

Attendance and Punctuality - Student

Policy and Procedures 2024-25

Objectives

Halesowen College is committed to providing high quality education and training and to student success. To this end we must maximise students' learning opportunities by;

- Setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions.
- Working with students and, where applicable, their parents/guardian/carers and employers to ensure good attendance and punctuality.
- Monitoring and taking action to improve attendance and punctuality where necessary and referring for support where there is a need.

Scope

This document sets out the principles and practice of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy that applies to all Halesowen College students, including those on Higher Education and Professional qualifications. This includes both onsite and online delivery.

Summary of College Expectations of Punctuality and Attendance

1. The college expects 100% attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions. This includes online sessions, workshops, compulsory visits and activities, tutorials etc.
2. Attendance of all students will be reviewed after three and five weeks of the academic year/apprenticeship start date. Any student who has not achieved at least 90% attendance, and who is unable to provide a full justification, will be withdrawn from the college.
3. Attendance will be regularly monitored throughout students' time in learning. Failure to maintain good attendance will be dealt with through the college Student Disciplinary Policy.
4. Students are expected to give good reasons, backed up with evidence, for all absences.
5. Students are expected to provide a reasonable justification for any lateness.
6. Where absences/lateness can be foreseen in advance, the student should notify their personal coach and class teacher/s.

Appropriate evidence should be provided to the class teacher for the absence to be classed as authorised.

7. For unforeseen absences, such as illness, the student must report the absence via the online absence reporting system as early as possible on the first day of absence and every subsequent day unless they are signed off by a doctor for a given period.
8. Non-attendance may be dealt with as part of the college's Student Disciplinary Policy and may result in a Level 1 or 2 sanction, a final written warning or exclusion.

Staff Procedures and Guidance

1. In order for the college to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality it is essential that all registers are marked in an accurate and timely fashion. The staff member responsible for the session must complete the register marking as soon as possible and in all cases by the end of the day in which the session falls. Failure to do this may result in students missing out on payments from Student Financial Support, and in significant inconvenience and distress.
2. Registers are auditable documents and must be maintained in a timely and accurate fashion. Here it is identified that a member of staff persistently fails to mark a register, or marks registers late, they may be subject to disciplinary action. Where registers remain outstanding after 28 days the presumption will be for disciplinary action.
3. Students are normally expected to make medical and other appointments outside of timetabled hours. However, where a student knows in advance that they are unable to attend a lesson, they must report the absence via the online portal, and/or their personal coach, and provide evidence of the absence to the Personal coach/class teacher.

When authorising absences the nominated member of staff will need to consider:

- Whether the case is reasonable.
- The number of absences taken by the individual.
- Repetitions of the same justification.
- Whether the justification is backed up by evidence, examples of legitimate reasons for absences might include;
 - Medical appointments which cannot be made outside of timetabled hours.
 - Religious holiday.
 - Attendance at a funeral.
 - Severe disruption to the transport network.
 - Driving test.
 - Representing the college at a regional/national event.
 - Responsibilities for caring for a close family member. If this is likely to affect their learning, this should be explored with the student and support offered.
 - Meeting involving social workers/external bodies.

An absence will not be authorised for any of the following reasons;

- Holidays
- Babysitting
- Driving lessons
- Birthdays
- Leisure activities
- Shopping
- Full or part time work (other than work experience)

4. Where the absence cannot be foreseen, the student should advise the college, either by the online reporting system or email to the Personal Tutor/class teacher on the day of absence. The class teacher responsible for the register will mark the student 'absent'.
5. Where no justification for the absence is provided in advance, the member of staff nominated to follow up absences must contact the student, and in the case of 16–18-year-olds their parent, guardian, carers or employer to ascertain the reason for the absence as soon as practicable.

Wherever possible the student should be asked to attend unless there is a valid reason for non-attendance. The member of staff should record any contact made, discussions, reasons and information and ensure this is communicated to other staff as required, using MyHalesowen.

