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Fitness to Study Procedure

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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.

At times a student's physical or mental health may be so affected that they are no longer able, despite support, to maintain academic progress. Academic success depends on positive engagement in classroom learning and the completion of relevant private study, including meeting coursework deadlines and participating in work experience where appropriate.

For a student with illness, special educational need (SEN) or disability, we are able to make reasonable adjustments to these expectations. We do not, however, offer remote learning 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.

JOINING THE COLLEGE

Students and their parents /carers are strongly encouraged to disclose any physical or mental health needs throughout the application process to enable the college to understand and plan for individual needs where possible. When a student has complex or significant health or special education needs, we provide additional information, advice, and guidance to help negotiate a viable study programme. Further information can be found in the college SEND Policy. It is important for prospective students and their families to share key information in order that the study programme is put in place with the correct support. When appropriate, external agencies will be consulted to provide further information and guidance.

IN COLLEGE

Whilst in college a student may be identified as requiring additional support and a support plan put in place, this could be in the form of any of the following interventions:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing support
- Learning Support
- Support Plan
- Subject Support Targets

The following areas will be discussed, and targets agreed in relation to the following areas.:

- Attendance in lessons/tutorials
- Submitting work
- Independent study
- Relationship with others (staff and students)
- Safety of themselves
- Safety of others

If the College becomes concerned about a student's Fitness to Study, the following steps will be followed:

- Communication with home, outlining concerns and setting up targets and support within a teacher or tutor support Plan. See Academic and Pastoral Flow Chart – appendix 1
- Communication with external agencies, if appropriate, to discuss concerns and support.
- Further communication with home, re-stating concerns and re-setting targets at the next meeting with an agreed review date (usually within 2 weeks) This will usually take place in the context of a meeting at the College with relevant parties in attendance.
- 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 member of the pastoral board and a meeting called with relevant parties.

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/phased return programme of study to suit their needs (within what is reasonable)
- The student returns on a reduced /phased return 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).

FITNESS TO RETURN

Should a student be absent due to significant self-harm or a suicidal attempt, a member of the safeguarding team will meet the parent/carer and student to put in place a safety plan for the safe return and support of the student. (See Appendix 1). A copy of the discussion and actions will be circulated to the student, parent/carer and tutor.

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 successfully complete 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, more flexible, or less demanding: Careers Manager, Vice Principal, and Assistant Principals.

RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

Diversity and Equality Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour Policy

SEND Policy



APPENDIX 2

Fitness to Return (FTR)

Following a serious incident with a student such as a suicide attempt or self-harm on site we complete this form to ensure they are fit to return to college.

Student Name:	Student Number:
Staff Member:	Date and Time:

1. Do you feel you can keep yourself safe at college? YES/NO/Unsure
2. What are you going to do to keep yourself safe?
3. What can the college do to keep you safe?

Safety Plan at College (Actions if you couldn't keep yourself safe):

▪ Include signs/triggers ▪ Places or people ▪ Activities that help ▪ How to communicate

Is a Fitness to Study meeting required at this time? YES/NO

If yes, hand to MNO.

Next Steps

Date of review meeting agreed: Date: Time:

Internal use: Share with the following: - Student - Parent/Carer - Tutor - Copy on MC
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