

Fit to Study Procedures

Scope and Purpose of Policy

This Policy states the responsibilities of Cardiff and Vale College in relation to the wellbeing of students who are displaying visible signs of illness, mental health difficulties, psychological, personality or emotional disorders which may have a profoundly disturbing impact on the functioning of individual students and on the wellbeing of others around them.

This Policy is intended to promote positive attitudes to students with impairments and indicates the commitment of the College to maintaining students' wellbeing and the procedures and support available to both students and staff when a student becomes unwell and/or presents a risk to self and/or others. The College has a duty of care to respond appropriately to situations where there are substantial concerns relating to a student's mental and/or physical functioning and the impact upon the individual and/or other members of the College community.

Dealing with Disruptive Behaviour or Behaviour Otherwise giving Cause for Serious Concern

See flowchart – Appendix 1

- In situations where a student's behaviour or wellbeing causes concern (see Appendix 2), staff should consult with the Disability and Dyslexia Manager in order to offer the appropriate support to the student.
- The Disability and Dyslexia Manager will arrange for the student to meet with the support team to discuss his/her needs within 10 days. A programme of support will be suggested where appropriate. This will be communicated to the learner and the Course Tutor in line with the College's Disclosure Policy. Where it is suspected that a student's behaviour may be related to an ongoing or emerging mental health problem, the student will be encouraged to get help through their GP.
- The Disability and Dyslexia Manager and his team will keep a central record of all referrals, actions and developments concerning each student.
- If a student refuses to take up the supported offered and/or his/her behaviour does not improve then the individual student's support needs are beyond the resources of the College. In this case there will be unresolved significant concerns about an individual's engagement with their study or unresolved significant concerns regarding their health or behaviour, hence a case conference will be arranged.
- The case conference should be convened within 10 working days from the decision to take this course of action.

- The conference will be chaired by a relevant Senior Manager ie Head of Learner and Learning Support, Head of Social Engagement and Vice Principal Strategic Planning, Learner Voice and Collegiate Services, who is able to discuss the most appropriate course of action. (See Appendix 3 – Case Conference Record)
- The group will include (where applicable) representative(s) from the academic department, i.e. the Course Tutor or Head of Department, the Disability and Dyslexia Manager and other staff as appropriate.
- The case conference may consider various options, including recommending additional support strategies, leave of absence or exclusion. In reaching any decision, due care and consideration will be exercised, to avoid as far as possible the student being placed in a more vulnerable situation or a situation that increases the vulnerability of other students.
- It will be made clear to the student where there are concerns relating to their mental and/or physical health and the impact upon the individual and/or other members of the College community, that such concerns exceed the usual pastoral role and need to be referred onto specialist support.
- The agreed course of action will be communicated to the student by the appropriate Senior Manager in a meeting which will take place within 5 working days of the recommendation. The student will be supported during this meeting by a suitable advocate of the student's choosing. The student will be informed:
 - of the decision and what that means for his/her study
 - of the 'Return to Study' procedure
 - that this procedure is quite separate from the College's disciplinary procedures
 - why the College is recommending this course of action.
- The appropriate Senior Manager will hold a de-briefing meeting for relevant staff within 14 days of communicating the recommendations to the student concerned. A brief record of the meeting will be made and circulated to all present and to other partners on a 'need to know' basis. The recording of information is underlined by the concept of 'latent duty' where it can be necessary to have evidence of what action has been taken in respect of supporting a student when a disability has been declared.
- It is acknowledged that though a student has mental health difficulties, this in no way lessens the duty of care that the College owes to other students. The duty of care to students with mental health problems should be balanced against the duty of care to other students. The Disability and Dyslexia team will work with the Course Tutor to provide any support that the other students in the group may need.