6. A weekly attendance report is sent to each Personal Coach. On the first tutorial back after the absence the Personal Coach should ask for an explanation for the absence, draw the student's attention to the attendance policy and stress that non-attendance will be followed up and dealt with.
7. Should a pattern of non-attendance emerge, the tutor should follow this up at the earliest opportunity with the student, recording any information on MyHalesowen. The Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead for the area must be advised.
8. If the level of non-attendance is judged to be unacceptable then the college Student Disciplinary Policy should be used. As the policy states that we expect 100% attendance, anything below this, without prior agreement or a valid reason, is unacceptable. It would therefore be appropriate to use the Disciplinary Policy as soon as problems become apparent, rather than leave the problems to grow without formally tackling them.

Students Responsibilities

You are expected to:

1. Attend 100% of all scheduled classes either in person or online relating to your programme of study as confirmed on your learning agreement. Each class you attend is registered separately.
2. Report any absence due to illness or any other reason to the college by 8:45 am on the first and every subsequent day of absence (on the online portal).
3. Do everything possible to avoid necessary absences by making medical appointments outside class time unless it is an emergency.
4. Avoid going on holiday during term time.
5. Provide medical evidence for absences of more than 5 consecutive days.
6. Tell us in advance if you know you are going to miss a lesson e.g. attend a university Open Day.
7. Comply with our Attendance and Punctuality Policy and associated sanctions if your attendance falls below 90%.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for ensuring the good attendance and punctuality of their students and for dealing with attendance and punctuality issues whenever they occur. There are some specific responsibilities attached to staff; these are outlined below.

The teaching staff are responsible for:

1. Accurately completing the register on the day of attendance.
2. Noting in the register any absences and lateness.
3. Following up absence with the student when they next meet.
4. Reporting any persistent issues with students to the Personal Coach and refer the student for support where a need is identified.
5. Promoting good punctuality and attendance through their own behaviour and teaching standards.
6. Update MyHalesowen with notes and actions.

Personal Coach is responsible for:

1. Following up with the student absences on a weekly basis.
2. Dealing with any personal/pastoral issues that affect poor attendance and punctuality.
3. Liaising with parents/guardians/carers in order to improve attendance and resolve issues.
4. Updating MyHalesowen with notes and actions relating to attendance or punctuality.

The Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead is responsible for:

1. Monitoring attendance and punctuality issues with Personal Coaches and taking early action to resolve issues.
2. Liaising with parents/guardians/carers and employers where attendance does not improve.
3. Implementing the policy if required for a Level 1 or 2 sanction in relation to poor attendance or punctuality with due regard to those who are young carers, care experienced, living independently and those with disabilities.

How attendance is recorded:

A register is taken for every lesson in college including tutorials, GCSE English and Maths and Functional Skills.

Students can check their own attendance on MyHalesowen.

N.B: Attendance of all students will be reviewed after the first five weeks of the academic year. If at that time you have not achieved AT LEAST 90% ATTENDANCE, and are not able to provide a full justification, you will be withdrawn from the college.

Attendance will be regularly monitored throughout your time at Halesowen College and if you fail to maintain the required level of attendance you will be subject to the necessary disciplinary measures.

Reporting on Attendance

The college monitors attendance closely and Personal coaches will receive a summary of student attendance weekly.

The college strongly recommends that students check their own records carefully, because attendance rates will be included on reports about individual student progress and in all references written to potential employers, other colleges or universities. Students can check this through MyHalesowen. If students have a genuine reason for a high absence rate we will comment sensitively about this in any reference.

What if attendance is poor?

If attendance rates are unsatisfactory students can expect this to be followed up by their personal coach initially and the Student Support Manager if required. Parents/guardians/carers of students aged under 18 are normally contacted if poor attendance becomes a problem. For students being supported by an employer through a programme we may also contact them with absence reports.

