reception area unattended. This will be noted and passed onto to the financial department in line with normal invoicing periods.

You can either wait in the customer reception area, walk to their waiting transport in the car park or travel home independently (unless this is not permitted for you at this time). This is to support appropriate age group responsibilities, independence and transitioning into society. More information in section 5.

3. External Trips

You will occasionally leave the site with the supervision of staff members, for pre-planned external trips. This could include, but is not limited to, local open recreational spaces, parks, woodlands, dog walking in nearby residential areas, supermarkets and local high streets.

As the external trips and outings benefit the students' education and experiences, all students will be allowed to access these trips as relevant. If a parent-carer does **NOT** want their young person to partake in nearby external visits, they must send a written letter to the ADO River Valley office and confirm via telephone. Due to staffing ratios required to support groups, if it is deemed that a student is not permitted to attend the external trips, the student may require a reduced timetable that day as there may not be the additional staff available to remain on site with them. This can be discussed directly with the parent-carer.

If a student displays challenging or unsafe behaviours or is of a high risk from absconding from the staff, a risk assessment will be completed for them and it may be deemed unsuitable for the student to attend the external visits until they are able to understand the risks involved, keep themselves and others safe, while also comply with guidelines.

Permission slips and further discussions with caregivers will be required for wider trips such as fitness centres, outdoor water sport centres, climbing centres, equine yards and stables and more.

4. Homework

Dependent on your chosen pathway, we may set weekly homework for specific subjects, and your submissions would work towards qualifications, such as BTECs or Functional Skills.

Any set homework will be discussed with you, and a clear due date and method of submission will be explained.

5. Transport

ADO River Valley does not organise transport to or from the setting. This must be arranged privately or through the supporting professionals. The ADO River Valley main office must be advised of the transportation plans so we know

who to expect and can contact them in case of an emergency collection. If an emergency collection is required, the guardian of you will need to provide a password which is shared with the ADO River Valley Office, and the person collecting.

Transport must be on site for a prompt **3:30pm** collection. Once you have left the site premises via the main reception gate, we hold no responsibility for you. We will not hold you back past collection time unless we are instructed to do so in writing from your guardian (based on your vulnerability factors). We will continue to keep our waiting area open which you can sit in, independently and await collection. You can ring the bell through to us if they have any concerns whilst waiting.

6. Subsistence

When attending our school, we ask that you bring a healthy packed lunch and refillable water bottle. We also recommend bringing additional healthy snacks for break times (you are a growing teen after all)! We operate a healthy eating policy and like to ensure that you are bringing lunches that are within our healthy eating policy guidelines. By healthy we are referring to a well-balanced offering which consists of lean protein, fibre-rich sources of carbohydrate and vegetables, as well as healthy fats.

We are happy to support you with alternative ideas for lunches should you need it.

As part of our promise to the environment, we ask you to be mindful of environmental factors, and therefore limit single use items such as plastic. There are many drinking water stations around the site to refill water bottles.

If any of our families are having difficulties with affording healthy foods, we urge you to get in touch with us so we can support and guide you.

We will offer regular cooking and eating opportunities for you, over the campfire and in our outdoor kitchen. This will be at the school's cost and within its budget. Having this as an option will ensure that you have the option to be independent, and expressive through making healthy meal choices.

7. Student Requirements

Most of your lessons will be outdoors, it is fundamental to what we do. Therefore, you must be prepared to attend dressed in suitable named clothing and footwear for the occasion.

For all seasons, please ensure you attend in base layers including trousers or leggings. Skirts, shorts and dresses are **not** suitable for the Outdoor Education site as they provide little protection against weather and when in the woodland areas.

Sensible outdoor shoes are required, for example outdoor walking boots or wellies for wet or winter weather. CROCS, flip-flops or open toe sandals are **not** permitted as these are not suitable for our outdoor activities and do not provide foot support on uneven ground. In winter months, we recommend suitable outdoor boots. If you would rather wellies, then these should be worn with good quality thermal socks as this footwear can prove cold if worn for the full day.

We request that you attend with an appropriate bag, such as a backpack to store your belongings. There will be fresh drinking water available for bottle refills. Hand washing stations are supplied throughout our learning areas and hot water stations are also situated in multiple zones, in addition to a functioning hot shower that can be used in specific circumstances.

