

Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures

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| Author | Vice Principal - Curriculum |
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| Person Responsible | Vice Principal - Curriculum |
| Approval/ review body | SLT (Senior Leadership Team) |
| Frequency of Review* | 12 months |

** Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require*

| Review History: | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Date: | Review by | Reason for review |
| August 2021 | Principal - Hadlow | Review and update as part of Corporation of North Kent College |
| August 2022 | Vice Principal | Annual Review and Update |
| August 2023 | Vice Principal | Annual Review and Update |

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction | 2 |
| 2. Scope | 2 |
| 3. How and When Should the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure be used? | 2 |
| 4. Structure of the Procedure | 3 |
| 5. Who can instigate the Procedure? | 3 |
| 6. Mental Health Policy and Procedure | 4 |
| 7. Returning to Study | 4 |
| Appendix 1: Policy Letter Template - Under 18 - FtS 1 | 5 |
| Appendix 2: Policy Letter Template - Under 18 - Parent/Carer/Guardian - FtS 2 | 6 |
| Appendix 3: Policy Letter Template - Over 18 - | 7 |
| Appendix 4: Policy Letter Template – To send with Support Action Plan - FtS 4 | 8 |
| Appendix 5: Fitness to Study Support Action Plan | 9 |
| Appendix 6: Fitness to Study Procedure Wall Chart | 10 |

1. Introduction

This policy applies to the entirety of North Kent College (“the College”) and includes all its campuses and satellite sites including Hadlow College

The College is committed to supporting students and recognises the importance of their health and wellbeing in relation to their academic progression and wider College experience. The College has a responsibility to support students to feel and perform well in order to maximise their potential whilst at College. The policy seeks to ensure that reasonable adjustments in support of those with challenges to their fitness to study are well planned, fairly applied, and where possible, supported by high quality evidence of need.

2. Scope

This Policy and Procedure act as a tool to ensure that a student’s fitness to study, if brought into question, is considered fairly and managed appropriately particularly when the College Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures would be unsuited to the student’s situation by making reasonable adjustments, providing realistic timelines and appropriately supportive action plans.

The Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure is intended as a supportive process which can be used by staff when a student’s physical or mental health is having a detrimental impact on their ability to achieve and progress academically, function effectively at College or is impacting negatively on others in the College community.

It is possible that the use of a formal procedure may increase a student’s experience of stress, particularly if the role and purpose of the procedure is not understood. In order to minimise the risk of causing additional stress, the Procedure should be used sensitively, ensuring that the student understands the focus is on his/her wellbeing, and that all possible steps are taken to minimise additional concerns and anxieties experienced by the student.

3. How and When Should the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure be used?

Any physical or mental ill health concern about a student should be acted upon promptly. Evidence indicates that early intervention and support can result in better outcomes for the student and may avoid the situation becoming more complex.

The Policy should be implemented when:

- 3.1. There is a concern that a student’s progress is being negatively impacted on by their physical or mental ill health.
- 3.2. Evidence submitted by the student to support this may include (not exhaustive):
 - 3.2.1. GP/Doctor letter confirming physical or mental ill health and nature of impact;
 - 3.2.2. Educational Psychologist Report detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
 - 3.2.3. Psychiatrist / Psychologist / Psychotherapist / Counsellor’s Report detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;

- 3.2.4. Occupational Health Therapist's detailing diagnosis and nature of impact; and/or
- 3.2.5. Specialist Teacher Assessment detailing diagnosis and nature of impact.

The student is responsible for the provision of documentary evidence as detailed above to support and inform the Fitness to Study Support Action Plan.

In instances where evidence cannot be provided and the Fitness to Study Policy is not applicable the College Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures should be referred to as an alternative intervention to support the student's progress.

For all students under the age of 18, their parent/ carer/guardian should be advised of any intervention or meeting organised as part of the Fitness to Study Procedure, enabling them to provide support to the student and provide input and information as required.