If students have worries or personal problems that are affecting their attendance, please discuss these with the Personal Coach.

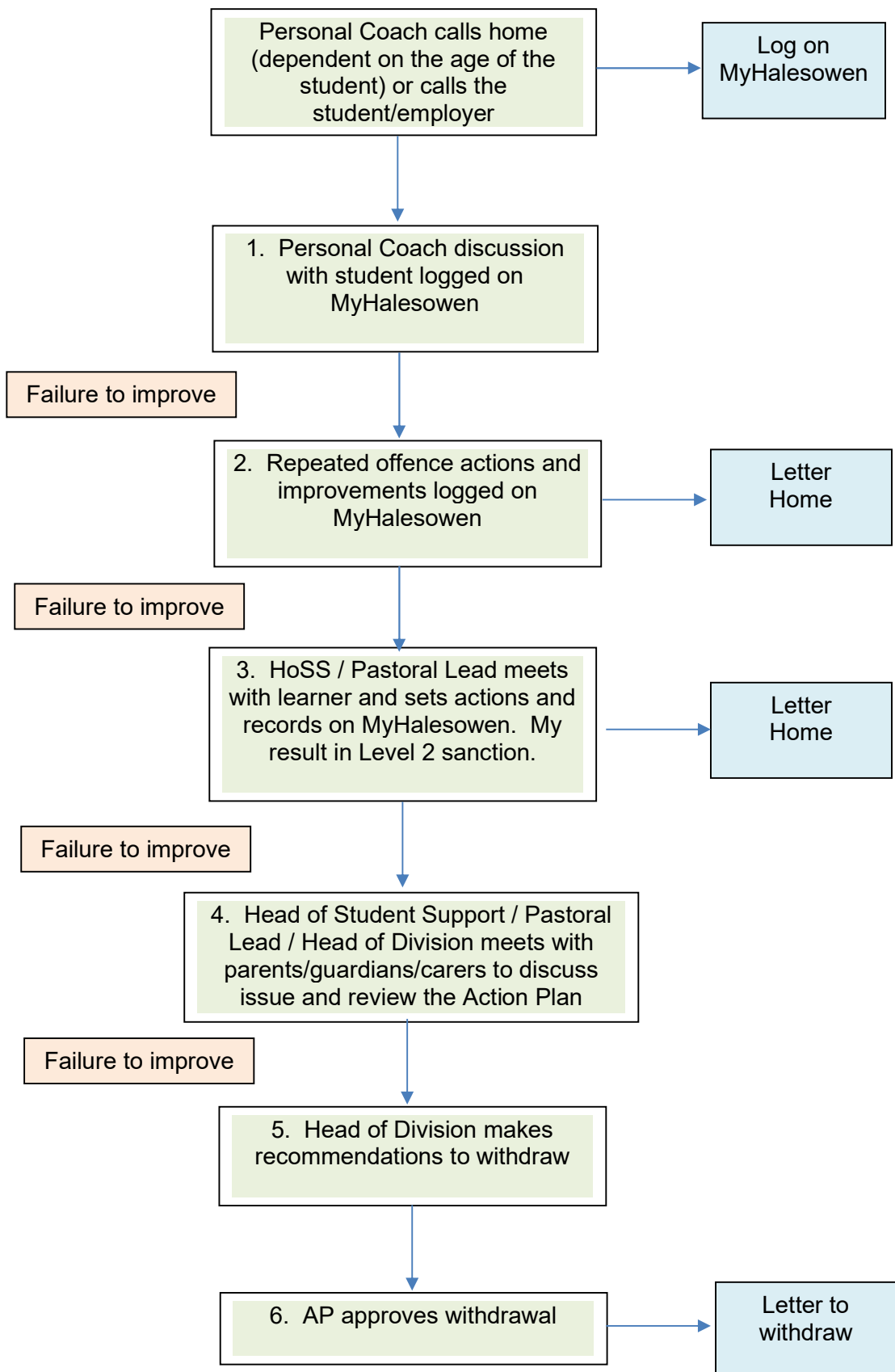
If a student is absent without sufficient reason for more than 4 weeks a 'Deemed to have left' letter will be sent.