In case you attend school wearing inappropriate clothing which is neither conducive to the weather nor to the activities you will be taking part in, we reserve the right to request that you wear spare, additional, or replacement clothing that we have. In case you refuse to wear these items and should this put you at risk from injury or illness, ADO River Valley staff have the right to send you home. You can of course return later in the day if you are then dressed appropriately.

You must attend with a full change of spare clothes to avoid any avoidable sensory overloads which could lead to distress or emotional dysregulation from any potential accidents that may arise. We ask that caregivers support students with ensuring their clothes are not see through.

You will have use of a locker for their bags during the school day.

7.1 Cold and Wet Weather

On cold days, please ensure that you attend with suitable thermal base layers of clothing to retain heat and keep you comfortable.

We ask that you have a named hat or cap suitable to the seasons. Gloves are required and waterproof gloves are highly recommended. A raincoat with a hood is a necessity for every day in attendance.

Our model and ethos is to teach outdoors unless we absolutely cannot and with this in mind please see some helpful links for clothing. Waterproofs are also good because they also act as a wind break, not only for when it is raining. Once a person gets wet it is very hard for them to warm up again. Waterproofs are not expensive and can be found on decathlon too.

[Men's trekking fleece tights - MT100 QUECHUA - Decathlon](#)
[WOMEN'S HIKING FLEECE TIGHTS MH100 QUECHUA - Decathlon](#)
[Decathlon | Sports Shoes, Sports Gear & Sports Equipment](#)

You may notice that lots of the staff tend to wear Jack Wolfskin [Outdoor Apparel, Footwear & Equipment – JACK WOLFSKIN \(jack-wolfskin.co.uk\)](#) appreciate it is not cheap however we rely heavily on the outlet at Ashford and second hand on Vinted.

7.2 Hot Weather

Please ensure you attend with a suitable high factor sun cream (minimum factor 30), which you can apply directly when needed. This is **NOT** optional and is a compulsory element of the kit required for students who join ADO River Valley. We are unable to apply our sun creams to you in case of allergies, and therefore if you do not have your own, then caregivers will be requested to travel to school to deliver this- we are happy for sun creams to live in lockers. If the weather is very warm, it may be advisable to bring insect repellent. Over-knee length shorts as minimum or leggings-cargo trousers with t-shirts must still be worn as this will provide some protection against sunburn or scratches in our forest and woodland areas. Skirts and dresses are not suitable attire for our activities and forest sessions.

7.3 Mobile Device and Phone Access

You are discouraged from bringing any mobile device to ADO River Valley, however if this cannot be avoided, and you have your phones then they will need to be handed over at our gate to staff at the start of the day and given back at the end. We have trust in our students to follow these rules, we will

not conduct bag searches unless we have reason to believe that there is a phone which is impacting the school day.

You will be unable to access your mobile device for the duration of your time with us. If you refuse to hand the phone in to ADO River Valley then you will be refused entry. We feel strongly about the unhealthy impacts of technology on our younger generation, and we will do all that we can to reduce the usage, even if you think we are being unkind as we hope you will look back and recognise why we did this.

Of course, if a caregiver needs to be in contact with you during the day this can be arranged via ADO River Valley on site mobiles. If this applies to you, please get your caregiver to email your specific requests to learning@rivervalleystudent.co.uk

7.4 Student Stationery

We are requesting that all students attend school with their own stationery. Whilst we will continue to have stationery on site, we feel it is important that you take accountability for your own stationery, and this way you can be in control of the usage of what stationery works for you. With this in mind, we request that each student attends school with their own pencil case. Full stationery breakdown can be found in the checklist later in the handbook. *Please ensure that this is still organised for you even if you may not yet be writing with us yet. Also, pencil cases can live in your locker if you wish.*

8. Medication

Staff members are only allowed to administer drugs if they have been prescribed by a doctor and staff members have written permission from the caregiver stating frequency and dosage.

If you have any allergies including hay-fever or fur allergies, we strongly recommend you provide a named GP prescription bottle of antihistamine or equivalent in order that we can support you onsite as required. If an allergy flare up is impacting your enjoyment and participation and we do not have any medication to administer, we will call the relevant contact to advise them and arrange collection (if required).

