

Reviewed and Approved by  
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November 2018



Brockenhurst College

# Fitness to Study Policy

**November 2017**

## 1. Introduction

Brockenhurst College takes the health, safety and wellbeing of all learners seriously and we recognise this as being fundamental to their academic progress. We are committed to supporting learners so that they may both feel and function well and we seek to provide a teaching and learning environment that is safe and conducive to study.

We therefore have a duty of care to respond appropriately to situations where concerns are raised about a learner. We will intervene if a learner's state of health is likely to affect their ability to be successful on their study programme; presents a risk, either to themselves or to others in the College environment; compromises the teaching and learning environment so that we cannot ensure the progress, health and safety of both the learner concerned and those affected by the learner.

## 2. What is fitness to study?

It is important to be clear about what is reasonable in an educational setting and the limits to the individual support that can be provided within the College. Our staff provide outstanding care for all students, but there will be times when a student's physical or mental health or personal circumstances are so affected that they are no longer able, despite support both internal to the College and externally, to maintain satisfactory progress.

Fitness to study therefore relates to an individual's capacity to participate fully, satisfactorily and appropriately in relation to their studies at Brockenhurst College. This includes participation in their academic programme, as well as physical activities, practical assessments or mandatory competencies in practice associated with their study programme that lead them towards a final qualification.

## 3. The purpose and scope of this policy

- To provide a suitable and co-ordinated response by academic and support staff in circumstances where it is not considered appropriate to apply other internal procedures such as the student disciplinary procedures.
- To encourage early intervention and active collaboration between all relevant parties in managing situations where there are concerns regarding an individual's fitness to study.
- To provide a non-judgemental, consistent and sensitive approach to the management of situations which may require different levels of response according to the perceived level of concern.
- This policy has been developed to work in conjunction with other key College procedures and policies:
  - Admissions policy and procedure
  - Progression policy
  - Safeguarding learners Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy
  - Prevent Strategy
  - Monitoring and Tracking Policy
  - Equality Scheme

- Complaints Policy and Procedure

#### 4. When to use this Policy

The policy may be implemented by a member of staff when:

- There is concern raised that student's health or wellbeing are affecting their attendance or capacity to study to the extent that they are not able to participate in their study programme to a level which will enable them to complete successfully.
- Concerns about the student's fitness to study are raised by a third party i.e. a friend, relative, employer, member of the College staff or medical professional.
- The student has told a member of staff that they have concerns about their own fitness to study.
- Behaviour that would usually be dealt with as a disciplinary matter, may be known or suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health difficulty.
- A student's health difficulties are adversely affecting the health, safety or wellbeing of others.
- A student's health difficulties are adversely affecting the learning, progress or likelihood of success of other learners.

#### 5. Procedure

##### **Stages of action:**

The procedures can be entered at any stage depending on the level of concern and urgency although it is hoped that most situations can be remedied by action taken at stages 1 or 2.

##### **Initial actions:**

It is possible that the initial stages of intervention might be through the normal College procedures with regard to attendance and performance concerns as doubts about a student's fitness to study may not yet have been identified. This is most likely in cases where health issues have not been disclosed to the College before joining or a new health issue is causing problems that have not yet been disclosed to the College.

##### **Stage 1 – Informal Stage**

Once concerns have been raised about a student's fitness to study, the student's Personal Progress Manager (PPM) or course leader/assessor where relevant for adult students or apprentices will meet with them and explain that concerns about their fitness to study have been raised. The student will be made aware of the precise nature of the behaviour that has caused the concern. The PPM will attempt to resolve the matter by informal discussions with the student.

- The student should be encouraged to explain their situation and views on the matter and will be encouraged to use one or more of the support services offered by the College if appropriate.

- A referral may be made to an external body, such as a healthcare professional if this is deemed appropriate.
- The PPM should consider with the student whether any specific academic arrangements or other types of support could be applied to help them study more effectively.
- The meeting outcomes will be logged on the student's Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- The PPM will contact the student's parents/carers to ensure that they are fully aware of the concerns raised and any actions arising from the meeting.
- A review point will be set not more than 2 college weeks from the date of the meeting.