Practices of activities used to improve attendance and promote positive behaviour

- The use of positive behaviour to improve attendance by students is expected of all teaching staff. Motivational language should be used to ensure that students understand the importance of their attendance to all aspects of their study programmes.
- Organised trips and rewards to be implemented to encourage good attendance.
- All student awards should have a good attendance component.
- Walk throughs by Heads of Division and Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead to ensure that a consistent message is being conveyed with regard to attendance, especially in the first weeks of the new term.
- The College coaches are a cost of £75 per term however, students with >85% attendance will have this cost remitted either through the Learner Support Fund or directly from the College. Where a student's attendance falls below this threshold, they will be issued with a warning followed by a final warning should there be no improvement. Should attendance fail to improve the right to this remission will be removed (unless there is a bona fide reason approved by the Head of Division).

Reviewed / Approved	By	Date
Reviewed by	Joanne Williams	June 2024
Consulted with	Lynn Pass / Sarah Bullus	July 2024
Approved	-	
CLT approved	Yes	09.07.2024
Website	No	
Next Review date		01.07.2025

Poor Attendance / Punctuality Process



Fitness to Study/Practice Policy

1. Introduction

Halesowen College takes the health, safety and wellbeing of all students seriously and recognises that this is fundamental to their academic progress. The College is committed to supporting students so that they may both feel and function well and thus seek to provide a teaching and learning environment that is safe and conducive to study. Further, it is recognised that occasionally a student's circumstances, conduct or health may impact upon their own or others' ability to fulfil that potential, which may result in implementation of the Fitness to Study/Practice Policy ¹.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students at the College and covers a range of concerns.

Fitness to Study relates to an individual's ability to engage satisfactorily as a student, including in relation to academic matters and College life. This covers issues relating to students' wellbeing, physical, emotional and mental health, health and safety and the wellbeing and health and safety of other individuals.

Fitness to Practice procedures of this policy apply to all students on courses with a practice component leading to registration with a professional, regulatory or statutory body that entitles the student to practice that profession, for example, early years, counselling and accountancy. Fitness to Practice refers to the student's health, general and professional conduct, both on and off College premises and in private lives and it is judged against the requirements of the professional body in question (the professional, regulatory or statutory body that oversees the course/profession). The expected standard of behaviour relates to their chosen profession and it may be higher than what is expected from students on other courses. Placement providers and College staff dealing with professional courses need to be aware of this policy.

Depending upon the circumstances it may be appropriate to implement other policies alongside or instead of this policy. These decisions should be made with careful judgement, Appendix A & B can be referred to for guidance.

- Misconduct with no concerns over fitness to practice should be dealt with under the Student Conduct and Disciplinary Policy (QL0011). The student's behaviour may, however, require considered and sensitive management, rather than disciplinary action. The policy will help the College in addressing cases which are inappropriate to progress as disciplinary matters. Levels of risk will be assessed by the College on a case-by-case basis.
- Health, disability and wellbeing concerns are dealt with under the Fitness to Study Procedures of this policy, unless the student comes under Fitness to Practice procedures.
- With regard to Applicants, the Admissions Policy should be referred to:

¹ In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, the College is committed to make reasonable adjustments where needed to enable students to pursue studies and in regard of professional courses, their chosen profession.

- Where there is a concern over the student's wellbeing (regardless of whether other procedures are followed), students should be signposted to College support services. Students may also be encouraged to seek external support/treatment.
- If a placement wishes to refer the student to their policies to address a fitness to practice concern, College procedures may be put on hold until they complete. The College may put interim measures in place in the meantime, including precautionary suspension of the student.
- Should the student be subject to a policy investigation, it is at the College's discretion to either pause or continue with the College's procedures.

