

## FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY

Date of creation	July 2014
Date of last update	December 2021
Next Review and update due	March 2023
Author	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Responsible Manager	Chalene Scott
Approved by	ELT
Date of Approval	March 2022

### Policy Statement

Barnet and Southgate College is committed to providing an inclusive and safe environment for all students, staff, visitors and volunteers; and recognises this is paramount to a student's health and wellbeing in relation to their achievement, success and progression in learning.

The College aims to demonstrate a fair and consistent approach to acknowledging its Duty of Care to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students; particularly students and applicants who presents with a mental health and medical condition, disability and learning difficulty.

Fitness to study is defined by the college for the purpose of the procedure; to mean fitness to attend and engage with all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment and participation in extra-curricular activities associated with a programme of study; and engage within the college community after taking into account any agreed reasonable adjustments.

Where a student may not be fit to study the college has a duty both to the student/applicant and other members of the college community to respond. Therefore this document outlines the procedure and support available where a student's health and wellbeing deteriorates, raising concerns that a student may not be fit to study, including where they may be at risk of harm to themselves and/or others.

There is a range of college policies which are central to many aspects of the Fitness to Study Policy and should therefore be read for further guidance. Other policies and guidance include:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Staff Code of Professional Conduct

Health and Safety Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy

Restraint and De-Escalation Policy

Criminal Conviction Procedure

[Guidance on students with SEND](#)

[Guidance on Looked After Children and Care Leavers](#)

## 1 Scope

[Barnet and Southgate College Values](#): Promoting Equality and Inclusiveness outlines our aims and expectations to treat all fairly, respect differences, be supportive and understanding, recognise individuality and the contributions others can make.

Prospective students are encouraged to disclose additional learning needs which can relate to their mental or physical health during the application and enrolment process to ensure the college can conduct appropriate information, advice and guidance; and discuss reasonable adjustments required to access learning.

Concerns for the health or wellbeing of a student or applicant can be raised by both staff, applicants, and students in response to any situation where a student/applicant displays indicators which identify concerns in relation to their fitness to study.

Students/applicants will not be expected to manage these situations in isolation and should be encouraged to approach and inform a member of staff if they have a concern. However, all college staff who come in to contact with students are more likely to identify whether someone is experiencing difficulties and must follow the procedures outlined in this policy to enable them to manage concerns.

## 2 Fitness to Student Procedure

Students and applicants will be treated fairly, respectfully and in line with the College's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and it is important to remember that 'Fitness to Study' procedures are supportive steps to prioritise the student/applicants well-being.

Where it is identified a student/applicant is not fit to study, staff are expected to assess on a case by case basis whether reasonable adjustments can be implemented to enable students/applicants with additional needs to participate and engage fully in the teaching, learning and assessment activities.

The procedure has three levels:

- Emerging concerns/Cause for Concern,
- Continuing/Significant concerns;
- Serious/Persistent concerns,

### 2.1 Stage 1 Emerging concerns

Based on the perceived level of risk to the health and safety and mental wellbeing of a student/applicant and the impact of their behaviour can have on others in the College community a Fitness to Study meeting should be scheduled to identify and explore matters in relation to their ability to participate on their programme of study. (Refer to Appendix 2).

If concerns emerge during the course staff are encouraged to implement the colleges positive behaviour policy and procedures in the first instance and evidence this on Pro-Monitor.

For students/applicants studying on short courses (for example Adult Community Learning) where a concern is identified, staff are encouraged to have an initial conversation with the student/applicant to identify their support needs or complete an early help referral to a Personal Development Advisor and/or Learning Support.

To further support students, staff can utilise a Positive Behaviour Management Plan (Refer to Appendix 3) to mutually agree on the behaviour expectations required to engage in learning. This process should be reviewed over an agreed period to demonstrate progress made in meeting the agreed expectations.

If progress has not been made overtime with reasonable adjustments in place (if applicable) the Personal Tutor must formally inform the student, parents/guardians and/or externally professionals that the concerns are recognised as continuing and significant. If concerns initially present as continuing and significant staff should proceed to stage 2.

## **2.2 Stage 2 Continuing/Significant concerns;**

Anyone who has a sufficient level of concern about a student/applicants health, safety and mental wellbeing should refer to the Safeguarding Team for advice and guidance, or make a Safeguarding referral. (Refer to Appendix 4).

