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Fitness for Study Procedure

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
STAGES IN A STUDENT'S COLLEGE JOURNEY	2
JOINING THE COLLEGE	2
DURING THE STUDY PROGRAMME	2
IMPLEMENTATION OF FITNESS TO STUDY PROTOCOL	3
RE-STARTING COLLEGE	3
INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE	3
RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS	3

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 adjustment 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 94%.

For a student with illness, special educational need (SEN) or disability, 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.

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. Study 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 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 Vice Principal Student Support, Director of Student Support, Assistant Principals and other relevant parties.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 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 within a **Teacher or Tutor contract**.

Stage 2 – Further communication with home, re-stating concerns and re-setting targets at the next level of **Course Manager or Senior Tutor** contract which will be reviewed approximately two weeks later. This will usually take place in the context of a meeting at the College with relevant parties in attendance.

Stage 3 – If the above has not been successful or the medical issues have escalated directly to this stage the student will be referred and discussed at the **Senior Pastoral Board**. A Fitness to Study decision will be made and delegated to one of the senior staff to hold. This may be realised via the following possible routes:

- The student returns to a full-time timetable on their existing programme of study
- The student returns to a full-time timetable on a revised programme of study to suit their needs (within what is reasonable)
- The student returns on a reduced programme (where advised by a senior member of staff and when it is understood to be educationally positive for the individual student)
- The student decides to withdraw from the College at the time in question, but possibly re-apply to re-start in the following academic year (where circumstances allow, and evidence of recovery is provided)
- The student's place is withdrawn by the College (upon which occasion a re-start or independent progression advice and guidance will be recommended and provided).

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 and may also be age dependent. On re-application to the College, the onus is on the student and parents/carers to provide evidence (linked to the requirements set-out by College staff at the original meeting) 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 Manager, Vice Principal, and Assistant Principals.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Diversity and Equality Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Student Behaviour