

# Policy on Fitness to Study for 16-19 students



## Policy Information

Version number	V1.0
Date of issue	September 2023
Date of next review	August 2024
Person responsible for review	Nicki Dartnell
Ratified by:	Governing Body

## **Policy Statement**

All staff at the College work together to provide a supportive and caring environment in which students can achieve their potential. Sometimes students may encounter health issues that negatively affect their ability to do well at college. This can be an upsetting, unsettling, and difficult time for them and for their families.

Our aim is to support these students so that they can get back on track, consider all options available to them, and be enabled to make well-informed choices about their future progression at the College or via alternative pathways. We will do this through open communication of our process with clear expectations, high levels of support, excellent guidance and information, and with empathy.

## **Policy Guidance**

- The aim of this policy is to provide students, parents/carers and staff with a clear framework for the support and management of situation where 'health conditions' includes both physical and mental health issues.
- There are three support stages, and all interested parties should be clear which stage has been reached in any meetings or communications.
- The stages are not necessarily sequential. It is possible to start at any stage and to reverse stages if a student's health improves, however, it may not be possible to reverse timetable or programme changes.
- At each stage, attendance will be taken into consideration and discussed in meetings, specifically whether the level of the student's attendance is sufficiently high to allow them to successfully complete their course.
- At each stage, the action points or expectations agreed in previous meetings will be reviewed and will inform future decisions and recommendations.
- At each stage the progression options, risks and contingency plans should be made clear to the student and parents/carers and a careers interview should be offered where appropriate.
- The student's personal circumstances will be fully assessed to determine which support stage is appropriate.

## **Support Level 1**

Stage 1 support applies when a physical or mental health condition has been identified and there are concerns that the student may not be able to make sufficient progress in line with College expectations because of this. Concerns may be raised by the student themselves, by staff or by parents/carers.

The student will meet with their tutor to discuss their health concerns and the support that is available both at College and externally. The tutor will inform parent / carer at this stage of the agreed support. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Additional tutor / subject teacher support
- Student wellbeing mentor

- Learning Support referral
- Wellbeing referral
- Counselling referral
- GP appointment
- Identifying external support agencies

Action points will be agreed detailing expectations of support for the student, level of attendance required, completion of College work, communication with College and commitment to learning. A review date will be agreed and fixed at this meeting.

*The tutor will record this as a 'Fitness to Study Stage 1' meeting on Bromcom*

### **Review**

The tutor will review with the student at the agreed deadline, to not exceed 4 weeks. If the support introduced at level 1 has positive outcomes, this may be the end of the support strategies needed. Support level 1 will remain in place if progress is being made but it is recognised that further support will still be of benefit. Parents / carers will be informed of the outcome of this level and when ongoing support is required. If level 1 support is seen to be ineffective, the student will move to level 2.

### **Support Level 2**

Level 2 support applies if the student is at significant risk of underachieving, or not completing their agreed programme of study due to a mental or physical condition. This may be indicated by, but not limited to:

- Poor attendance
- Persistent lateness
- Poor communication with College
- Inability to study independently for 5 hours per week per subject
- Subject assessments not being submitted
- Inability to engage with support level 1 strategies
- Any other factors that indicate a student is struggling to meet College expectations.

The tutor will consult with the senior leadership team about appropriate actions or adjustments for the student in their given circumstances. These include strategies identified at support stage 1, plus the following, which include, but are not limited to:

- The option of working with support within the Learning Development Area for an agreed temporary period of time
- A period of online learning (to not exceed half a term)
- A phased return to College, where applicable

NB: at support level 2, there is no discussion or any actions relating to a reduction of programme or a potential restart.

### **Level 2 Meeting**

The tutor will meet with the student, parents/carers and other relevant colleagues to discuss and review any previous support level 1 strategies.

Medical evidence can be submitted at the Level 2 meeting if the student is to continue at College. Information from the College pastoral team, or confirmation of professional diagnosis and/or support may be a condition of further College support and/or programme adjustment.

The risks to progression of each adjustment to the student's study programme should be made clear to the student and their parents/carers. Relevant action points should be agreed as necessary. The outcome of the meeting will be recorded internally, shared with relevant staff and also communicated to the student and their parents/carers via email.

A review date will be fixed as one of the outcomes of this meeting. The Tutor will record this as a 'Fitness to Study level 2' meeting and all relevant staff who work with the student will be alerted. A letter will also be sent to the student and their parent/carer(s) to record the steps agreed.