4. Structure of the Procedure

4.1. Step 1

Initial meeting and assessment to agree a Support Action Plan is held.

4.2. Step 2

Review meeting held to identify what improvements have been made against targets. If the targets are complete and the student is back on track then no further action is required. If the targets are not completed or changes are needed to meet additional support needs, continue to monitor or repeat Step 2 and create a further Support Action Plan.

Step 2 can be repeated as often as required depending on the unique needs of the student. Targets set at review meetings should continue to be monitored at regular intervals, until such time as the student either progresses or achieves success, or alternative options are offered.

4.3. Step 3

Review meeting - No improvement, Support Action Plans not met or the student is unable to complete the course of study or progress and achieve. Alternative options are investigated and offered.

5. Who can instigate the Procedure?

The initial procedure will be started by the student's Personal Tutor, member of Student Support Team and/or Residential Manager.

Where other members of staff have concerns about a student's physical or mental ill health, they should contact the Personal Tutor who will consider whether this procedure should be implemented and communicate this to the student and parent carer/guardian if under 18.

- 5.1. The Personal Tutor can seek advice from Student Support for guidance on interventions, or if the student requests an advocate to be present at the review meetings.

6. Mental Health Policy and Procedure

- 6.1. The Mental Health Policy and Procedure should be used in conjunction with the Fitness to Study Procedure when there is a serious or persistent concern about a student's mental ill health, safety and/or ability to study, live or engage at College. In most cases escalation to this level will follow attempts to address concerns through previous interventions put in place as part of Fitness to Study Support Action Plan. However, in some cases it may be appropriate to proceed directly to the guidance in the Mental Health Policy when there is a potential need for **"Time out"**.

7. Returning to Study

- 7.1. In cases where the outcome of the Fitness to Study or Mental Health Procedure results in an interruption to study and/or remain in residential accommodation, the procedure for considering a return to study should be made clear to the student at the time of his/her interruption **"Time out"** which is written into the Mental Health Policy and Procedures
- 7.2. In all cases the student will be asked to provide satisfactory evidence that he/she is now fit to study and/or return to residential accommodation. The precise nature of the evidence required from the student will be dependent on the individual circumstances in each case. In all cases it is expected that this will involve a report from a recognised independent professional with sufficient knowledge about the health and wellbeing of the student during the period of interruption, and satisfactorily address any potential impact/risk that returning to study/residential accommodation might have on the student and/or others.
- 7.3. The decision to allow a student to return to study will be made by the relevant Head of Curriculum (or nominee) with responsibility for the area.
- 7.4. The decision to allow a student to return to residential accommodation will be made by the Head of Curriculum with responsibility for the area and the Residential Manager.
- 7.5. They may also consult other members of curriculum/support staff regarding special arrangements and reasonable adjustments that might be needed to support the student on return.
- 7.6. The decision to allow study to resume will be communicated to the student prior to his/her return, and any requirements and special arrangements will be made clear. The College will determine the on-going arrangements to support and review the progress of the student to minimise risk of a recurrence of the original difficulties.
- 7.7. Where necessary a risk assessment may be put in place to support the students return to study.

Appendix 1: Policy Letter Template - Under 18 - FtS 1

Correct headed paper needs to be used.

Date

Dear

Your Health and Wellbeing at College

I would like to hold a meeting to discuss your health issues and to put support in place to help you through this period and stay on track with your course. Please attend a meeting with *name* at *campus* at *time*. Please report to Reception upon your arrival where you will be met.

This meeting has been arranged as part of the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures and is intended to support you.

I believe that recent incidents may have an effect on your ability to study and to achieve and progress on your course. *Your behaviour may also be affecting others studying on the course with you (leave in only if relevant).*

If you are already receiving help and/or support and have any documentation that explains your physical or mental ill health issues, please bring this to the meeting. This documentation might include:

1. Educational Psychologist Report detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
2. Psychiatrist/Psychologist/Psychotherapist/Counsellor's Report, detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
3. Occupational Health Therapist's detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
4. Specialist Teacher Assessment detailing diagnosis and nature of impact for example; and/or
5. GP/Dr letter confirming disability and nature of impact.