When reviewing the perceived level of risk to a person's health and wellbeing, communication is paramount and can avoid crisis situations from occurring. Concerns should be acted upon promptly, particularly where a decline in the student/applicants health and wellbeing has been identified, or a legitimate reason for believing that they are at risk of harm to themselves or others.

To ensure appropriate support is provided, staff will be requested to detail in the safeguarding referral the student/applicants engagement in their learning and with others, risks and/or concerns which will be shared with external agencies and/or our Local Safeguarding Partners.

In order to identify where risks can be managed the Personal Tutor, student/applicant, parents/guardians and/or external professionals (if applicable) should also conduct a risk assessment to establish whether risks can be safely managed by college staff and the student/ applicant. (Refer to Appendix 5). The level of risk must be assessed based on the risk to the student/applicant concerned as well as the impact on other students and staff.

If it is agreed that staff and students/applicants are unable to safely manage risks identified following the risk assessment process, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team the college may take steps to suspend the student from their programme of study or the application process or put reasonable adjustments in place. During the suspension period the college will investigate the concerns further to decide whether to prevent enrolment or formally withdraw from the college; either temporarily or permanently from the programme of study.

Should the decision to temporarily withdraw, suspend or put reasonable adjustments in place is made, the student/applicant is expected to provide up to date documentation and/or reference from their Local Authority or Healthcare Professional to complete a robust assessment of the level of risks previously and recently identified; taking into consideration reasonable adjustments which can be agreed to support participation and engagement in college activities.

Should staff recognise concerns which present as an ongoing risk they must proceed to stage 3.

## **2.3 Stage 3**

From time to time there may be a situation where a student/applicant finds themselves severely incapacitated, e.g. through injury or critical illness.

If a student/applicant chooses to defer participation on a course whilst engaging with the Fitness to Study process, a Return to Study meeting will be requested before the student/applicant can resume their studies and application to study.

In circumstances, where it would be unreasonable to expect a student to submit a request for consideration of personal circumstances, the college may consider ending or defer participation on the programme of study and signpost to an alternative provision appropriately resourced to meet their support needs; acting in accordance with information received and shared with the student/applicant's parent/guardian or Health Care Professional.

Students/applicants in certain disciplines (such as Social Work and Teaching or other disciplines which are subject to the requirements of Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies) may be subject to separate and over-riding obligations to declare significant health issues and refer to the Fitness to practice guidance.

### **3. Return to Study**

It is important that the student/applicant is provided with clear guidance about what will happen once the break or suspension period is over and they are due to return to study.

1. The Personal Tutor or Curriculum Manager will act as a designated person for the student to contact during their period of break in learning (if required,) and that staff member should initiate contact with the student during that period. This contact might include but does not need to include strategies to keep the student updated engaged with their studies or signposting to appropriate support.
2. At the point that the student is proposing to return to study, a Return to Study meeting will be arranged with the intention of reviewing current circumstances and the reasons for a break in learning, what has changed and re-entry requirements.
3. The Student will be requested to provide evidence in advance of this meeting if it was a requirement of the Fitness to Study process, which confirms that they are well enough to return to the satisfaction of the college.

The evidence required from the student will be dependent on the individual circumstances, such as a report from a recognised health care professional with sufficient knowledge about the health and wellbeing of the student during the period of the break in learning and the potential impact that returning to study might have.

The report should include specific detail about the appropriateness of the student's health in the context of the proposed Return to Study; examples of relevant questions will depend on the course requirements, but may include:

- Consideration of risks associated with course of study/accommodation etc.
- Consideration of the demands of work based courses;
- Consideration of the demands of small group work on the student;
- How equipped the student is to engage in teaching, learning and assessment;
- Evidence of a diagnosis of a medical condition that will assist in accessing support upon a return to study.

In the event that a decision is made to not return due to not being Fit to Study, such decision will be communicated in writing to the student prior to their planned return date.

If the decision is made to return to study, a return to study meeting will be scheduled with the Safeguarding Team and Curriculum Manager to determine the ongoing support arrangements and will arrange to regularly review progress to minimise the risk of the recurrence of the original difficulties.

Following a return to study; if further concerns are raised about the student at a future point these concerns will be managed under this Fitness to Study Policy.