### **Level 2 Review – within 3 working weeks**

A review meeting will take place within 3 working weeks, to which parents will be invited. At the discretion of the College, support Level 2 can be extended for a further period of up to 3 weeks to allow further time for improvements to take effect. Progress will be measured against the basic expectations of all students as set out in the College Code of Conduct. Parent/carers will receive a letter which will summarise the key support strategies that have been put in place to enable the student to return to their full programme of studies.

If the student's progress is still of significant concern, or they are in danger of not completing some or all of their programme of study (which may have already been adjusted), then the student will be moved to Support Level 3. The outcome will be recorded internally and shared with relevant staff after the meeting.

### **Support Level 3**

Support Level 3 is reached where insufficient progress has been made at Support Level 1 or 2; where the student's progress is of significant concern or where there has been a further deterioration in their health. The Pastoral Leadership team will meet with the student, their parents/carers, their tutor and with other relevant colleagues to discuss what happens next (note; this meeting may be conjoined with the Level 2 meeting review above). The student's personal circumstances will be fully reviewed when making the decision and there are three possible outcomes of the Support Level 3 meeting:

### **1) Reduction/change in programme of study**

After discussion and agreement with the Pastoral Leadership Team, Headteacher and any other relevant staff, the student may be able to reduce the number of subjects they are studying or change a subject. Consideration must be given to their future aspirations and whether the reduction or change of subjects will still allow them to follow their desired career path.

### **2) Restart the academic year**

If the student has a chronic health condition that is preventing them from meeting the minimum requirements agreed with them at support level 2 and their condition is likely to improve following further rest and treatment, then this might be considered as an option. This will be offered only under exceptional circumstances, and only if there is sufficient time for the student to recover sufficiently before the start of the new academic year.

In the event of an agreed restart, the student will be withdrawn from the College roll and must return any books or other resources on loan from the library, along with their student ID card and lanyard. Any agreed restart is provisional and is contingent upon the student's health being substantially improved by the agreed date of review.

### **3) Withdrawal from college**

This is only considered if the student's health is deemed to be sufficiently poor that they cannot continue their programme of study, and if a restart is not possible or not recommended. In this case, the student will be withdrawn from the College roll. Support from careers specialists at College would always be offered to a student contemplating leaving College.

The Pastoral Leadership team will record 'Fitness to Study Level 3' internally and follow the appropriate process (e.g. Restart, Leavers). Communications will be sent to parent/carer(s) and to any relevant external professionals (with consent from the student).

### **CONTACT DURING THE YEAR (RESTARTER)**

The Pastoral Leadership team will keep in contact with the student during the remainder of the academic year to discuss whether the student's health is improving; whether they still intend to return to College in the following academic year and, if so, which subjects they would like to study, noting the following: Year 12: students are not required to study the same subjects as before, but must be qualified for any different subjects. Year 13: students will be required to continue the same programme of study, but consideration will be given to any changes in specification which might make continuation with a certain subject impossible. In this case, other options may be discussed.

## **START OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR**

A member of the Pastoral Leadership Team will meet with the student and parents/carers at the start of the new academic year, prior to lessons commencing, to go through the following:

- Confirmation that the student's place at College will be provisional and dependent on them meeting all College expectations.
- The student will sign a restart contract reconfirming their understanding of College expectations and their commitment to them and confirming that they are fit enough to return to study.
- The student will be offered the same tutor where possible.

### **Review meeting**

A review meeting will take place to determine whether the student has met all College expectations.

**Year 12:** within 3 term-time weeks

**Year 13:** within 6 term-time weeks.

If the student has met the College's expectations and is achieving as expected, the review meeting may be the end of the support intervention. If the student has not met the College's expectations and is not achieving as expected, whether because of ill health or a lack of commitment, the student will be withdrawn from the College roll and supported to consider alternative education and training pathways. If a student is unable to complete their intended programme following a restart, the College will not offer a further period of study.

### **Additional year of study ('Year 14')**

In exceptional circumstances, a student may continue with a reduced programme of study and then complete an additional year of study ('Year 14'). In this instance, the tutor will meet at regular relevant intervals with the student to explain and discuss the process including but not limited to the following:

- Course change confirmation processes
- Timetable adjustments
- Health updates