Members of the core ADO River Valley team are first aid qualified and trained and have medical kits nearby.

Staff will administer first aid to you, if and when needed. If you or your Parent-Carer opts to **NOT** receive medical attention, they must send a signed letter that is sent to the ADO River Valley Business Office and also confirm with them over the phone.

9. Photography

If you or your Parent-Carer does **NOT** want you to have images taken at school, we must receive a written email or letter to the office and confirm via telephone at the point of when they are on-rolled.

As part of ADO River Valleys growth and development, photos may be used within the school website, social media platforms, paper promotions, display boards etc. The photos are to help illustrate our services. We will never link an individual's name to their photo, without further confirmation from parents-carers, or individuals themselves. We will never sell images or share them with third parties.

If you are completing qualifications such as AQA, Functional Skills or BTECs, staff may need to photograph you completing practical work as part of the course evidence requirements. Photo permission is not required for this as evidence is a compulsory part of completing a course.

10. Behaviour

Considering that the students and young people referred to ADO River Valley often present with a series of complexities, displaying challenging behaviours can be part of their presentation at times.

We ask for your maturity and responsibility as a Post-16 student. We also kindly ask you to ensure that you channel any frustration you may feel in a situation into determination to follow the correct lines of communication. However, we are aware that being in control of our thoughts and feelings always can be hard; therefore, working closely with us in trying to identify possible triggers as well as to identify other possible outlets with which you can express your thoughts and feelings is something we consider highly important. It is also worth noting that many staff members and assigned individuals are on site to help you should you need support surrounding your emotional regulation. We will offer transparency to all students about when peers are having difficult days to encourage further acceptance.

Full details can be viewed in our **Behaviour for Learning Policy** in the ADO River Valley Library on our website, www.adorivervalley.co.uk Challenging behavior is recorded within Incident Forms and the relevant contacts will be advised of incidents accordingly.

Robust systems in place to recognise behaviours, including PRIDE Points/ Leaves and Nettles. More information on this in the Code of Conduct section.

11. Safeguarding

At ADO River Valley, we take the safety of our students, staff and wider stakeholders very seriously. As a Post-16 student, we ask that you join us in taking responsibility for ourselves, and those around us.

If you have a concern relating to yourself or someone around you, please do ensure that you ask to speak directly to one of our friendly 'Designated Safeguarding Officers'.

We appreciate that it can be nerve-racking having to speak about a worry that you have, however it is something that must be done in order to help explore and mitigate further concerns.

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Online Safety Lead (OSL) is Katie Palmer

Our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer, is Amy Kadiu

Please refer to our **Safeguarding Policy** for further information.

12. ADO River Valley Policies and Procedures

If you wish to read our full un-edited copies of all the relevant policies and procedures for the ADO River Valley Education team and all associated services, including the River Valley, they can be found on the main ADO River Valley website within the ADO River Valley Library at www.adorivervalley.co.uk .

Whilst we are an ecological company, we do appreciate that some stakeholders may wish to review our policies by print, and therefore we are happy to print upon request.

In addition, we also allow a tablet loan to stakeholders to sit in our waiting area and review our policies if they do not have use of a device themselves.

13. Details on Qualifications:

We aim for you to reach your full potential, we provide baseline assessments within the first two weeks for students starting with us and ascertain a wealth of information from the assessment process. Once the assessments are complete, our educators will review. Within the first two weeks you also will have an Individual Learner Plan meeting, whereby you can discuss your interests with regards to the curriculum and qualifications that are available to you.

We have a wide variety of vocational qualifications available, irrespective of academic levels. The idea is that we provide stepping stones to achieve higher levelled qualifications throughout the years that you are with us.

If you or a family member feel unhappy with the equality and access to assessments then you have every right to appeal by reviewing our **Malpractice, Appeals and Complaints Policy**.

We pride ourselves on supporting young people in every way possible, in many cases this is to ensure that you can achieve the same as your peers. If you do need support in one or more given areas, we will ensure that reasonable adjustments and access arrangements are in place.