A copy of this letter is being sent to your parent, guardian or carer, they will be invited to attend the meeting with you.

Yours sincerely

Insert Name
Insert Title

cc: Parent/Guardian/Carer

Appendix 2: Policy Letter Template - Under 18 - Parent/Carer/Guardian - FtS 2

Correct headed paper needs to be used.

Date

Dear

Your *Son/Daughter/Ward's* Health and Wellbeing at College

I would like to hold a meeting to discuss your *son/daughter/ward's* health issues and to put support in place to help them through this period and stay on track with their course and would like you to attend, if possible.

This meeting has been arranged as part of the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures and is intended to support them.

I enclose a copy of the letter being sent to your *son/daughter/ward* today which contains details of the meeting and a guide to the Fitness to Study Process.

Please report to reception upon arrival where you will be met.

If you would like to have further information before the meeting please contact *name and their contact details*.

Yours sincerely

Name
Title

Enc. Copy of the letter being sent to your *son/daughter/ward*

Appendix 3: Policy Letter Template - Over 18 - FtS 3

Correct headed paper needs to be used.

Date

Dear

Your Health and Wellbeing at College

I would like to hold a meeting to discuss your health issues and to put support in place to help you through this period and stay on track with your course. Please attend a meeting with *name* at *campus* at *time*. Please report to reception upon your arrival where you will be met.

This meeting has been arranged as part of the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures and is intended to support you.

I believe that recent incidents may have an effect on your ability to study and to achieve and progress on your course. *Your behaviour may also be affecting others studying on the course with you (leave in only if relevant).*

If you are already receiving help and/or support and have any documentation that explains your physical or mental ill health issues, please bring this to the meeting. This documentation might include:

1. Educational Psychologist Report detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
2. Psychiatrist/Psychologist/Psychotherapist/Counsellor's Report detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
3. Occupational Health Therapist's detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
4. Specialist Teacher Assessment detailing diagnosis and nature of impact for example; and/or
5. GP/Doctor letter confirming disability and nature of impact.

You may also bring a friend, relative or advocate with you for support should you wish to do so.

Yours sincerely

Name
Title

Appendix 4: Policy Letter Template – To send with Support Action Plan - FtS 4

Correct headed paper needs to be used.

Date

Dear

Your Health and Wellbeing at College

Following your meeting with *(staff member and job title)* and me on *(date)*, regarding your health issues, please find enclosed the agreed Support Action Plan.

It was agreed to put support in place to help you through this period and stay on track with your course.

This Support Action Plan has been created as part of the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures and is intended to support you.

If you have not already submitted any documentation that explains your physical or mental ill health issues, please provide this within the period set in the Support Action Plan. This documentation might include:

1. Educational Psychologist Report detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
2. Psychiatrist/Psychologist/Psychotherapist/Counsellor's Report detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
3. Occupational Health Therapist's detailing diagnosis and nature of impact;
4. Specialist Teacher Assessment detailing diagnosis and nature of impact for example; and/or
5. GP/Dr letter confirming disability and nature of impact.

Curriculum and support staff will continue to support you and help you achieve the targets set in the Fitness to Study Support Action Plan enclosed.

Review meeting date (if applicable)

(Under 18s only) A copy of this letter is being sent to your parent, guardian or carer and they will be invited to attend the next meeting with you.

Yours sincerely

Name
Title

cc: Parent/Guardian/Carer
Enc: Copy of the Support Action Plan.