3. Purpose

- 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 levels of concern.
- This policy has been developed in conjunction with the following College policies:-
 - Admissions Policy
 - Safeguarding Policy
 - Equality Policy
 - Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy

4. When to use this Policy

This policy may be implemented by the individual, another student, a member of staff or any third party 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 ie a friend, relative, employer, member of the College staff or medical profession.
- 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. Responsibilities

Students are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the requirements for professional conduct in the chosen profession, as well as College policies and procedures and conduct themselves accordingly.
- Notifying their personal coach about any circumstances that may affect their own fitness to practice or study, for example, a health condition, criminal conviction.
- Students may choose to discuss their situation with the College's safeguarding team who will provide support as requested.

Teachers, course leaders and staff on professional programmes are responsible for:-

- Being aware of this policy and referring to it when concerns about a student's fitness to practice/study arise.
- Bringing this policy to a placement providers' attention (where relevant).
- Should being subject to these procedures delay the student's completion of their studies, the College will support the student to catch up. The College will not, however, guarantee that the student will complete within the original timeframe.
- Provided the student has given consent, normally if the student is under 18 or a vulnerable adult, copies of correspondence will be sent to the parent/guardian/carer. Data protection rules apply and sensitive data should not be shared without the student's specific consent unless an exemption, such as the need to protect the public or prevent crime can be applied. The College will disclose information to the police if necessary or required by law.

Placement providers are expected to;

- Bring the attention of and discuss any fitness to practice/study concerns with the relevant teacher/course leader/placement officer.
- Inform the tutor of their wish to refer the student to their procedures to address the fitness to practice/study concern.

Record Keeping

- Copies of all relevant documentation relating to any level of concern must be retained securely in the student's file. This includes properly recorded investigations. This information must be destroyed when it is no longer required.
- The fact that the student has been subject to Fitness to Study/Practice procedures must be noted on MyHalesowen but without any sensitive details.
- If a student is withdrawn/withdraws from the College during the Fitness to Study/Practice process, CIS must be informed and they will record this to ensure that appropriate procedures are followed if the student seeks re-admission.

Student Support

- The student is entitled to be accompanied to any meetings/hearings by a friend, a student representative or a relative but not by a person active in legal or other professional work unless the College otherwise agrees, having been given notice before the day of the meeting.

6. Reporting Procedure

Concerns may be raised by the individual, another student, a member of staff or any third party. They should be reported to the students' Personal coach or the Head of Division / Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead of that area. If appropriate, the concern should also be reported to the Safeguarding Team. The Personal Coach, in the first instance, is responsible for following up the reported concern in line with this policy and procedures.

Concerns may range from minor to serious. Professional judgement will need to be made by the Personal Coach and if in doubt the appropriate Head of Division / Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead contacted to ensure a consistent approach across the College. Examples of concerns are given in Appendix A.

When making the judgement, aspects such as the student's maturity, pattern of the behaviour, potential risk to themselves and others, openness of the issue, readiness to address the issue and support that can be offered should be taken into account.

Minor Concerns

Where possible, the Personal coach should address minor concerns through an *informal meeting* without having to resort to formal action in the first instance. Appropriate support arrangements for the student should be considered. The cause for concern and the agreed actions should be recorded and kept on the student file sensitively on MyHalesowen. It may be appropriate to address the concern using an alternative policy.

Serious Concerns

Serious concerns should be notified to the Head of Division / Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead of the area immediately. They will notify the Assistant Principal Safeguarding and Students or Head of Pastoral who will decide what immediate action needs to be taken (for example, suspension) and which procedure(s) should be followed to address the issue. This may include a combination of:-

- A referral to Fitness to Practice/Study Formal meeting or Panel Hearing
- Safeguarding referral
- Disciplinary proceedings
- Signposting to support services
- Suspension
- Notification of third parties
- Any other action that is deemed appropriate in the circumstances.

