

# Fitness to Study Procedure

## **Document Summary**

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### The City College: Fitness to Study Policy

#### 1: Introduction

The City College is committed to student well-being and academic success. This policy provides a framework for addressing situations where a student's physical or mental health significantly impacts their ability to study or poses a risk to themselves or others. It is intended for serious concerns that cannot be resolved through standard College support channels.

The College has a duty of care to all community members and must balance a student's right to support with the need for a safe learning environment. In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, including those with mental health conditions.

#### 2: Scope and Purpose

This policy is for situations where a student's health or behaviour is seriously affecting their own well-being or the well-being of others. It helps staff identify the limits of their support and the need to refer students to professional external agencies, such as a GP or community health services. All matters related to a student's health will be handled with strict confidentiality.

#### 3: The Process

The procedure is a staged approach, beginning with informal support and escalating to a formal review if concerns persist.

- Stage 1 (Emerging Concerns): If a student's behaviour or health is concerning, a staff member will speak with them. The goal is to encourage the student to seek support and to create a simple, written plan of action.
- Stage 2 (Continuing Concerns): If issues persist, the Student Welfare Officer will coordinate a more formal response, which may include a case conference with staff and a support plan involving external agencies.
- Stage 3 (Serious Concerns): For critical situations where a student's behaviour poses an immediate risk, a Fitness to Study Panel will be convened. The Panel, chaired by a senior staff member, will review the case based on the 'balance of probability'. The student will be invited to attend and may be accompanied by a 'Friend' (not a lawyer).

#### 4: Temporary Exclusion

A student may be temporarily excluded from their studies to ensure safety while a formal review is conducted. This is a neutral act, not a punishment, and will be for no longer than is deemed necessary.

#### 5: Panel Decisions and Appeals

If the Panel finds the concern is proven, it can take action, including:

- Allowing the student to continue with or without adjustments.
- Requiring a temporary or permanent withdrawal from the College.

The student will be notified of the decision and their right to appeal.

An appeal can be made on grounds of procedural error, new evidence, or a disproportionate sanction. A Fitness to Study Appeals Panel, which includes a senior staff member not previously involved, will review the case. The decision of this Appeals Panel is final within the College.

### **6: Return to Study**

Any student who is excluded from their studies must provide a report from an independent health professional to demonstrate their fitness to return. The College may require a second medical opinion, with the cost of any additional medical reports paid for by the College.

### **7: External Review**

Once all internal procedures are exhausted, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter. Students can then apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) for an independent review of their case.

### **8: Useful Links**

- Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA): <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/>
- Office for Students (OfS): <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/>
- Student Minds: <https://www.studentminds.org.uk/>
- Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC): Provides guidance on the Equality Act 2010. <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>