### **4 Appeal**

All students have the right of appeal against a decision to suspend or withdraw them from their study under the Fitness to Study Policy and Procedure. To make a formal appeal the college requests a written notice of appeal which clearly outlining reasons for the appeal, including evidence which was not previously available and may have materially affected the outcome; or there is evidence of procedural irregularity or bias in the conduct of the case.

Email: [feedback@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk](mailto:feedback@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk)

### **5. Review**

- This policy will be regularly monitored and reviewed:
- Following any issues or concerns raised following the Fitness to Study Process
- In all other circumstances the college conducts and annual self-assessment review of all concerns logged and reported. The review process will enable the college to continually develop and improve practices for all students, staff and visitors.

### **Appendix 1 Fitness to Study Flowchart**



Dear xxxxx,

You are invited to attend a Fitness to Study meeting on: Date ..... Time  
..... Where ..... With  
.....

The aim of this meeting is to give us an opportunity to further discuss the concerns that have been raised about your fitness to study and to agree an action plan between us, of support or another intervention

As part of this process you are encouraged to bring someone to support you to the meeting, this could be a parent/guardian, support worker etc. It is important that you contribute to this meeting and you're encouraged to provide us with any relevant information or medical evidence that might support the discussion process.

Please be assured that the information shared and the discussion that will take place during this meeting will be treated sensitively and only shared with members of staff who need to know or external agencies that are directly involved with your personal development and wellbeing.

Finally, we have enclosed a copy of the Fitness to Study policy for your information and reference.

Kind Regards,

**Appendix 3 Positive Behaviour Management Plan**

**Positive Behaviour Management Plan**

<b>Purpose of behaviour plan</b> <i>(include concerns identified or shared with others and what should happen moving forward):</i>	
<b>Triggers:</b>	Ways to reduce triggers:
<b>Highlighted Behaviour:</b>	Ways to respond to highlighted behaviour:
<b>Other Behaviour:</b>	Ways to respond to highlighted behaviour:
<b>Actions to do after an incident:</b>	
<b>Actions to make sure this plan is followed:</b>	
<b>Plan has been written with input from:</b>	<b>Plan has been read and understood by:</b>
<b>Last updated:</b>	<b>Next update due:</b>

## SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL FORM

This form is to be completed to record and report:

- Information Sharing
- Safeguarding Concerns

Please complete and forward to: [safeguarding@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk).

For immediate advice call a member of the Safeguarding and Early Help Team on 020 3764 4077.

Have you informed the student you are making this referral (Tick Box)?

<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>	
-----------	--	------------	--

**Student Details:** *(Complete details of the student you are concerned about)*

Date or Disclosure		Time of Disclosure	
Course		Name of person making referral	

Initials of Student:	Student ID Number:
Address: Post Code:	Student Contact Number:
Borough:	Date of Birth:
Parent/Carer Name:	Parent/Carer Name Contact No:
<b>Summary of Concern/Incident</b> <b><i>Factual – what do you KNOW?</i></b>	
<b>How often/How long ago did the incident occur?</b>	
<b>Who is/has been involved</b> <i>(siblings other students etc)?</i>	
<b>What has happened?</b> <i>(What do you know?)</i>	
<b>Where and when did the incident take place?</b>	
<b>Other action taken by you or others:</b> please provide details of meetings/referrals/other measures taken	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

## Appendix 5 Fitness to Study Risk Assessment

NAME OF INDIVIDUAL:

DATE OF ASSESSMENT:

NAME OF ASSESSOR:

DATE TO MONITOR/REVIEW:

ASSESSMENT OUTCOMES SHARED WITH:

*(internally and externally)*

<b>1-2</b>	<b>Low risk – sign-posting or referral to internal services/some short-term actions to support learner. Review and monitor within 1 month</b>
<b>3-4</b>	<b>Medium risk (Continuing/Significant concerns) – sign-posting or referral to internal services for longer-term actions to support; referral to external organisations; liaison with relevant professionals; Review and monitor within 1 month</b>
<b>6-9</b>	<b>High risk (Serious/Persistent concerns) – URGENT ACTION to reduce risk. MUST refer to statutory services, follow up with Curriculum Manager and Head of Centre to review case.</b>

Indicators/areas of concern	Comments	Severity <i>(Rating 1-3 and Reasons)</i>	Likelihood <i>(Rating 1-3 and Reasons)</i>	Risk Level LOW/MEDIUM/ HIGH	Actions agreed to reduce/minimise risk and/or meet needs	Risk Level After Actions LOW/MEDIUM/ HIGH