Cooling Off

Where an incident requires immediate "cooling off", the student may be asked to leave the premises or to move to a specific area in the College. The cooling off period may last up to the end of the day. Parents/guardians/carers will be informed where the learner is under 18 years of age or have additional vulnerabilities if leaving the premises.

Cooling off on the premises should be used where practical and if the student has support needs, s/he should be referred to the Learning Support Team. Discretion should be used before sending a student home.

Cooling off is not designed to be used as a form of a disciplinary sanction and the issue must be addressed with the student in line with College policy.

Suspension

Where there is a serious concern over the student's fitness to study/practice and it is believed that their continued presence on site/at placement would compromise the investigation into the matter, the safety or welfare of them or others, or the reputation of the College, the placement or the profession, the student may be suspended by the Assistant Principal on the authorisation of the Deputy Principal.

Parents/guardians/carers will be informed where the learner is under 18 years of age or have additional vulnerabilities.

Suspension should only be used as a last resort. It is considered a neutral and precautionary act to allow time for an investigation to take place and/or preparation for a hearing. Suspension is not designed to be used as a form of sanction and a proper hearing must follow the suspension period as soon as possible.

During the period of suspension, work must be provided by the tutor and the student may (with written permission) be admitted to College for meetings/interviews, to submit coursework to meet deadlines, to take examinations, to use an LRC, although this may require going to a different site.

7. Formal Procedure

The following stages are available within the Fitness to Study/Practice Procedures:

Concern	Addressed at	Highest Possible Outcomes
Minor Concern	Informal meeting with Personal Coach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plan
Serious Concern	Formal meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal monitoring or adjustments. Formal Warning.
	Panel Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Written Warning Forced study break. Exclusion from the programme or College

The Assistant Principal Safeguarding and Students or Head of Pastoral will appoint an investigating officer (usually a Head of Division / Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead) to conduct any witness interviews, obtain a statement from the student and to gather any other appropriate evidence for the case. Statements may be made anonymous if necessary. Where applicable, a request may be made for a student's permission to obtain a medical report/information about them. The investigating officer will then prepare a brief summary of the case. A copy of the summary and the evidence should be given to the student before the meeting/hearing.

The student should be given reasonable notice of the meeting/hearing date. The Assistant Principal Safeguarding and Students / Head of Pastoral may decide to postpone the meeting /hearing if it is necessary for other (external or internal) procedures to complete first. If the student does not attend the meeting/hearing, a decision can be made to reschedule it, or for it to proceed without the student being present. This is at the discretion of the person chairing the meeting.

Guidance and procedures for conducting a Fitness to Study/Practice meeting/hearing is in Appendix C.

Formal Meeting

The meeting will be held by the Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead. The investigating officer will present the findings. The student will be given an opportunity to respond. The student may be accompanied (in line with this policy, Section 6). Meeting notes should be taken and kept.

Following the meeting, the Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead will communicate the outcome within five working days. If necessary, they should consult the Head of Pastoral and/or an externally practising professional for expert advice and may invite them to attend.

Panel Hearing

The panel is comprised of the following three persons:-

- Assistant Principal Safeguarding and Students (Panel Chair)
- For Fitness to Practice Hearings:
 - Representatives of the profession (may be a member of staff or an external person) and
 - Head of Pastoral (in case of a welfare/health issue)
- For Fitness to Study Hearings:
 - Head of Pastoral and
 - A Manager from another area

The case will be presented by the investigating officer. The student may be accompanied in line with the policy (Section 6). Witnesses may be called in, provided that the Chair has been notified before the day of the hearing.

The Panel will hear the case and the student will be given the opportunity to respond, following which the Panel decides the outcome. The student will be informed in writing within five working days.

