



HE18 – Higher Education (HE) Study & Wellbeing Review Policy

Policy Author:	Head of HE	Policy Owner:	Vice Principal Curriculum
Approval Date:	March 2021	Review Date:	March 2023
Purpose of the Policy <p>The College seeks to support all students to fulfil their potential and expects them to participate appropriately in College life as a student. Appropriate participation demonstrates a student's Fitness for Study, which is defined as follows: students should be able to take an active part in and meet the requirements of their course, to work with others, and to conduct themselves in ways that do not have an adverse impact on other members of the College and the local community.</p> <p>Occasionally a student's circumstances or health may affect their own or others' ability to fulfil their potential. This policy describes the processes that the College will follow in instances where this ability is in doubt and/or where associated levels of risk are unacceptable. This may be because of a student's extended absence, health condition, wellbeing concern or other circumstances that lead to an inability to progress in their programme, or that adversely affect others.</p>			



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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. Weymouth College is committed to an ethos of equality and inclusivity, and aims to facilitate and promote positive health and wellbeing through the recognition and understanding of all relevant health conditions and disabilities. Where necessary, the College encourages all students to seek help and support from the appropriate service(s) at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 1.2. The Study and Wellbeing Review policy provides a four-stage framework to guide practice in directing students to appropriate support, and to determine in a timely fashion what actions are needed where health, wellbeing or Fitness for Study concerns arise:
 - Stage One - Low risk: refers to emerging concerns or low risk situations;
 - Stage Two - Medium risk: refers to medium risk situations where concerns are ongoing;
 - Stage Three - High risk: refers to high risk situations where a student's Fitness for Study may be in question.
 - Stage Four – The process whereby students can request to return to study following a period of interruption.

2. Reason For The Policy

- 2.1. In an emergency situation where it is believed that a student's health or wellbeing condition presents an immediate risk to themselves or others, the appropriate Emergency Services should be contacted and the Vice Principal Curriculum, Head of Higher Education or nominee, should be notified as soon as possible. The Fitness for Study procedures will be invoked subsequently as appropriate.
- 2.2. Where a student's health or wellbeing condition results in inappropriate conduct such as abusive or threatening behaviour, or where others are put at unacceptable risk, this may result in immediate interruption from study on the authority of the Vice Principal Curriculum. This would include a requirement for the student to leave College premises as quickly as possible. Such situations would subsequently be dealt with by stage three of this policy (Fitness for Study), or under the College's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 2.3. **Applicants and Preadmission Issues**

Where any of the risk issues become apparent in relation to a prospective student prior to their enrolment, this policy shall apply as it does to existing students. Use of the term 'student' in this policy document and shall therefore include prospective students and applicants where relevant. Issues relating to HE applicants should be referred to the HE Registrar so that the relevant elements of this policy can be applied where necessary.
- 2.4. **Safeguarding & Prevent**

The College is committed to supporting and promoting the welfare of its students and is committed to the provision of a safe environment conducive to work, study and the enjoyment of a positive experience for all members of its learning community. The College will take all safeguarding concerns, including suspicions and allegations of



exploitation, radicalisation, harm or abuse, seriously and will conduct a risk assessment as soon as possible.

If the concern is found to be valid, the College will promptly make a referral to the relevant statutory authority. (Please refer to College Safeguarding Officer)

3. Policy Objectives

To ensure students:

- 3.1.** Can benefit from their programme of study and pursue it for the required period with a reasonable chance of successfully obtaining the award for which they are registered.
- 3.2.** Do not in any way prevent, hinder or disrupt the study or assessment of other students; staff in the discharge of their duties or academic pursuits; or visitors to the College from carrying out their lawful business.
- 3.3.** Do not, as a consequence of their required or necessary presence on campus, present an unacceptable risk to the health or safety of themselves or others.
- 3.4.** Are in a position to engage satisfactorily in any elements of study or assessment which take the form of placements, particularly those taking place in a professional and/or work-based setting.

4. Policy

- 4.1.** The College has responsibilities in relation to the health, safety and wellbeing of all members of our community, including students, staff and visitors.
- 4.2.** Members of staff are responsible for acting within the framework of this policy and the accompanying procedures where there are concerns as outlined above, or where a student self-refers to a member of staff because of a significant concern.
- 4.3.** Students are responsible for informing the College about any changes to their ability to study or otherwise to engage safely and appropriately with others as a member of the College community. We recognise that there may be times when a student is unable to do this. Inability or refusal to do so may result in a student's study being interrupted, in accordance with this policy, until such time as the student is able or prepared to re-engage appropriately with the College as a student.
- 4.4.** Requests to return to study must be made in writing to the relevant Head of School (see Section 8 below).

Data Protection

- 4.5.** The College follows the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and is governed by Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018, and will treat all personal information (including sensitive personal information relating to students' mental, physical health or personal circumstances) as confidential within the terms of the legislation.
- 4.6.** Personal information about a student obtained under this policy and procedure will only be shared within the College amongst those members of staff who need to know that information in order to offer the student appropriate support, to enable the



operation of this policy and procedure, or where it is required, with accrediting professional, regulatory or statutory bodies.