Returning to Study

- If the student has been suspended or offered leave of absence he/she will have to follow the Return to Study procedure before they can return to study.
- During this process the College will ensure that the student is assisted by the course team, with advice from the Disability and Dyslexia Manager.
- The College will require the student to produce appropriate confirmation of their health and ability to resume studying.
- If a student has been under suspension from the College due to psychiatric ill-health, they will need a formal assessment by an appropriate medical practitioner or other health professional before returning to study. The Disability and Dyslexia Manager will support the student to access an appropriate referral.
- A 'Return to Study and Risk Management Plan' (Appendix 4) will be signed in consultation with the student, the Disability and Dyslexia Manager and their course tutor. This will address:
 - the specific study-related support needs of the student in returning to education
 - the support which is reasonably required in the short term
 - involvement of and liaison with external agencies
 - any longer term support or adjustments that are reasonably required and any conditions that might or will apply to provision.
- The Return to Study and Risk Management Plan will incorporate a risk analysis that takes account of the experiences that led to the student's initial suspension from their course and any other information that is known to be relevant.
- Any return to study will be subject to the student's co-operation with this process and full adherence to any agreements made.
- Other members of staff within the Disability and Dyslexia team and the Student Services team will be available to provide advice and support to facilitate the student's transition back onto the course, particularly in relation to any action that might be required under the Equality Act 2010.
- When return to study is not deemed to be an option, the student should follow the existing Complaints and Appeals Policy and processes.

Confidentiality

- In all cases where, in the member of staff's judgement, it would be in the student's best interests to disclose sensitive information (e.g. so that appropriate support may be provided) the student's informed consent should be obtained where possible.
- It will be necessary to inform the student why there might be a need to disclose sensitive information, who will have access to this information and the likely consequences of giving or withholding consent (e.g. additional support strategies such as reasonable adjustments including additional examination arrangements).
- Once consent has been obtained, it is the responsibility of the person passing on the information to ensure it is done on the terms agreed with the student.
- If the student chooses not to provide their consent, this decision should be respected. In this scenario, the implications of non-disclosure in terms of additional support should be made clear. However, there exist rare occasions when the student's consent is withheld or it is impracticable to try to obtain it, when confidentiality may be broken. These include:
 - When the student's mental health has deteriorated to the extent of threatening his / her personal safety
 - When the student is at risk of serious abuse or exploitation
 - When the student's behaviour is adversely affecting the rights and safety of others
 - Where the member of staff would be liable to civil or criminal procedure if the information were not disclosed (e.g. if a crime had been committed)
- Staff should consult with the appropriate Head of Learner and Learning Support if they believe there is a need to break the commitment to confidentiality. Initial discussion should not identify the student until the grounds for breaking confidentiality have been established and agreed upon.

Equality and Diversity Statement

In accordance with College procedures, an Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken for this Policy on June 30th 2011.

Health and Safety Implications

There may be circumstances where there appears to be a conflict between Fit to Study issues and the health and safety of employees and learners. All cases will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Linked Policies

- Safeguarding – Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy - pending
- Relationship Management Policy
- Disclosure Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Central Admissions Policy - pending
- Student Complaints Policy

Linked Procedures

- Safeguarding – Children and Vulnerable Adults Procedures
- Substance Misuse Procedures - pending
- Relationship Management Guidance and Procedures
- Disclosure Procedures
- Student Complaints Procedures
- Health and Safety Procedures
- Central Admissions Procedures - pending

Location and Access to the Policy

This is available from the website, staff intranet and Moodle and may be out of date if printed.

