

# FIT TO LEARN POLICY

## **1. Introduction**

Prior Pursglove and Stockton College is a sixth form college for full time students. We strive to provide a welcoming and supportive environment to help students make the most out of their experience at college and achieve successful outcomes which will allow them to progress after college. Our aim is to ensure that all students at the College achieve their full potential in an inclusive environment free from discrimination. Whilst the vast majority of our students are able to engage in their studies to the fullest extent and play an active part in college life, we understand that a small number may endure difficulties with health and wellbeing that may prevent them from doing so. This document aims to outline the support which can be put in place along with an approximate timescale to ensure that the best outcome can be achieved for the student.

## **2. During enrolment/starting college**

- Students are encouraged to disclose any physical or mental health need as part of their application and enrolment process. This disclosure will in no way prejudice any decision about the application and the offer of a place at the College, on the contrary, it is used to establish how best we can respond to the individual's need and what reasonable adjustments can be made.
- It may be appropriate that further information is sought from health professionals and that meetings are arranged to ensure that there can be a smooth transition to the College and a support plan can be put in place.
- Any student who joins the College with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will have this annually reviewed by the SENDCO and their team.
- Support is reviewed in line with the College monitoring processes and consent will be sought to share with subject teachers, the Pathway Leader, and the Examinations Officer, the key relevant information so that they can best make appropriate adjustments.

## **3. Studying at the College**

- Early disclosure of physical or mental health issues or any additional barriers to learning is vital to allow us to assess how best to accommodate students and to provide appropriate support for individual students. We will always seek to provide support whether the condition was pre-existing or commences during the student's time at the College. Students are made aware of the extensive range of support available both at induction and as part of their programme of study in tutorial sessions.
- We recognise that some students may have periods of absence due to a Special Educational Need or Disability. The Learning Support team reviews the support needs of all students with SEND in line with the College SEND Policy. Support plans may also involve referral to outside agencies, such as CAMHS or the student's GP.
- In crisis situations where there are immediate and grave concerns for a student's health or well-being, staff will judge how best to provide first aid and whether emergency services should be called. We will always endeavour, in these situations, to contact parents and carers as soon as possible. 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 a sixth form college.
- A minimum level of attendance needs to be maintained to allow a student to make academic progress. We are not a distance-learning College and, while it is reasonable

for subject teachers and support staff to be flexible on a temporary basis, excessively long periods of complete absence or very poor attendance will make a student's studies untenable. If a student falls significantly behind with their deadlines for coursework and homework, despite extensions being offered, then there comes a point when catching up is not viable. The specific expectations regarding attendance and assessment will depend on the individual's circumstances.

- We strongly value the input and support from parents especially where students may struggle to meet the demands of good attendance due to health or wellbeing issues. We endeavour to keep in close contact with parents as much as possible and invite them in to attend meetings to discuss support needs.

#### **4. Fitness to Study**

Our staff provide outstanding care for all our students, but there will be times when a student's mental or physical health are so affected that they are no longer able, despite support, within the College and externally, to maintain reasonable academic progress:

- a) There may be times when the nature of the student's ill health can require support beyond the expertise or capacity that we can reasonably offer.
- b) Occasionally a student's health may present a health and safety risk to either themselves or those around them that is unmanageable in a mainstream educational setting.

There are therefore occasions when it will be, in our judgement, that continuing at College is no longer the best option for the student.

If the College reaches a decision, after consultation with the student, parents/carers and medical professionals that a student should withdraw as it is in the best interests of the individual student then this will be actioned.

If it is agreed that a restart in the following year is an option, then this will only be possible if the student is able to provide evidence that their health has improved sufficiently so that they are fit to resume study without further prolonged absence.

Where there is no consensus that a withdrawal is the most appropriate outcome then the stages below will be followed:

##### **Stage 1 – Maximum timescale 6 weeks**

A meeting will take place with a Faculty Manager or Deputy Faculty Manager to make the student aware of concerns raised by subject teachers, and/ or Personal Tutor and to hear and consider the student's and their parents'/carers' views. The various sources of support open to the student will be explained and an action plan put into place to support the student and to set targets. The action plan will include a review date, usually after two weeks, and will be recorded in the confidential section of a student's individual learner plan.

##### **Stage 2 – Maximum timescale 4 weeks**

If at review targets have not been met, a letter will be sent home outlining concerns and resetting the targets. A new action plan which includes a review date, usually after two weeks, will be recorded in the confidential section of a student's individual learner plan. Where the issue identified is expected to be longer term, the focus for priority is progress rather than attendance. The meeting will focus on making a realistic plan which may include any of the following:

- A reduction to the number of courses on the study program
- A reduced timetable for an agreed period of time, supported by completion of missed work at home, submitted to subject teachers so progress can be monitored.