Appendix 5: Fitness to Study Support Action Plan

To be completed before or during any review or assessment meeting

Step 1: Initial Assessment ☐ **Step 2:** Review ☐ **Step 3:** Review ☐ Please tick as appropriate

Student Name: **Personal Tutor:**

Student Date of Birth: **Age on 31 August (at start of course):**

| Reason for Support Action Plan: <i>(brief description)</i> | Support/intervention required: <i>(SMART TARGET)</i> (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-related). |
|---|--|
| | |

Student's signature: Date:

Staff Name and Signature: Date:

Appendix 6: Fitness to Study Procedure Wall Chart

Fitness to Study and Guidance for **Support Action Plans and Review Meetings**: Wall Chart outlining Procedure.

| Fitness to Study Steps | Present at Meeting | Paperwork and Letters | Informing Parents/Carers/Guardians Who sends letters | EGs (not exhaustive) Your judgement must be used |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| STEP 1: INITIAL ASSESSMENT | Personal Tutor and Student Plus notify the parent, carer or guardian and invite to the meeting <i>External Agencies/other if appropriate</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C4C or File Note outlining issue • Written medical evidence as appropriate • Student Letter FtS 1 or 3 • Parent Letter FtS 2 • Support Action Plan and letter FtS 4 <p>All Student/Parent letters administered by Curriculum Administrators. Tutors to update ProMonitor.</p> | <p>YES</p> <p>Students under 18 on 31 August at the start of their course.</p> <p>Invite to Meeting. Letter FtS1 Invite to Meeting. Letter FtS2 After the Meeting. Letter FtS4 and copy of Action Plan sent by Curriculum Administrators</p> | <p>Persistent lateness and attendance issues due to:</p> <p>Accident/long term illness; Mental Health crisis; Long term mental health issues; and/or Physical health issues</p> |
| STEP 2: REVIEW MEETING To be repeated as frequently as necessary | Personal Tutor and Student Plus notify the parent, carer or guardian and invite to the meeting <i>External Agencies/other if appropriate</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to meet previous Support Action Plan/no improvement <p>or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C4C or File Note outlining further issues • Written medical evidence as appropriate • Student Letter FtS 1 or 3 • Parent Letter FtS 2 • Support Action Plan and letter FtS 4 <p>All Student/Parent letters administered by Curriculum Administrators. Tutors to update ProMonitor.</p> | <p>YES</p> <p>Students under 18 on 31 August at the start of their course.</p> <p>Invite to Meeting. Letter FtS1 Invite to Meeting. Letter FtS2 After the Meeting. Letter FtS 4 and copy of Action Plan sent by Curriculum Administrators</p> | <p>As above with no improvement.</p> <p>Persistent lateness and attendance issues due to:</p> <p>Accident/long term illness; Mental Health crisis; Long term mental health issues; and/or Physical health issues.</p> |
| STEP 3: REVIEW MEETING | Personal Tutor Head of Curriculum and Student Plus notify the parent, carer or guardian and invite to the meeting <i>External Agencies/other if appropriate</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to meet previous Support Action Plan/no improvement <p>or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C4C or File Note outlining further issues • Written medical evidence as appropriate • Student Letter FtS 1 or 3 • Parent Letter FtS 2 • Support Action Plan and letter FtS 4 <p>All Student/Parent letters administered by Curriculum Administrators. Tutors to update ProMonitor.</p> | <p>YES</p> <p>Students under 18 on 31 August at the start of their course.</p> <p>Invite to Meeting. Letter FtS1 Invite to Meeting. Letter FtS2 After the Meeting. Letter FtS 4 and copy of Action Plan sent by Curriculum Administrators</p> | <p>No improvement and unable to either continue or achieve on their course.</p> <p>Persistent lateness and attendance issues due to:</p> <p>Accident/long term illness; Mental Health crisis; Long term mental health issues; and/or Physical health issues</p> |

Step 2 can be repeated as often as required depending on the unique needs of the student. Targets set at review meetings should continue to be monitored at regular intervals, until such time as the student either progresses or achieves success, or alternative options are offered.