Appeal

There is a right to appeal against the outcome of the Panel Hearing, details of which are set out in the relevant procedure. There is no right to appeal the outcome of a Formal meeting. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of a Formal Meeting, they may be referred to a Panel Hearing.

9. Linked Policies

- Student Conduct and Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions Policy

10. Appendices

- A Examples of types of concerns
- B Addressing concerns via alternative routes
- C Procedures and guidance for formal meetings, panel hearings and appeal
- D Summary of Hearing conduct.

EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF CONCERNS:

This is not an exhaustive list. The concern may be related to an issue in the College, or equality to an issue in the students; private lives outside College.

Fitness to Study:

- Misuse of alcohol or drugs, including driving under the influence and any type of use that affects their studies.
- Use/handling of illegal substance.
- Physical or mental health issues that are not satisfactorily managed and remain a concern after reasonable adjustments have been put in place.
- Threatening, aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Inappropriate behaviour.
- Behaviour/issue that may pose a risk to the individual, College staff and students or the public.

Fitness to Practice – Professional requirements:

- Failure to follow College rules and policies.
- Conduct contrary to the standards put in place by the professional body.
- Failure to follow work placement rules and policies.
- Misuse of alcohol or drugs, including driving under the influence and any type of use that affects their studies.
- Use/handling of illegal substances.
- Criminal convictions which may include those that are “spent”.
- All types of fraud and dishonest conduct.
- Physical or mental health issues that are not satisfactorily managed and remain a concern after reasonable adjustments have been put in place.
- Threatening, aggressive or violent behaviour.
- Unprofessional behaviour.
- Inappropriate behaviour and general attitude.
- Behaviour/issue that may bring the College into disrepute.
- Behaviour/issue that may pose a risk to the individual, College staff and students or the public.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS VIA ALTERNATIVE ROUTES:

Referral to support services:-

- Should be done in all cases where there is a concern over the student's wellbeing.

Disciplinary Policy:-

- Misconduct with no connected mental or physical health issues.
- Student needs to be capable to meaningfully engage in a disciplinary process and take responsibility for own actions – for example, doesn't have a learning need that prevents this.

Fitness to Study:-

- Health problems are disrupting their own studies or the studies of others, or result in unreasonable demands being placed on staff or other students (including learning disabilities/support needs).
- Medical Assessment requested and Risk Assessment conducted by a designated person.
- Welfare/medical profession may be consulted (this may be external party).

Fitness to Practice:

- Both health and misconduct issues considered.
- Applies to students on "professional programmes".
- Enables the College to judge the issue against the regulating bodies' profession-specific expectations.
- Professional member on panel so that profession-specific issues are fully considered.
- If health reasons, welfare representation on the panel.
- Outcome communicated to the professional body (they may or may not take further action).

Safeguarding Referral:-

- Any issues that may relate to keeping young people and vulnerable adults safe must be reported to safeguarding and safeguarding procedures followed in line with policy where appropriate.

FITNESS TO STUDY/PRACTICE: PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE FOR FORMAL MEETINGS, PANEL HEARINGS AND APPEAL:

Formal Meetings:-

1. A Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead will arrange a notification to be sent to the student, giving reasonable notice of the meeting, stating the nature of the concern and the student's entitlement to be accompanied and enclosing copies of any evidence and documentation that is to be referred to at the meeting.
2. At the meeting, the Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead will explain the process and the potential outcomes to the student and will inform them of their right to appeal.
3. The investigating officer will present the case and the student is then entitled to respond.
4. A period of questioning and discussion may follow, with the aim of finding an amicable solution where possible.
5. Once a student has been questioned and left the meeting, the Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead will review the findings and decide the outcome. In regards to Fitness to Practice, the Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead must act in a proportionate way by considering the interests of the public (including patients/clients) as well as those of the student. Ensuring the protection of the public at large will be essential in reaching a public at large will be essential in reaching an appropriate decision.
6. The Head of Student Support / Pastoral Lead will ensure that the student is notified of the decision in writing within five working days.

