



**STAMFORD
PARK TRUST**

SUPPORT TO STUDY POLICY ASHTON SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

DOCUMENT REFERENCE:	SPT/POL/000174/ASFC
THIS POLICY APPLIES TO:	Students
OWNER/AUTHOR:	Assistant Principal – Engagement and Achievement
ESTABLISHMENT LEVEL:	College
APPROVING BODY:	Senior Leadership Team
REVIEW CYCLE:	Annual
DATE APPROVED:	March 2018
LAST REVIEWED ON:	November 2025
NEXT REVIEW DUE BY:	November 2026
SUMMARY OF CHANGES:	Changes to roles Director of Engagement and Achievement to Assistant Principal Engagement and Achievement Change in terminology from Fitness to Study to Support to Study in some places.
RELATED DOCUMENTS/POLICIES:	Student Conduct Policy, Inclusive Learning Policy
LEGAL FRAMEWORK/STATUTORY GUIDANCE:	Equality Act 2000

Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Confidentiality, Consent and Data Protection.....	3
3. Scope.....	4
4. Purpose	4
5. Procedures.....	5
6. Return to Study – Sympathetic Restart.....	6
7. Appeals.....	7

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Ashton Sixth Form College is an educational institution for full time students aged 16 to 19 and for part time adult learners. We have included in our Equality Policy the commitment that the promotion of equality for all members of our community is central to all aspects of our provision at Ashton Sixth Form College. All members of our diverse community can expect to be treated fairly and with respect irrespective of their background. We are committed to working towards the eradication of any disadvantage that may occur from an individual's background. This philosophy underpins how we constantly strive to make reasonable adjustments for any student. In doing so we fully comply with the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.2. It is important, however, to be clear about what is reasonable in an educational setting and the limits to the individual support that can be provided within the college. Our staff provide outstanding care for all students, but there will be times when a student's physical or mental health are so affected that they are no longer able, despite support, within the college and externally, to maintain reasonable academic progress.
- 1.3. 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, prolonged periods of absence cannot be sustainable.
- 1.4. There may be times when the nature of a student's ill health can require support beyond the expertise or capacity that we can reasonably offer.
- 1.5. Occasionally a student's ill health may present a health and safety risk to either themselves or those around them that is unmanageable in a mainstream educational setting.
- 1.6. There are therefore occasions where, for one or more of the reasons above, it will be our judgement that, in the best interests of a student, continuing at college is no longer the best option.
- 1.7. The purpose of this policy is to:
 - i) Support students for whom a mental or physical health condition or a disability may present challenges that affect their academic progress, through a staged supportive process and/ or interventions.
 - ii) Ensure consistent and fair treatment in relation to action taken in response to a student's individual circumstances that have impacted progress and/ or attendance.

2. Confidentiality, Consent and Data Protection

- 2.1. The college recognises that any discussions relating to Support to Study will involve personal and sensitive information and we will handle, process and store this accordingly. The college will manage all personal and sensitive information in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the common law of confidentiality, as per the Trust's Data Protection Policy.
- 2.2. Staff will seek consent from the student at all stages of discussions to share vital information with key personnel, both within and outside college.

- 2.3. In exceptional circumstances, such as where it is believed that the student has committed an offence, is at risk to themselves or others, or is likely to commit a serious criminal offence, college may need to break confidentiality. In these circumstances we will always inform the student.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to current and future full-time and part-time students of the college when they are at the college, in the vicinity of the college and when they are travelling to and from the college on college transport, or on a college organised trip, placement or event. The jurisdiction of this policy also extends to non-college related activity and will also apply when behaviour outside of the college has a detrimental impact on others from the college, e.g. cyber-bullying.