14. Post-16 Provision Checklist

- Labelled Required Medication (including allergy medication if needed)
 - Packed Lunch
 - Snacks
 - Refillable Drink Bottle
 - Suitable Outdoor Clothing
 - Waterproof jacket/coat with hood and trousers
 - Warm Layers of Clothing
 - Cold Protection – Hat, Scarf, Gloves, Extra Socks
 - Heat Protection – Hat-Cap and Sun Cream (minimum factor 30)
 - Comfortable Waterproofed Trainers or Outdoor Boots (*Note: Footwear Can Get Very Muddy!*)
 - Wellies or Waterproof Outdoor Boots
 - Pencil Case
 - Pencils
 - Pens (for handwriting)
 - Ruler
 - Rubber
 - Colouring Pencils
-

- [] Colouring Pens
- [] Sharpener
- [] Highlighters (optional)
- [] Glue Stick (optional)

15. Code of Conduct

ADO River Valley should be a welcoming and safe place for young people and staff. Therefore, our staff have agreed to the following code of conduct:

We, the ADO River Valley staff will do our best to:

- To introduce young people to how the school works, providing them with a welcoming experience
- To respect and showcase young people's skills and support individual needs
- To provide a safe environment for young people to be actively involved

We, the ADO River Valley team expect young people to adhere to our PRIDE Acronym:

- Polite
- Responsible
- In Control
- Do Your Best
- Earn and Give

Be Polite.

We will:

- Greet staff
 - Thank someone who does something for us
 - Hold open the door
 - Use kind, helpful and thoughtful language
-

- Welcome visitors to the school

Be Responsible.

We will:

- Focus in lesson, attending lessons on time
- Complete the work set
- Bring/clean/tidy our equipment for ...
- Help with ...

Stay In Control.

We will:

- Keep a positive attitude to learning
- Walk away from conflict
- Use reflection time wisely
- Get help rather than join in any dispute
- Practise mindfulness each day

Do Our Best.

We will:

- Attend school
 - Join in events and competitions
 - Create our best work
 - Complete tasks to the best of our ability
-

- Participate in mindful activities

Earn and Give.

We will:

- Act as an ambassador for the school
- Take an active role in events
- Do an act of kindness every day

Some examples of situations we would not accept at our school:

- Deliberately not co-operating with staff
- Aggressive or violent behaviour, including verbal or physical bullying or harassment towards staff, peers or animals
- Disrespectful, racist, sexist, or insensitive comments
- Offensive language
- Dropping litter, throwing things, or spitting
- Using a personal phone or device on site
- Sharing contact details with other young people whilst at school
- Viewing or sharing inappropriate material
- Taking or sharing videos or photos
- Visibly displaying inappropriate romantic affection to another peer at school
- Possession or use of alcohol, drugs, or solvents
- Carrying weapons, it is strictly not permitted, it would be confiscated, and police would be contact

Please note, that whilst this may appear harsh or strict, it is for the interests of each and every student. Of course, we want to encourage healthy friendships

on site, however we are unable to encourage this outside of school due to staff not being present to help navigate the friendship and ensure safety and boundaries at all times.

Romantic relationships are something we accept may happen at our school between peers, however we reserve the right to enforce that relationships are of an appropriate age (over 16) and that there are strong boundaries set out at school. When a romantic relationship is occurring between two peers, we request that it is to remain private between the two young people, with consent at the forefront of student's minds. Caregivers have a duty to safeguard relationships of all kinds, outside of the school setting.

16. Important Contact Information

ADO River Valley is located at:

Poets Corner Centre
19A Keats Road
Welling
DA16 3NB

The ADO River Valley main office is located at:

ADO Services CIC,
Main Office
126 Upper Wickham Lane
Welling
Kent
DA16 3DP

ADO Contact Number – 020 8850 6778

Email – learning@rivervalleystudent.co.uk

Office Hours – 8.30am until 5pm – Monday to Friday (Closed Weekends and School Holidays)

16. Key Staff

- **Katie Palmer – Headteacher, Site Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Quality Assurance, Therapist**
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- Victoria McHolland-Pilcher – **Proprietor, Director of Education, Therapist**
- Amy Kadiu- **Deputy Headteacher, SENCO Advisor, Maths and English Teacher**
- Joe Greenwood- **Land Support Supervisor, Health and Safety-Risk Assessment of Setting**
- Charlotte Fenna- **Science Educator, Animal Care Lead, Equality and Diversity Ambassador**
- Emma Bronsdon- **Sport and Creative Educator, Hedgehog and Wildlife Ambassador**
- Michelle Brodie- **Learning Support Assistant, PSHE Assistant Educator, Wellbeing Support**
- Tom Phillips- **Trainee Educator**
- Ella McHolland-Pilcher- **Equine Therapy Trainee, Equine Care Lead**
- Eva Kadiu- **Equine Educator Trainee**

17. Frequently Asked Questions

1- What Can I Do When My Young Person Might Be Having A Particularly Difficult Day?