- 4.7. The College may ask a student for his or her agreement to share personal information obtained under this policy and procedure with relevant professionals outside of the College in order to offer the student appropriate support. The College will not normally share any personal information about a student without their agreement, but may do so in exceptional cases, where permitted by law.

5. Definitions

Assessment of Risk

Stage One - Low Risk (Emerging Concerns):

- 5.1. Low risk situations arise where there are emerging concerns for example, a pattern of non-attendance or non-engagement, or claims for extenuating/mitigating circumstances which do not warrant a formal Student Support Meeting being called. In these situations the student should be invited by an appropriate member of staff such as the programme leader/personal tutor to discuss the concerns identified, possible solutions and relevant support available.
- 5.2. At such low risk meetings it should be made clear that it is the student's responsibility to inform the College of any issues related to fitness for study. The explicit causes/instances for concern should be explained to the student, with clear examples provided. The student should be made aware of appropriate sources of academic and personal advice and support. The student should be informed that if concerns persist, a more formal meeting (medium risk) will need to be called. A record should be kept and relevant staff must be informed that the low risk meeting has taken place.
- 5.3. If, at an informal meeting with the student, it becomes apparent that more serious concerns exist and that an informal approach will not resolve the situation, the student must be informed that a more formal meeting will be called as quickly as possible.

Stage Two - Medium Risk

- 5.4. A risk may be judged to be medium where an informal meeting with the student as defined above (low risk) has been held but no improvements have occurred in relation to the situation identified, or when additional issues have arisen which are judged to be too serious to be dealt with by Stage One. In such cases a Student Support Meeting should be organised to consider what additional assistance is appropriate. This meeting will involve the student and appropriate members of academic and/or professional services support staff.
- 5.5. The student may bring a person of their choosing (family member, friend etc) to the meeting for support.
- 5.6. Where the level of risk is judged to be medium the student will be asked to agree an action plan. This may include:
 - a) requiring the student to attend weekly appointments with a nominated member of staff for regular monitoring; and



- b) requiring the student to engage with support services within the College or from external professionals, such as the student's GP and/or other relevant medical services.

A date will be set to for review of progress towards the action plan.

Stage Three - High Risk

- 5.7. A situation will be judged high risk if immediate interventions are required and/or previous interventions (low and medium risk) have not been successful or are no longer appropriate. In serious situations a high risk Case Conference should be called directly without low or medium risk interventions.
- 5.8. In exceptional circumstances, such as where there is deemed to be an unacceptable level of risk to the student or members of the College community, the Vice Principal Curriculum may decide that a student will be interrupted from their studies and required to leave the College premises as soon as possible, pending further investigation, and prior to the holding of a High Risk Case Conference. In such circumstances the student may also be asked to refrain from being present on the College campus, except by invitation to attend meetings in relation to this policy.
- 5.9. If it is deemed appropriate that the student should be interrupted from studies then they will be informed in writing of the general procedures for return to study, and of any particular arrangements specific to their case.

6. Impact on Academic Progress

- 6.1. In cases where an action plan has been agreed as part of medium or high risk interventions, continued failure to make academic progress, or to engage with the requirements of the programme of study, may result in the decision of the award assessment board to interrupt or withdraw the student from the programme directly.

7. Appeal

- 7.1. Students have the right to appeal against any decision taken under the medium and high risk Fitness for Study procedures. Appeals will only be accepted if there is evidence of procedural irregularity, bias or failure to reach a reasonable decision, or if the student submits further material circumstances which could not reasonably have been expected to have been submitted for consideration at the appropriate time.

8. Stage Four - Return To Study

- 8.1. Following any period of interruption from the College under these procedures, it may be appropriate for the student to return to resume their studies.
- 8.2. It is the student's responsibility to contact the College formally, giving at least six weeks' notice, if they wish to request to return to study at the end of any period of interruption.
- 8.3. Each student's case depends on the specific circumstances but in all cases, return to study will be conditional upon satisfactory evidence of fitness for study. This may take the form of evidence provided from a registered health practitioner, a social worker, law enforcement or a rehabilitation professional who has enough knowledge of the



student's circumstances to be able to make an informed statement about the student's fitness for study. The College reserves the right not to permit a return to study if the evidence provided is deemed insufficient to mitigate any perceived remaining risk.

- 8.4. The decision to permit a student to return to study will be made by Vice Principal Curriculum.
- 8.5. In cases where a student has taken the decision independently to interrupt their studies, the College reserves the right to utilise the return to study process to determine if appropriate support is in place where needed, and if a return to study can be approved.

9. Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

If, after exhausting the Appeals process, the student remains dissatisfied with the College's final decision they may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Contact details for the Independent Adjudicator are:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator
 3rd Floor
 Kings Reach
 38 – 50 Kings Road
 Reading
 RG1 3AA
 Tel: 01189 599813
 Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk

10. Responsibility

Head of Higher Education
 Vice Principal Curriculum

Definitions:	As above	Who Needs to Know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All College HE staff • HE Students • College Safeguarding Officer
Related Policies and Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy • Prevent Policy • Student Disciplinary Policy 	Approval Date:	March 2021

This policy was approved and adopted by:

Julia Howe

Julia Howe
Interim Principal and Chief Executive Officer