4. Purpose

- 4.1. A student's fitness to study may be brought into question as a result of a wide range of circumstances. These include, but are not limited to:
- a. Serious concerns about the student emerge from a third party (e.g. friend, peer, member of college staff, placement provider, member of the public, employer, multi-agency partner, parent) which indicates that there is a need to address fitness to study.
 - b. A student has told a member of the college's staff that they have a problem and/or has provided information which indicates that there is a need to address their fitness to study.
 - c. A student has not engaged with study by attending lessons in person for a prolonged period of time with or without reason. Absence may be a cause of concern. The Education and Skills Funding Agency state that *"Institutions must withdraw students from their programmes if they do not return to learning after being absent for 4 weeks. The DFE does not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence for funding purposes."*
 - d. A sustained period of absence within the first half term. Colleagues from both the pastoral team as well as curriculum areas will use this period to ascertain if students are engaging fully with college and their academic programme of study. This assessment can be in relation to attendance and work rate as well as their ability to fully engage with their studies in a way that demonstrates they will thrive and be successful in their sixth form education. The college, during this period, reserves the right to withdraw the student's place at college if they appear to not be achieving the aforementioned aspects. The college reserves the right to do this without invoking the formal support processes, in order to allow the student time to research other opportunities at other institutions or employers in a timely fashion.
 - e. The student's disposition is such that it indicates that there may be a need to address an underlying mental health issue. For example, if a student has demonstrated mood swings or unusual behaviour, shown signs of depression, become withdrawn/aggressive/distressed/irritable, or is becoming intimidating to others.
 - f. Behaviour, otherwise dealt with as a disciplinary matter, which it is considered may be the result of an

underlying physical or mental health issue.

- g. The student's academic performance, physical behaviour or demeanour is not acceptable and this is thought to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health issue.

5. Procedures

- 5.1. We will act in a timely manner, keeping parties informed of anticipated timescales of further actions that need to be taken. We will set out clear timeframes for each of our actions and your responses including timeframes for improvement and review.
- 5.2. The student and their parent/guardian will be given a copy of any support or action plans that are agreed at each stage.
- 5.3. If a student chooses not to engage with the Support to Study process, we may follow the process without your agreement. However, if there is a refusal to undertake actions, set to address concerns we will deem the student as unfit to study at the college and the student will be taken off roll and ineligible for a restart.

5.4 Initial concerns

Teacher/ Senior Tutor/ IL/ support staff to log information and/ or concerns (including concerns which may be brought to the Senior Tutor's attention from a third party). Senior Tutor to assess appropriate action to determine Support to Study Process requirements (if necessary).

5.5 Stage 1

Senior Tutor to meet with student to initiate Support to Study Plan Stage 1 and agree actions/ SMART targets. Senior Tutor to email copy of agreed actions/ SMART targets to student.

Senior Tutor/ Inclusive Learning (IL) staff (if necessary) to hold follow up meeting with student to discuss what's working and what needs to be reviewed/ adjusted.

After a specified period of time, if progress made, and actions/ targets met, Senior Tutor to meet with student to review and complete Cedar Contract Stage 1

After a specified period of time, if no progress made, Senior Tutor will "Escalate to Next Level" to proceed to Stage 2.

5.6 Stage 2

Senior Tutor to meet with parent/ guardian, Senior Tutor Manager (STM) and IL staff (if necessary) to review the appropriate support and adjustments to help overcome any barriers and consider whether continued study in college or on the student's current programme of study is in the best interests of their health, wellbeing and education. Senior Tutor to initiate Support to Study Plan Stage 2 and agree actions/ SMART targets.

Senior Tutor/STM/IL staff (if necessary) to hold follow up meeting with student to discuss what's working and what needs to be reviewed/ adjusted.

After a specified period of time, if progress made, and actions/ targets met, Senior Tutor to meet with student to review and complete Cedar Contract Stage 2.

After a specified period of time, if no progress made, Senior Tutor will “Escalate to Next Level” to proceed to Stage 3.

5.7 Stage 3

Senior Tutor to meet with parent/ guardian, member of Senior Leadership Team and any other appropriate professionals (internal or external) to review the appropriate support and adjustments to help overcome any barriers and consider whether continued study in college or on the student's current programme of study is in the best interests of their health, wellbeing and education.

If the student and/ or parents/ guardians fail to attend, despite reasonable attempts to provide a timely opportunity, the meeting may go ahead in their absence.