In this section we are referring to a student's Social and Emotional Mental Health/ SEMH and what caregivers can do on the days when they are having a particularly difficult time. What does a particularly hard day look like in the first place? It is important to say at this point that we strongly believe that caregivers know their children best, so we trust your judgment and that you know a lot better than any of us how a 'particularly hard' day looks like for the student. However, from our experience we know that sometimes for students who have had long histories of SEMH difficulties, finding the motivation to get up in the morning and prepare for school can be a huge challenge which can put pressure on the whole family, especially when sleep difficulties contribute a big part of the students presentation and they always feel tired and exhausted when they wake up. We appreciate that it is difficult to distinguish

between a particularly hard day from one where the presentation is typically difficult.

Considering that for all of us the events from the previous day as well as the kind of sleep we've had overnight can linger and affect the way we feel the following morning, it is important to bear the following in mind: In the same way we would think about physical illness and someone's ability to go to work or in our case to school on that particular day, it is also important to weigh up whether the way that the day in school will progress for the student if it feels like 'a ticking time bomb' or almost like a self-fulfilling prophecy in the sense that they will not be able to cope, hold that in mind and make the decision which feels right for your YP. We would never tell you what to do as parents/caregivers, although at the same time, we want to assure you that we take SEMH struggles as seriously as physical health, and we would understand if you decided to not send your YP to school on a day which you consider particularly difficult for their emotional wellbeing, and which could impact the way they conduct themselves at school. Therefore, the same way you can contact us and speak to us or leave a message regarding your YP's absence due to physical illness, you can do the same to report that your YP won't be able to attend on that day due to SEMH difficulties. It is important to note that home learning could be organised for days such as this where your YP's SEMH needs could cause them to struggle within school. Finally, it is also important to note that in cases where this becomes a typical occurrence and your YP's attendance suffers, we will meet with you and discuss about how to best support your YP at that time. We are part of your team!

2- How Can I Support my Young Person to Manage Exchanging or Not Exchanging Contact Details With Other Students Attending ADO River Valley?

In this section we are referring to the very common phenomenon of Young People (YP) attending our school, exchanging contact details with one another and communicating through this means outside of school. As a school, we neither condone nor support this as we totally appreciate that this is a family

decision. However, we want to share with you the possible benefits as well as risks which can arise so that you are as informed as possible.

In particular, what we know is that the majority, if not all, of the YP who attend our school have had long histories of struggles in their previous schools they were attending and on most occasions they have had to experience a lot of transitions and change of school environments before they arrived with us. This has inevitably meant that belonging to a group, which is one of our innate needs, is something that they have had to fight hard for, therefore their need to belong might be intensified or it might work the opposite way, in cases they prefer to not risk worrying about friendships and fitting in. Socialising and feeling that we belong are positive predictors for people's mental health, however, as a school we do not hold responsibility or have control over what is being posted and promoted outside of our setting, which could impact on a student's wellbeing in either a positive or a negative way. Having open and honest communication with your YP regarding their social media use as well as some parental involvement is encouraged in order to support YP to develop digital literacy, for example: 1) to set and stick to goals for social media use (i.e. content creation, connection with peers), 2) to curate content and control settings, and 3) to be aware of scams, possible predators, as well as time-drains. You might find it helpful reading the following webpage, which includes useful information and relevant guidance for parents:

[Teaching Kids to Be Smart About Social Media \(for Parents\) - Nemours KidsHealth](#)

Thank you for taking the time to read our handbook. We hope it has been of benefit to you. The final step (along with shopping for stationery and outdoor clothing) is to email learning@rivervalleystudent.co.uk to confirm you (the young person) and your caregivers have read, understood and adhere to the handbook.