- A combination of face to face and remote learning, with progress of work to be monitored by subject teachers.
- A short-term period of remote working, with submission of work on a weekly basis so progress can continue to be monitored.

### **Stage 3 – Decision on fitness to study**

An Assistant Principal will be present at the Stage 2 review. If targets have not been met the Assistant Principal will decide if the student should move to stage 3 where they will be advised that they are no longer fit to study at the College. If withdrawal is the outcome, the decision will be recorded in the confidential section of student's individual learner plan and a letter will be sent to parents/carers. The student will have the right of appeal to the Principal. The student will always be offered a careers interview to explore alternative options and/ or referred to alternative education/ training providers.

### **Stage 4 - Contact with external agencies**

There may be occasions when the College will be advised by medical professionals that it is unsafe for the student to attend. This advice will always supersede College policy.

The support stage to be entered will be determined during the meeting based on individual circumstances.

The aim of all stages is to support a student to remain in education and to succeed on their chosen courses with the ultimate goal to return to normal timetable.

The continuation of each stage is subject to a Student continuing to make progress in line with expectations /completion of set work and assessments as required and/or positive engagement with support either internally/externally (Eg: Counselling)

### **Appeals:**

Appeals must be submitted to the Principal within 5 working days of receipt of confirmation of the decision to withdraw the student.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other College policies and procedures, in particular (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

# Fit to Learn Policy + Support Stages

Where a genuine reason for longer term absence is identified, at any stage of the attendance disciplinary process, then a meeting will be held between Stockton Sixth form college, the student and their parents, in order for an alternative solution to be found.

The purpose of this meeting is to establish and understand:

- Whether the impact on attendance is likely to be short term or long term
- The likely impact on progress during this time
- Whether any support is needed to be provided by the college
- Whether an amendment or reduction is needed to the course program in order to support the student to succeed
- Whether the student is capable of continuing with a study program at the current time.

## Support Stage 1

Short term medical issue identified - expected return to full time study within 6 weeks.

One of the following (or combination of) may be agreed on a short-term basis.

- A reduced timetable for an agreed period of time, supported by completion of missed work at home, submitted to subject teachers so progress can be monitored.
- A combination of face to face and remote learning, with progress of work to be monitored by subject teachers.
- A short-term period of remote working, with submission of work on a weekly basis so progress can continue to be monitored.

## Support Stage 2

Medium-Long term medical issue identified - (Eg: mental health or similar)

Where the issue identified is expected to be longer term, the focus for priority is progress rather than attendance. The meeting will focus on making a realistic plan which may include any of the following:

- A reduction to the number of courses on the study program
- A reduced timetable for an agreed period of time, supported by completion of missed work at home, submitted to subject teachers so progress can be monitored.
- A combination of face to face and remote learning, with progress of work to be monitored by subject teachers.
- A short-term period of remote working, with submission of work on a weekly basis so progress can continue to be monitored.

## Support Stage 3

Previous plans not successful and/or Student believed to be unable to complete qualifications.

Where all previous attempts at supporting student to continue to study have failed, a final meeting will be held to determine whether there is any room for any further reductions/ amendments to course program to support student to achieve any qualifications. (eg: A level reduced to AS and/or certificate courses at end of 1 year.)

Possible outcomes of Stage 3 meeting:

- A final amendment is agreed with conditions to be met and student returns to Support Stage 2, with a further review date set.
- The student is UNFIT TO LEARN at this time, and is withdrawn from college.

(Any withdrawal comes with an option to be reconsidered for a place the following September, should the students' situation change. Referrals to external agencies for support. Careers advice and/or referrals to alternative Education/Training providers.)

The support stage to be entered will be determined during the meeting based on individual circumstances.

The aim of all stages is to support a student to remain in education and to succeed on their chosen courses with the ultimate goal to return to normal timetable.

The continuation of each stage is subject to a Student continuing to make progress in line with expectations /completion of set work and assessments as required and/or positive engagement with support either internally/externally (Eg: Counselling)

<b>Date of Last Approval/Revision</b>	July 2023
<b>Review interval (years)</b>	Every two (2) years
<b>Author</b>	Vice Principal (OJW)
<b>Approval/review body</b>	SLT/LGB
<b>Date of next review</b>	July 2025
<b>Public File location</b>	College Website (external) and SharePoint (staff)

This policy has been subject to an **Equality Impact Assessment** which can be located in the policies master folder, and was updated by:

**Author:** Olivia Wytcherley, Vice Principal

**Approved by:** SLT July 2023 / LGB Sept 2023