Panel Hearings:-

1. A notification will be sent to the student, giving a reasonable notice of the meeting, stating the nature of the concern, the student's entitlement to be accompanied and whether witnesses will be called and enclosing copies of any evidence that the area has collated and any documentation that is to be referred to at the meeting.
2. At the meeting the Panel Chair will explain the process and the potential outcomes to the student and will inform them of their right to appeal.
3. The investigating officer will present the case and the student is then entitled to respond.
4. A period of questioning and discussion may follow, with the aim of finding an amicable solution where possible.
5. Once the student has been questioned and has left the meeting, the Panel will review the findings and decide on the outcome.

In regards of Fitness to Practice, the Panel must act in a proportionate way by considering the interests of the public (including patients/clients) as well as those of

the students. Ensuring the protection of the public at large will be essential in reaching an appropriate decision.

6. The Panel Chair will write to the student within 5 working days informing them of the Panel's decision.

APPEAL AGAINST THE OUTCOME OF THE PANEL HEARING

1. The student may appeal against the outcome by writing to the Deputy Principal, stating the reasons for the appeal, within five days of reception of the outcome letter.
2. The Deputy Principal will determine whether or not an Appeal Hearing is justified, consult with the original Panel Chair as appropriate; and
 - a) If the case can be reviewed using the available documentation, this will be carried out by the Deputy Principal and the student notified of the decision within ten working days.
 - b) If an Appeal Hearing is warranted, it will be convened within ten working days, with the student having been given reasonable notice of the hearing.

The Appeal Panel will comprise the Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal and a member of staff from Learner Services, all members not having previously been involved in the case in question. The Original Panel Chair will also be present.

At the Appeal Hearing, the student will be invited to explain the grounds of the appeal and to state their case. The person who chaired the Original Hearing will be asked to respond to the appeal and explain the reasons for the original recommendation. The Appeal Panel can question the student and the Original Panel Chair. Once the student has been questioned and has left the meeting, the Appeal Panel will review the findings and decide the outcome. The student will be notified of the outcome within five working days of the Appeal Hearing.

3. if the appeal is upheld, no sanction or a lesser sanction than originally recommended may be decided.
4. If the appeal is dismissed, the recommendations of the Original Panel will stand. No greater sanction against the student than originally recommended may be imposed. A student who has appealed unsuccessfully is to be informed of the complaints procedure of the funding body.

Complaint to the Funding Body

When the student has exhausted the appeal procedure, there is a right to make a complaint to the appropriate Funding Body. A complaint to the Funding Body is not a further stage of appeal. The Funding Body does not hear evidence or seek to substitute its own decision for that of the College. In considering a complaint, the Funding Body will undertake an enquiry to consider whether or not the College has followed its procedures.

SUMMARY OF THE HEARING CONDUCT:

At the Hearing the Chairperson will:-

- Introduce the Panel, explain the purpose of the hearing and the procedure to determine who is presenting the evidence for each side.
- Outline the concerns.
- Confirm if witnesses or subject matter experts are being called.
- Invite both sides to present oral and written evidence and to ask questions with the College presenting the case against the student first and then the student is invited to respond.
- Have the authority to limit the amount of time used by each of the parties in presenting the case.
- Be sensitive to cultural, gender and equality issues in so far as they may affect the conduct of the hearing.

The recommendation(s) may include:-

- Exclusion from the College permanently or for a period of time.
- Conditional return to studies with an Action Plan.
- Safeguarding referral.
- Referral to disciplinary proceedings.
- Referral to internal/external support services.
- Notification of third parties.

Within five days of the disciplinary hearing, the student will be sent written notification of the Panel's decision. Subject to student consent, normal, if the student is under 18 or a vulnerable adult, copies of correspondence will be sent to parents/guardians/carers. If applicable, copies will be sent to the student's sponsoring employer and their placement and the professional body may be informed.