Severity X Likelihood = Risk level

<b>Severity</b>	<b>Likely to Occur</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Harm has occurred and continues to engage in teaching, learning and assessment</li> <li>2. Risk of harm has impact to emotional well-being, attendance, engagement</li> <li>3. Presenting risk of harm to self and/or others</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low – may occur and can be managed</li> <li>2. Medium – frequently occurs and additional resources required to manage</li> <li>3. High – most likely to happen and limited resources available to manage</li> </ol>

### **Indicators/areas of concern**

Disclosures of harm  
 Non-attendance/Missing from Education  
 Change in behaviour  
 Radicalisation  
 Information sharing from external partners  
 Information disclosed during disciplinaries  
 History of abuse  
 Looked After Child /Care Leaver  
 Young Carer

Normalisations of violence/conflict  
 Substance abuse-mental ill health  
 Inappropriate relationships  
 Multiple use of College services  
 Dangerous online behaviour sexting  
 Gang association (county lines)  
 Violent outbursts/offending  
 behaviour/threatening/bullying  
 Self-harming  
 Low self-esteem/worth  
 Youth Offending Team  
 Breakdown of relationships

Appendix 6: Learner Support Referral Form

Learning Support Interview Form			
Full Name:		Student ID:	
MOB/Tel No:		DOB:	
Learner email:		Age:	
Course/Dept:		Level:	
Local Authority:			
Reason for referral to Learning Support /Primary Support Need:			

**Summary of previous educational experience** (attainment, skills, experience, subjects)  
*Include Further Education experience, if relevant: (include levels working towards and/or achieved):*

**Additional details of current/future Learning Support needs to assist progress and overcome learning barriers relating to Primary Support Need:**

Does the learner have an EHC Plan?                      **YES**      **NO**                      **RECEIVED**     

Other Formal Assessments (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_                      **RECEIVED**     

Previous School/College Attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Details of Previous Support Provision (please tick)

In class support	Assistive Technology	Specialist Tutor	
Out of Class Support	Exam Access Arrangements	Medical risk assessment	
Numeracy/Study Skills	Counselling	Communicator/Note taker	
Literacy/Study Skills	Adapted resources	Support with mobility	
Dyslexia/Dyscalculia	Extra time for assignments	Mentoring	

Include any additional information here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Support Requested/Recommended**

- In class support (shared/one to one): \_\_\_\_\_
- Out of class support (specify Lit, Num, Dys, etc): \_\_\_\_\_
- Assistive Technology (specify when possible equipment/software): \_\_\_\_\_
- Exam Access Arrangements: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Useful contacts**

(Name/Relationship with the learner; parent/foster parent/social worker (email & phone number please))

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional information and learning strategies to share with vocational/academic course tutors:****Additional advice or actions arising from this interview:**

Action to be taken by LS Team ONLY if different from the recommended types of support above

I understand support is subject to satisfactory evidence and availability of funding. Yes No

I agree that details can be passed to college staff as per new GDPR May 2018 and the college can request evidence from previous provision and any other external Agencies. Yes No

I have been requested to provide evidence of my exam arrangements Yes No

**Signature of Student:**

**Date of Interview:**

**Signature of Interviewer:**

**Print your name:**

## WELFARE AND MENTAL HEALTH (EARLY SUPPORT) REFERRAL FORM

**FOR SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS USE SAFEGUARDING REFERRAL FORM**

This form is to be completed to record and report:

- Early Help Concerns (Welfare) – Professional Development Advisers (PDA)
- Mental Health (Early support) – Mental Health and Wellbeing Adviser

Please complete and forward to: [welfare@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk)

Have you informed the student you are making this referral (Tick Box)?

No		Yes	
----	--	-----	--

**Student Details:** *(Complete details of the student you are concerned about)*

Date of Disclosure		Time of Disclosure	
Course		Name of person making referral	

Initials of Student:	Student ID Number:
Address:	Student Contact Number:
Post Code:	
Borough:	Date of Birth:
Parent/Carer Name:	Parent/Carer Name Contact No:

**Summary of Concern**  
*Factual – what do you KNOW?*

**Summary of the concern:**

**What has happened?** *(What do you know?)*

**Other action taken by you or others:** please provide details of meetings/referrals/other measures taken.

**Signature:**

**Date:**