



## **Protocol for a Student's Fitness to Study**

### **Introduction**

This protocol applies to students of Richard Huish College.

One of our core values is 'we have a culture that cares for the individual and promotes inclusivity, equality and mutual respect'. This philosophy underpins how we constantly strive to make reasonable adjustments for any student. In doing so, we fully comply with the Equality Act 2010.

Another of our core values is 'honesty and integrity are central to our work– we are committed to being transparent, open and trusting'. We therefore wish to clarify that at times a student's physical or mental health may be so affected that they are no longer able, despite support, to maintain reasonable academic progress. Academic success depends on positive engagement in classroom learning, work experience when appropriate and the completion of relevant private study, including meeting coursework deadlines. Our target for attendance is 93%.

For a student with illness, special educational need or disability (SEND), we are able to make reasonable adjustments to these expectations. We are not, however, a distance learning college and whilst it is reasonable for subject teachers and support staff to be flexible on a temporary basis, any prolonged periods of absence or non-completion of coursework are not sustainable. On occasion, a student's ill health and/or behaviour may present a Health and Safety risk to either the student themselves or those around them that is unmanageable in a mainstream educational setting.

This guidance is produced alongside the Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity Policies of the College.

### **Stages in a Student's College Journey**

#### **Joining the College**

Students and their parents are encouraged to disclose any health or special educational need at various times in the various stages of *Joining Huish*. When a student has complex or significant health or special educational needs, we provide information, advice and guidance to help negotiate a viable study programme and an appropriate support plan. When appropriate, external agencies will be consulted. Student engagement in any support plan is vital to academic progress and in contributing to a student's fitness to study. The support we are able to offer is finite and must be available to other students as well. In all cases, the support we offer is on site and to support classroom learning.

#### **During the Study Programme**

When special educational need, disability or a health need is disclosed during a student's study programme, College staff should be informed as soon as possible and as far as possible, reasonable adjustments will be made for the student. It is difficult to set non-negotiable limits for academic success as there needs to be professional judgment in each case.

Disclosure of a special educational or health need at any point will not prejudice any decisions relating to the student, but the information is used to establish how we can respond to the individual's needs and what reasonable adjustments can be made. The staff who are available for consultation about support include the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, the Deputy Principal, Assistant Principal for Student Support and relevant Head of School.

### **Implementation of Fitness to Study Protocol**

If the College becomes concerned about a student's Fitness to Study, the following steps will be followed to give clarity to the process.

**Stage 1** – Communication with home, outlining concerns and setting targets which will be reviewed two weeks later.

**Stage 2** – Further communication with home, re-stating concerns and re-setting targets which will be reviewed approximately two weeks later.

**Stage 3** – A case conference or return-to-College meeting will be organised with the student, parents, tutor, Head of School and Assistant Principal for Student Support. This meeting will focus on the feasibility of the student continuing to study at the College. One outcome of this meeting might be that a student will be withdrawn from the College.

If a student has been absent for two weeks or a similar volume of partial attendance due to illness, a return-to-College meeting may be called to discuss the strategies necessary for a successful return to full time study. Strategies may include a phased return, completion of an action plan to manage any specific risks and setting reasonable targets for attendance and study.

### **Re-starting College**

In certain situations it may be appropriate to offer a re-start at College. It is possible for a student to re-start only once. On re-application to the College, the onus is on the student and parents to provide evidence that the student has recovered sufficiently and that they have the capacity to be academically successful on a full-time study programme. Further re-starts would not be in the best interest of a student.

### **Information, Advice and Guidance**

When a full-time College-based study programme is not appropriate, the following staff can advise on alternative educational provision that is part time, short-term or less academically demanding: Careers Officer, Assistant Principal for Student Support, appropriate Head of School.

For a student in recovery from illness, these alternative routes are recommended as a stepping stone back into full time education, either before starting College or before re-starting at College.