Depending on the concerns raised the PPM may choose to follow the process above and review or move immediately to stage 2 as detailed below.

### **Stage 2 – Fitness to study concern**

If the issues raised are of sufficient concern, or if informal actions have not resulted in the improvement needed, the PPM will raise a fitness to study contract. This contract will be recorded formally on the student's ILP and will contain:

- Details of the concerns around the student's fitness to study.
- Current actions by the College, student, parents/carers, healthcare professionals or other relevant bodies in relation to the current fitness to study concerns.
- An action plan for resolution of the situation. This may include:
  - Actions to be taken by the student
  - Actions to be taken by parents/carers, healthcare professionals or other relevant bodies.
  - Support or adjustments to be made by the College to assist with the student's studies.
  - Targets to be met by the student.
- A timescale for review and resolution. This should be no more than 4 College weeks from the date of the meeting.

Additional interim meetings may be scheduled to monitor the situation and progress made by the student. The PPM and other relevant College staff should help the student access the support available to them to enable them to continue with their studies as agreed. The expectation is, however, that the student will take personal responsibility and fully engage with the support put in place by all parties.

If the concerns have not been addressed, support has not been sought, or sufficient progress has not been made, the case will move to the next stage of the process.

### **Stage 3 – Fitness to study review**

If concerns remain despite earlier stages of intervention, a review meeting will be held to determine the next course of action. Attendees at this meeting will be:

- Director of Learners and/or Pastoral and Welfare manager (Chair)
- The student's PPM (or course leader/assessor)
- The course leader or Head(s) of Curriculum in the associated subject(s)
- Any other support staff involved in the case where relevant.

The purpose of the review panel is to assess the student's fitness to study in the context of their current study programme and decide on the next course of action in the best interests of all parties.

The College may seek additional information in the form of assessments from medical professionals or other relevant bodies.

If appropriate the student and student's parents/carers may be invited to attend the meeting.

The outcomes of this meeting will be communicated to the student and parents/carers. These are (but not limited to):

- **No further action required.**

This is most likely in the event of the student recovering in advance of the meeting to the point they are actively able to participate in their study programme and may therefore be able to succeed this academic year. Continued monitoring of progress is also likely to be recommended.

- **To recommend specific further academic or pastoral support arrangements are put in place to assist with on-going support at College.**

This is most likely if the College believes that with continuing support the student may still be able to be successful on their study programme this academic year.

- **To implement a revised study programme for the student.**

This is likely if the College believes that a changed or reduced study programme may allow the student to be successful this academic year.

- **A suspension in studies or an agreed break in learning with a resumption or restart of their programme at an appropriate point in the future.**

This is most likely if the student has a condition that is temporary or will in time improve and they will subsequently be able to fully participate in a study programme.

- **Withdrawal of College place.**

This is most likely if the College believes that the student's current state of health:

- Will preclude them from being successful on their study programme.
- Requires a level of support that the College is not able to adequately provide.
- May impact on the health, safety and welfare of staff or students.
- Is likely to have a negative effect on the learning and progression of other students at the College.

## 6. Right of appeal

The student may appeal to Brockenhurst College against the outcomes of the review. A letter or email setting out the grounds of appeal should be addressed to the College Vice Principal, to be received within 21 days of the date on which the panel outcomes were made. The procedure of an appeal will be the same as that set out under the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

### Appendix A – College support staff and services

The following College staff may be associated with a fitness to study case or provide support for a student while at College:

- Academic and personal tutors
- Personal Progress manager
- Course leader / assessor
- Heads of Curriculum
- Pastoral and Welfare manager
- Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) coordinator or a member of the LDD team.
- Student services personnel
- The College safeguarding team
- Intensive support officer
- Student liaison officer
- College nurses
- College Counsellors