Date approved: 19 April 2013

Approved by: QSB

Review date: 30 June 2016

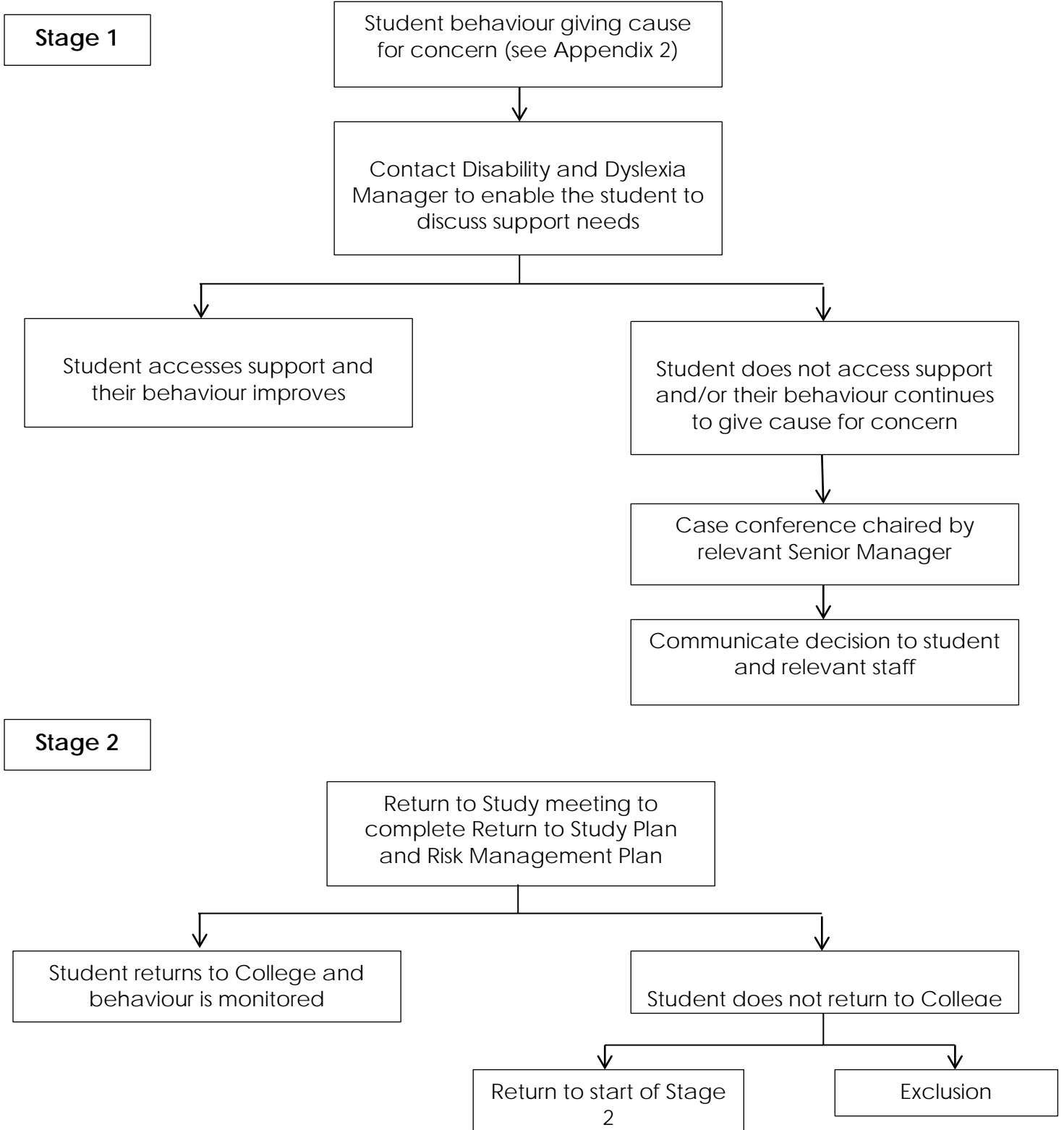
Responsible Manager: Head of Learner and Learning Support Services

Executive Lead: VP Strategic Planning, Student Voice and Collegiate Services

Accessible to Students: Yes



Appendix 1 – Fit to Study Procedures Flow Chart



Appendix 2 – Behaviour Giving Cause for Concern

Examples of behaviour that could mean a referral under the Fit to Study Policy include:

- Behaviour that negatively impacts on others in the group
- Behaviour that makes it impossible for the student to learn
- Quick changes in behaviour
- Outbursts etc
- Periods of complete disengagement



Appendix 3 – Case Conference Record

Student Name:		SIN:	
Course:			
Course Tutor:			
Panel Members:	Name	Designation	

What has been happening – in class, out of college?
What have you been thinking and feeling – in class, out of college?
Why has this been happening? (List medical evidence here)
Who has been affected by this? How?
What do you think needs to happen to enable you to stay at College? What do you need? What does the College need?

Case Conference Decision:	Continue at College with support <input type="checkbox"/> Leave of absence from College <input type="checkbox"/> Exclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please note) <input type="checkbox"/>
Reason for the Decision	

Signed Chair:	
Signed Panel Members:	



Appendix 4 – Return to Study and Risk Management Plan

Student Name:		SIN:	
Course:			
Course Tutor:			
Panel Members:	Name	Designation	

How are you? What has been happening since we last met? What has changed?

What do you need to help you return to College?

What does your class need if you are to return to College?

What does the College need to enable you to return to your studies?

What evidence is available to support your return to College?



Case Conference Decision:	Return to College <input type="checkbox"/> Further Leave of absence from College <input type="checkbox"/> Exclusion <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please note) <input type="checkbox"/>
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Reason for the Decision

Actions agreed to support the student's return to College.			
Action Agreed	By Who?	By When?	Monitored by?

Signed Chair:	
Signed Panel Members:	
Signed Student:	
Signed Parent/Guardian (if appropriate):	