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STUDENT/APPRENTICE FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. PURPOSE AND DEFINITIONS

- 1.1 Leicester College is committed to supporting student/apprentice health and wellbeing. It recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health, wellbeing and behavioural issues is critical to student/apprentice learning, personal development and achievement.
- 1.2 In the context of this policy, health and wellbeing refers to the physical, mental and emotional health, attitudes, behaviours and lifestyles that enable students to meet the academic, social and emotional demands of College life. The College is committed to ensuring that all students/apprentices are treated fairly and equitably.
- 1.3 The Fitness to Study Policy relates to a student/apprentice’s capacity to participate fully in their studies and student life generally, making progress with their learning to achieve their goals and aspirations.
- 1.4 The policy is not to be used to address academic performance issues or with issues relating to attendance or behaviour UNLESS the behaviour, disruption or risk is perceived to be of a serious or potentially serious nature AND there is visible signs of illness, mental health difficulties, psychological, personality or emotional disorders.
- 1.5 Leicester College recognises that there may be circumstances where a student/ apprentice is unable to determine that they are placing unreasonable demands on themselves, staff, resources or the learning of others and are endangering their own wellbeing or success. This policy will, therefore, come into effect in circumstances where usual support, actions undertaken via student/apprentice review, reasonable adjustments, support from Student Services, Additional Learning Support and the curriculum team have exhausted appropriate avenues to enable the student/apprentice to continue with their studies, at this time.

2. SCOPE AND PROCESS

- 2.1 This policy can be implemented during application, pre-entry, transition, whilst a student/apprentice is on programme and during progression.

- 2.2 The College will take a fair and consistent approach where student/apprentices are unable to meet programme requirements. This could be in terms of attendance, engagement and participation in learning, adherence to targets and academic deadlines or meet the expectations defined within the Student/Apprentice Pledge, notwithstanding reasonable adjustments. The main measure will be that the College feels the student/apprentice is not able to make satisfactory progress with their learning due to:
- A medical condition
 - A mental health concern
 - Aspects of the student/apprentice's personal life significantly impacting on participation and/or engagement
 - Specific behaviour(s) reported and/or observed which are considered to be putting the student/apprentice or others at risk (deemed as falling outside of the Student/Apprentice Behaviour and Conduct Policy).
- 2.3 There are three 'stages' to the Fitness to Study process:
1. An informal 'stage', which invites a student/apprentice to an 'Informal Resolution - Fitness to Study Meeting', undertaken by the Programme Area Manager/ACM and involving other staff/parents/carers who support the student/apprentice.
 2. A formal meeting which is referred to as a 'Formal Stage 1 Fitness to Study Meeting', chaired by the Head of Personal Development, to be used in cases where the actions agreed in the informal meeting have not been effective.
 3. A subsequent formal meeting which is referred to as a 'Formal Stage 2 Consideration to Pause Learning Meeting', chaired by the Head of Personal Development, used in cases where the actions agreed at Stage 1 have not been effective or a student/apprentice's level of progress have drastically declined in a very short period of time.
- 2.4 In order to invoke either of the formal meetings the Programme Area Manager will complete a Fitness to Study Referral e-Form, using this link: [Fitness to Study Referral e-Form](#)
- 2.5 Once a referral has been received, the Head of Personal Development will invite the student/apprentice, their parent/carer (if applicable), appropriate members of staff and any external support workers/employer to a formal meeting to discuss the case, agreeing with all attendees the actions necessary to support the student/apprentice. A student/apprentice is entitled to nominate an internal or external advocate at panel meetings to speak on their behalf.
- 2.6 In situations of significant concern or when emergency interventions appear necessary, the College may need to ask the student/apprentice to not visit the College site/s and Level 3 then be immediately implemented and any relevant safeguarding procedures followed.
- 2.7 Leicester College reserves the right to revert to the Student/Apprentice Behaviour and Conduct Policy where appropriate.
- 2.8 In the case of a pause in study being agreed, and for a longer period of time than would be considered a 'short-term break', the College will place consideration on ensuring that a positive alternative destination is planned or supported as much as practically possible.

