

FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY

Audience:	Students
Requirement:	Advisory
Policy Owner:	DP Curriculum & Quality
Review Delegation:	Curriculum & Quality Cttee
Review Cycle:	Every 2 years
Last Review:	July 2023
Due for Review:	July 2025

SOUTH HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE GROUP

FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY

1.0 Statement of Principles

- 1.1 South Hampshire College Group is committed to supporting student wellbeing and recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health is crucial to student learning and academic achievement.
- 1.2 Fitness to study relates to an individual's capacity to participate fully as a student, in relation to academic studies and life generally at college.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to provide a suitable, coordinated response by academic and support staff in circumstances where a student's fitness to study is a cause for concern.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to all of South Hampshire College Group course provisions including Apprenticeships, Adult Learners, Full and part time study programme, students on work placement as well as students representing the College Group in the wider community. This policy applies to students throughout the period of their registration with South Hampshire College Group.
 - 2.2. This policy is not intended for use during an applicant's interview or admissions process. The College Group's FE Admission & Progression Policy provides information relating to the assessment of individual needs on application to study at the College. The admissions policies can be found on the South Hampshire College Group website.
 - 2.3. The College Group reserves the right to apply its admissions policy rather than this policy in the first six weeks of the start of the academic year.
 - 2.4. This policy has been developed to manage situations where, in light of concerns regarding safeguarding, health and or wellbeing, it is not considered appropriate to implement other student processes such as the Behaviour Management Policy. There may, however, be situations where it is appropriate to implement alternative procedures and the College Group is not prevented from doing so, notwithstanding concerns regarding the student's health or wellbeing.
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3.0 Detail

Fitness to Study

3.1 A student's fitness to study may be a cause for concern as a result of a wide range of circumstances, including (but not restricted to) the following:

- Where the reasonable adjustments in relation to a student's EHCP provision have been identified as being unsuccessful with ensuring that the student is able to fully participate in college life in respect of attendance, engagement, behaviour and progression.
- Where a student with statutory external agency involvement (e.g. Social Services, Police, CAMHS) is unable to fully participate in college life in respect of attendance, engagement, behaviour and progression.
- Where a student is affected by medical conditions that require long periods of absence and treatment.
- Where there are doubts from staff regarding a student's fitness to study due to a pre-existing medical condition.
- Where participation in a programme related activity or assessment would jeopardise the long-term health and wellbeing of a student due to a pre-existing medical condition.
- When there is a disruption to teaching, learning and support of other students or where unreasonable demands are being made on staff or students due to deterioration in the physical or mental health of a student.
- Where there is a potential risk to a student or others due to deterioration in the student's physical or mental health.
- Behaviour which would usually be dealt with as a disciplinary matter, which may be known to be or suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health difficulty.
- The student's academic performance or personal conduct is not acceptable and may be known to be or suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health problem.

3.2 This policy is intended for use where the situation has not been resolved via the existing academic and student support provisions within the College Group.

Equality and Diversity

3.3 In responding to and managing situations where a student's fitness to study is a concern, the Group remains mindful of its duty of care and its obligations under the Equality Act 2010, including its duty to make reasonable adjustments to teaching and learning, assessment and other activities, as appropriate. In dealing with cases the College also remains mindful of its duties under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the College Group Data Protection Policy.

- 3.4 In implementing the procedure, the College Group will ensure that it offers and encourages students to seek appropriate support from the outset for example by referring students to the pastoral teams.
- 3.5 When implementing this procedure, each matter will be dealt with in a supportive manner and on an individual basis. Any decision reached about a student's fitness to study will be made, wherever possible, through a process involving the student and other relevant parties such as academic and support staff, parents or carers, external agencies, as appropriate in the circumstances.
- 3.6 South Hampshire College Group is committed to equal opportunities and our aim is to make our procedures easy to use and accessible. We will take reasonable steps to accommodate any reasonable adjustments to enable access to this procedure or receive responses in other formats, and provide such assistance, as may be reasonably required.

4.0 Appeals

- 4.1. A student or apprentice may appeal against any fitness to study action taken against them by a fitness to study panel.
- 4.2. Appeals will normally only be considered on the following grounds:
- **That evidence produced identifies there was a material administrative error in conducting the fitness to study procedure or that it was not conducted in accordance with the published procedure.**
 - **That evidence produced identifies that some other material irregularity has occurred.**
 - **That new evidence is available that was not available at the time of the hearing that could materially affect the hearing panel's decision.**
- 4.3. Appeals should be submitted to the Vice Principal within 10 working days of the date on which the written confirmation of the hearing was sent.
- 4.4 The decision by the Vice Principal or their nominee will be confirmed in writing to the student normally within 5 working days.
- 4.5 The right of appeal in the case of a looked after student or a student with an Education, Health and Care Plan will be in consultation with the Local Authority or other relevant agencies.
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