

FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Callywith College takes the health, safety and wellbeing of all learners seriously and we recognise this as being fundamental to their academic progress. We are committed to supporting learners so that they may both feel and function well, and we seek to provide a teaching and learning environment that is safe and conducive to study.
- 1.2 We therefore have a duty of care to respond appropriately to situations where concerns are raised about a learner. We will intervene if a learner's state of health presents a risk, either to themselves or to others, or where this results in unreasonable demands being placed on staff, or that the teaching and learning environment is compromised so that we cannot ensure the health and safety of both the learner concerned and those affected by the learner. We may require a learner who is on course to interrupt their studies, this would always be at the discretion of a member of SMT. Examples include, when a learner's conduct is presenting risks in how they behave and treat other people, how they function in managing their own health and safety and where this impacts on other learners, staff or members of the public. We do this in recognition that there may be underlying physical or mental health issues or substance misuse problems or difficult personal circumstances giving rise to or contributing to unacceptable conduct.
- 1.3 We further accept that we have a duty of care to ensure that an applicant is fit to study and may require them to delay their course start date if they are unfit.
- 1.4 This policy is intended to be supportive rather than penal in nature. It is for use where staff recognise there may be an underlying health or social concern about a student, but their present conduct, disruption or risk is perceived to be serious or has the potential for escalation to a serious nature. Should the student, however, decline to respond positively to this supportive intervention, the College will refer to the codes of conduct, disciplinary process or other College policies or documents.
- 1.5 The fitness to study policy may be used in conjunction with other policies, such as our attendance, mental health and/or disciplinary policies.

2. Definitions

Wellbeing – a condition in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life and can work productively and fruitfully.

Fitness to study – the ability for any student to fully and safely engage in their programme of study with expected levels of lesson attendance, submission of work and behaviour in-line with related policies and the student code of conduct.

Attendance – is simply defined as % attendance in timetabled sessions/lessons and not as presence on site.

3. Policy

- 3.1 It is part of the educational aim of the College to nurture a spirit of independence, self-awareness and personal responsibility amongst learners. Learners must therefore take an active part in the process by taking appropriate measures to manage their own health and wellbeing so that they can achieve and succeed. Many opportunities are provided to learners throughout the academic year to engage in activities delivered through the tutorial system, Student Services team and the Health and Wellbeing programme, to learn about and develop their own wellbeing. The College therefore has an expectation that its learners should demonstrate that they are fit to study by showing both awareness and behaviour indicative of fitness.

- 3.1.a Awareness of:
- their own current state of physical or mental health/ wellbeing and present risks to it
 - the health and safety of themselves and others
 - the risk of physical danger to themselves and others
 - the impact of their behaviour on other students and/or staff
 - the impact of their behaviour on the day-to-day operation of the college
 - how their current support needs match the scope of support which the college can be reasonably expected to provide.
- 3.1.b Behaviour demonstrates ability to:
- attend and engage in timetabled sessions/lessons at the expected level with their usual support adjustments as necessary.
 - complete and submit work associated with their course(s) and engage fully with the assessment process within required timescales set, with appropriate adjustments where eligible.
 - communicate effectively with fellow learners, staff and other professionals through which ever method is usual to that learner.
 - function as a member of the college community in compliance with the student code of conduct and the health and safety regulations and risk assessments.
 - actively comply with any intervention designed to improve fitness to study.
- 3.2 This policy applies to **all** learners and applicants, **irrespective of their age or living arrangements**. It applies to learners where unacceptable conduct is observed on or close-by college premises and during study activities off-site such as outings, visits, residential, field work or placements or when brought to the attention of the College. It applies to applicants where there is cause to believe at application that they may not be fit to study or where information requested by the College is not forthcoming within stated time periods.
- 3.3 We strive for consistency and sensitivity in these matters so any decisions will be reached through a team approach following consultation and advice from relevant individuals. The learner's views will form part of the consideration, as will the views of the learner's parents, guardians or advocates where appropriate, the staff's judgment of their awareness and ability to learn, study and interact with the rest of the College and the overview of the Programme Team Leader (PTL) with regard to the achievement, success and progression of the learner.
- 3.4 No learner can be withdrawn from their programme of study and/or the College without first consulting the learner, and where appropriate their parents, guardians, or advocates. Only the appropriate Assistant Principal can withdraw a learner in consultation with the Team Leader for Student Services and the learner's PTL.

4. Implementation

- 4.1 On enrolment all students will be informed of the policy as part of the induction process relating to attendance policy and the student code of conduct. **As such, all new students will undertake a period of probation lasting until 1st term ILP day during which time all students will be expected to prove they are fit to study** with their usual support adjustments in place. Students not proving they are fit to study during this probation period will be referred to their PTL for review.
- 4.2 Once a student moves beyond the probation period this policy should be implemented by any member of staff, in consultation with the relevant PTL, when a learner's health or wellbeing is:
- a) preventing expected levels of attendance and engagement in timetabled sessions/lessons with their usual support adjustments in place
 - b) is having a detrimental impact on their ability to achieve, succeed and enjoy

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- c) and/or is disruptive to the teaching and learning environment.
- d) and/or is placing an unreasonable burden on staff.
- e) and/or is impacting on the learning of others.