3. EVENTS

3.1 Emergencies

- 3.1.1 The Fitness to Study Policy should not distract from acute situations where it is believed a student/apprentice's behaviour or health presents an immediate risk to self or others.
- 3.1.2 In such circumstances a Safeguarding Officer and the Director of Curriculum/Apprenticeships must be informed immediately. If neither are available, the Director of Student/Apprentice Services must be contacted by phone or in person. An example of such a case could be where there is suicidal intent.

3.2 Application, Pre-Entry and Transition

- 3.2.1 Leicester College recognises that for certain programmes there is a need to ensure that student/apprentices are emotionally and physically fit to undertake all aspects of study and/or relevant work placement/Personal Development activities.
- 3.2.2 The applicant selection process takes every reasonable step to ensure that student/apprentices are supported and given appropriate information regarding the demands of the programme and the support available. However, in doing this the College must also consider its duty of care in relation to health, safety and safeguarding.
- 3.2.3 Where a student/apprentice has identified information as part of the application process and/or a member of staff has concerns that the programme demands may have a detrimental effect on either the applicant and/or others, then a query must be sent to the Head of Personal Development to determine whether the Fitness to Study Policy needs to be implemented.
- 3.2.4 Where there is insufficient information to make a decision a request for further evidence from the GP, health professional or relevant external agency may be undertaken. The applicant will be asked to provide historical details of relevant support services that can be contacted, current medical status and external support the applicant currently accesses. If the applicant declines to co-operate, or after investigation, information is not available to enable risk management procedures to be put in place, then a decision may be made to withdraw the offer of study. The applicant will be formally advised of the decision and the applicant may be offered the opportunity to apply for a different programme or offered careers advice, to assist the applicant in making an informed choice.
- 3.2.5 Where after consideration of all the information available, it is considered that a Support Plan (outlining reasonable adjustments), a risk assessment and in some instances capacity to study are deemed not viable then reasons for the decline or referral of the offer will be explained to the applicant and their parent/carer if appropriate.

3.3 On Programme/During Progression

- 3.3.1 In all cases, the initial consideration to implement the Fitness to Study Policy will be as a result of a significant cause for concern. The arrangements of the Fitness to Study Policy should be explained clearly to the student/apprentice and a copy

of the Fitness to Study Policy given. In all cases, the College must ensure that it is made clear to the student/apprentice that this is a supportive measure to:

- ensure that the demands of study are not impacting negatively on overall wellbeing or recovery from ill health
- ensure that changes are made and the student/apprentice is supported, to adjust behaviours that are negatively affecting their own success or that of others
- assist the student/apprentice to significantly improve attendance/engagement, and
- assist with changes regarding personal life, which are affecting the success, participation and wellbeing of the student/apprentice and intervention is required.

4. APPEAL

- 4.1 The student/apprentice has the right to appeal against any decisions made.
- 4.2 Appeals must be made in writing within 10 days of receiving formal communication, and must state the grounds for the appeal which can be:
- Evidence is available, which for good or responsible cause has not been brought to the attention of the Head of Personal Development as part of the panel meeting.
 - There has been a relevant and significant error in the operation of the fitness to study procedures.
- 4.3 Any appeals must be sent to the relevant Vice Principal who will respond with their final decision within 10 working days.

5. RETURNING TO STUDY

- 5.1 At the point at which a return to study might be viable, the relevant Programme Area Manager will seek any evidence regarding medical interventions/actions taken by the student/apprentice (and others).
- 5.2 A revised Support Plan, Risk Assessment and/or Personal Development targets will be implemented to highlight what support will be provided by the College to enable the student/apprentice to return to study.
- 5.3 Where appropriate the student/apprentice may be required to agree to a Risk Management Plan highlighting interventions and actions required for managing risks to self and others.
- 5.4 If a return to study is not considered appropriate, or there is a lack of information regarding interventions undertaken by the student/apprentice/others externally they will not receive an offer to study at the College.