In the meeting, SLT may make recommendations from the following options:

- a) student continues their education at college, subject to the support and adjustments that are mutually agreed (Stage 3 Final Contract) which will reviewed after 4 weeks.
- b) student has an educational pause and restart, subject to the arrangements that are mutually agreed i.e. doctor's letter, making reference to the Return to Study: “sympathetic restart” procedure.
- c) student withdraws from college and is supported to explore alternative provision, or options that are better suited to meet their needs. If the student and parents/guardians do not accept withdrawal from college as the outcome of Stage 3, they have the right to appeal.

After 4 weeks, if the student is placed on Stage 3 (Final Contract), a follow up meeting will take place. Senior Tutor and SLT will meet with the student and parent/guardian to review progress. SLT to convey decision on next steps/appropriate action.

Successful Outcome: Student to remain on Stage 3 Support to Study Plan (Final Contract) with ongoing monitoring and support as agreed by SLT.

Unsuccessful Outcome: Students and parents/guardians are able to withdraw themselves from college or be withdrawn. The student is offered Careers support, advice and guidance.

If the student and parents/guardians do not accept withdrawal from college as the outcome of Stage 3 they have the right to appeal.

6. Return to Study – Sympathetic Restart

- 6.1 Each student's case will depend upon the specific circumstances and context out of which concern arose, but in all cases return to study will be dependent upon a successful meeting with the student's Senior Tutor, whereby it is ascertained that the student is fit to study. This may require medical evidence and the provision of information about appropriate support services, with a recommendation of the benefit of continuing to study

with support. Evidence submitted should be from a recognised health/social care professional who has sufficient knowledge of the nature and extent of the student's previous problems and the college's concerns about them to be able to make an informed statement of the student's renewed ability to manage the demands of studying.

- 6.2 In cases where the college has any continuing concerns about the individual's fitness to study, it may require a second medical opinion. In this case a student may be asked to submit themselves for medical examinations by doctors/specialists nominated by the college, at the college's cost, to allow the situation to be properly evaluated. Students will only be permitted to return if, after receiving medical advice, the college is satisfied that the student is fit to study and able to comply with any conditions required on their return.
- 6.3 The decision to permit Return to Study will be made by the Assistant Principal: Engagement and Achievement in compliance with any conditions required, compliance with academic regulations and availability of support upon return.
- 6.4 In any case where a student returns to study, the Support to Study process will recommence from Stage 1. The student must provide their continued co-operation in this respect and review meetings will continue for part or all of their remaining time at the college.
- 6.5 If a student unfortunately returns to unacceptable levels of attendance in the first half term, the college, during this period, reserves the right to withdraw the student's place at college if they are not meeting requirements agreed in the Return to Study meeting. The college reserves the right to do this without invoking the formal support processes, in order to allow the student time to research other opportunities at other institutions or employers in a timely fashion.

7. Appeals

- 7.1 A student has the right to appeal against a decision under this policy and will be informed of this right.
- 7.2 If a student wishes to appeal against the decision made on their Support to Study at Ashton Sixth Form College, they must do so in writing to the Centre Principal within 5 working days of notification of the decision.
- 7.3 An appeal hearing will normally be held within 10 working days of receipt of the request. The student will be informed in writing of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing and the reasons for the decision. The student will be given a copy of the Support to Study Policy. If the student requests extra time to prepare his/her case, the hearing may be put back for a period not longer than 5 working days.
- 7.4 An appeal against a decision will normally be heard by the Centre Principal or their delegate.
- 7.5 A student on a 16-19 programme may be accompanied by a parent/guardian and a student on the adult programme may be accompanied by another student, learning mentor or student counsellor.
- 7.6 At the appeal hearing, chaired by a Senior Leader, the student will have the opportunity to present their case and any supporting evidence and to challenge the reasons for the decision.

- 7.7 A student will normally be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal hearing within 5 working days. For students on 16-19 programmes, a copy of the letter will also be sent to the parents/guardian.
- 7.8 If the student's appeal is unsuccessful, he/she will be informed in writing of his/her right to refer the matter to the Department for Education.