

FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Callywith College takes the health, safety and wellbeing of all students seriously and we recognise this as being fundamental to their academic progress. We are committed to supporting students 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 student. We will intervene if a student'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 student concerned and those affected by them.
- 1.3 We may require a student to interrupt their studies, this would always be at the discretion of a member of SMT. Examples include, when their 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 students, 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.
- 1.4 We further accept that we have a duty of care to ensure that an applicant is fit to study and may require them to either apply a short delay to their course start date if they are unfit, or suggest they start the following year.
- 1.5 This policy is intended to be supportive rather than penal in nature. It is for use where staff recognise there may be an underlying wellbeing, health or care concern about a student, and 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 student code of conduct, disciplinary process or other College policies or documents.
- 1.6 The fitness to study policy may be used in conjunction with other policies, such as our **safeguarding, mental health, attendance or behaviour policies, or our student code of conduct.**

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 of 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 students. They 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 students 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 students 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 students, staff and other professionals through whichever method is usual to them.
 - 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** students and applicants, **irrespective of their age or living arrangements**. It applies to students where unacceptable conduct is observed on or close-by college premises and during study activities off-site such as outings, visits, residentials, 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 student's views will form part of the consideration, as will the views of their parents, guardians or advocates where appropriate, the staff's judgement 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 student.
- 3.4 No student can be withdrawn from their programme of study and/or the College without first consulting them, and where appropriate their parents,

guardians, or advocates. The appropriate Assistant Principal can withdraw a student in consultation with the Team Leader for Student Services and the learner's PTL.

4. Implementation

- 4.1 This policy can be initiated by any member of staff, in consultation with the relevant PTL, where there are significant concerns about a student's safety or their impact on the college community in a way that is either:
- a) disruptive to the teaching and learning environment.
 - b) placing an unreasonable burden on staff.
 - c) impacting on the learning of others.
 - d) Increasing the vulnerability of the individual concerned.

It is an alternative to other means of managing a concern about conduct where there is sufficient indication that the conduct could be the result of a **diagnosed (or in some circumstances undiagnosed) mental, emotional or physical ill health or learning 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 student by avoiding the situation becoming more complex. It is possible that their studies may be the cause of their mental health problems and will need to be considered.

- 4.2 It is possible that such intervention may increase a student's experience of distress rather than appearing as an opportunity to get help. The policy should therefore be used sensitively, ensuring that they and their parents, guardians or advocates understand that the focus is supportive not penal.
- 4.3 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 Protection Act.

5. Procedure (fitness to study stages)

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 will be initiated. At all stages, next of kin will be included in the procedure and communication with key outside agencies connected to the students will occur before and after movement onto or between stages.

The stages are not necessarily consecutive, and a stage/s might be skipped, depending on the fitness to study concern.

Stage	Trigger	Who	Process	Next Steps	Likely outcomes
Stage One	Initial concern and	Initial meeting held by PTL and PDT with student (to include a member of the SEN	Discuss issues and support needs and an action/support plan agreed.	In the meeting we will agree on targets and a time scale for their review.	STAGE 1 At review the agreed action plan has been effective.

	engagement required	team if a learning need is present or the Safeguarding Officer/DDSL where there is a risk identified). Parent/guardian will be invited to the meeting and made aware of these concerns.	This may include additional mentoring, temporary alternative timetable, and liaison with external agencies to provide support and care.	A review date will be set. Risk assessments or other safeguarding strategies to support the individual will be put in place where appropriate.	Intervention under policy stops here and return to tutor monitoring progress. OR At review the agreed action plan has not been effective. Stage 2 intervention required.
Stage Two	Intervention required	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 stage two. There will be a further meeting held by PTL, PDT, student and next of kin, and a member of the SEN team/Safeguarding Officer where appropriate.	Discuss issues and support needs. This may include a reduction in curriculum or the opportunity to restart (timescale dependant on point in the academic year).	A further action/intervention plan or pause in study agreed.	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. OR At review the action plan or intervention has not been effective. Stage 3 intervention required.
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 stage two will progress to stage three. This meeting will be held by a member of SMT and include PTL, PDT, student and next of kin and where appropriate a member of the SEN team/Safeguarding Officer.	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.	Possible outcomes 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/others, specific non-compliance with the code of conduct as a result of non-fitness such as persistent non-attendance,	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. OR At review the action plan has not been effective. A fitness to study hearing will take place. The student may be withdrawn from college.

				non-completion of work, inability to meet external assessment requirements).	If the student's place is maintained at college, the review procedure will go back to stage 2.
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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.