6. MONITORING, REVIEW AND EVALUATION

- 6.1 The Vice Principal Study Programmes and Apprenticeships, together with the Head of Personal Development is responsible for reviewing the Student/Apprentice Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures every two years and making appropriate changes.
- 6.2 Reporting will occur each academic year to evaluate the impact of the policy and associated procedures, highlighting any trends and improvement actions necessary.

Fitness to Study Process

Where there are identified concerns regarding a student/apprentice’s fitness to study, a meeting must be held with that student/apprentice and all involved in their support/care. All reasonable adjustments available should be considered first and the formal stages (noted below) should only be evoked after ‘informal’ intervention has been exhausted - unless in the cases of immediate risk.

Initial Support Meeting – Level 1	Ineffective Initial Actions Meeting – Level 2	Consideration to Pause Learning – Level 3
Programme Area Manager will make a referral via the Fitness to Study e-Referral form (to request a Level 1 Fitness to Study Panel Meeting)	Programme Area Manager will make a referral via the Fitness to Study e-Referral form (to request a Level 2 Fitness to Study Panel Meeting)	Programme Area Manager should make a referral via the Fitness to Study e-Referral form (to request a Level 3 Fitness to Study Panel Meeting)
▼ The Head of Personal Development (Chair) will arrange a fitness to study Panel meeting with appropriate attendees based on the referral form suggestions, an invitation letter will be sent to the student/apprentice (and their Parent/Carer if appropriate) giving a reasonable amount of notice	▼ The Head of Personal Development (Chair) will arrange a fitness to study Panel meeting with appropriate attendees based on the referral form suggestions, an invitation letter will be sent to the student/apprentice (and their Parent/Carer if appropriate) giving a reasonable amount of notice	▼ The Head of Personal Development (Chair) will arrange a fitness to study Panel meeting with appropriate attendees based on the referral form suggestions, an invitation letter will be sent to the student/apprentice (and their Parent/Carer if appropriate) giving a reasonable amount of notice
▼ The Programme Area Manager (or anyone they delegate the task to) will present the incidents/evidence/events for the panel members to consider. The student/apprentice and anyone they nominate to support will also be given an opportunity to give their thoughts and perspective (if they attend, the meeting will go ahead without them if prior notice is not given of non-attendance)	▼ The Programme Area Manager (or anyone they delegate the task to) will present the actions that have not been effective or not undertaken as planned, for the panel members to consider. The incidents/evidence/events and anyone they nominate to support will also be given an opportunity to give their thoughts and perspective (if they attend, the meeting will go ahead without them if prior notice is not given of non-attendance)	▼ The Programme Area Manager (or anyone they delegate the task to) will present the actions that have not been effective or not undertaken as planned, for the panel members to consider. The incidents/evidence/events and anyone they nominate to support will also be given an opportunity to give their thoughts and perspective (if they attend, the meeting will go ahead without them if prior notice is not given of non-attendance)
▼ The Chair will then ask the student/apprentice (and their support) to leave the room whilst consideration is given to the case and agree the actions necessary with the panel members – actions agreed will then be communicated with all attendees both verbally and in writing	▼ The Chair will then ask the student/apprentice (and their support) to leave the room whilst consideration is given to the case and agree the actions necessary with the panel members – actions agreed will then be communicated with all attendees both verbally and in writing	▼ The Chair will then ask the student/apprentice (and their support) to leave the room whilst consideration is given to the case and agree the process for pausing the student/apprentice’s place at the College with the panel members – actions agreed will then be communicated with all attendees both verbally and in writing – other actions such as IT access etc will also be made with immediate effect
▼ A date will be set for all actions to be reviewed by the curriculum team and a referral for Level 2 will be made by the Programme Area Manager if those actions have not been completed or have been partly/fully ineffective	▼ A date will be set for all actions to be reviewed by the curriculum team and a referral for Level 3 will be made by the Programme Area Manager if those actions have not been completed or have been partly/fully ineffective	▼ The student/apprentice’s letter ‘Notice of Pausing Study’ will document the timescale this has been agreed for and who the student/apprentice should get back in contact with after this period to return to the College