It is an alternative to other means of managing concern about conduct where there is sufficient indication that the conduct could be the result of **mental, emotional or physical ill health or disability, wellbeing or difficult personal circumstances**. These indications should be of a serious nature but equally they should be addressed promptly as early intervention may result in earlier support and better outcomes for the learner by avoiding the situation becoming more complex. It is possible that the learner's studies may actually be the cause of their mental health problems and will need to be considered.

- 4.3 It is possible that such intervention may increase a learner's experience of distress rather than appearing as an opportunity to get help. The policy should therefore be used sensitively, ensuring that the learner and their parents, guardians or advocates understand that the focus is supportive not penal.
- 4.4 Once the decision to implement the policy has been agreed by the member of staff, Programme Team Leader and Team Leader for Student Services, the necessary personnel to take the concern forward will be involved.
- 4.5 All information provided during the implementation of this policy will remain confidential for use within the policy and procedure and is subject to the requirements of the Data

5. Procedure (fitness to study stages)

- 5.1 It is hoped that in most cases concerns about fitness to study can be resolved at an informal stage, and that students will respond positively, taking advantage of the support available. However, if following informal support/intervention there is still concern that a student is not fit for study then the following procedures will be followed. At all stages, next of kin will be included in the procedure. At all stages, communication with key outside agencies connected to the students will be had before and after movement on to or between stages. The stages are not necessarily consecutive, and a stage/s might be skipped, depending on the fitness to study concern.

5.2 Stage One – Initial concern and engagement required

Initial meeting held by **PTL and PDT with student (to include the SENCO if a learning need is present, Student Services lead where there is a safeguarding difficult personal circumstances concern or member of the safeguarding team where there is a mental health concern)** to discuss issues and support needs and an **action/support plan** agreed. This may include additional mentoring, alternative timetable and liaison with external agencies to provide support and care. **Parent/guardian will be invited to the meeting and made aware of these concerns.** In the meeting we will agree on targets and a time scale for their review. A review date will be set. Risk assessments or other safeguarding strategies to support the individual will be put in place where appropriate.

5.3 Stage Two – Intervention needed

A student who is not able to meet the set targets and/or is not engaging effectively with the support offered at stage one will progress to a fitness to study stage two. There will be a further meeting held by **PTL, PDT, student and next of kin and Student Services lead/SENCO/member of safeguarding team where appropriate** to discuss issues and support needs, this may include reduction in curriculum or the opportunity to restart (timescale dependant on point in the academic year) and a **further action/intervention plan or pause in study agreed.**

5.4 **Stage Three** – Formal procedure

A student who is not able to meet the targets and/or is not engaging effectively with the support offered at a stage two meeting will progress to a stage three **formal procedure to assess fitness to study**. A fitness to study stage three hearing will take place and a decision made as to whether the student's place will be maintained or withdrawn. This will be held by **a member SMT and include PTL, PDT, student and next of kin and where appropriate Student Services lead/SENCO/member of safeguarding team**.

Possible outcomes from this hearing are:

- a) Student retained with explicit conditions
- b) Student withdrawn by mutual agreement and best interest of student
- c) Student withdrawn, with reasons stated (e.g., unmanageable level of safeguarding risk to self and/or others, specific non-compliance with the code of conduct as a result of non-fitness such as persistent non-attendance, non-completion of academic work, inability to meet external assessment requirements)

5.5 Outcomes at each stage

STAGE 1

At review the agreed action plan has been effective. **Intervention under policy stops here** and return to tutor monitoring progress.

At review the agreed action plan has not been effective. **Stage 2 intervention required**.

STAGE 2

At review the agreed action plan/ pause in study/ restart where appropriate has been effective.

Intervention under policy stops here. Return to tutor/PTL monitoring.

At review the action plan or intervention has not been effective. **Stage 3 intervention required**.

STAGE 3

At review the stage 2 action plan/intervention has been effective. **Intervention under policy stops here**. Return to Student services lead/PTL and tutor monitoring progress.

At review the action plan has not been effective. **A fitness to study hearing will take place**. If the student's place is maintained at college, the review procedure will go back to stage 2.

6. **The appeals procedure**

A student has the right to appeal against a decision to withdraw their school place under this policy and will be informed of this right. If a student wishes to appeal against the decision made, they must do so in writing to the Principal within 5 working days of notification of the decision. An appeal hearing will normally be held within 10 working days of receipt of a request. The appeal will normally be heard by the Principal.