



South
Lanarkshire
College

East Kilbride

FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Quick Links

We are inclusive and diverse, and this is one of our values.

We are committed to the FREDIE principles of Fairness, Respect, Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Engagement.



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To find out more about our Vision, Mission and Values click [HERE](#)



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1. PURPOSE AND AIM

South Lanarkshire College is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all and complies fully with legislation and national guidance to ensure the safety of staff and students, whilst widening access and promoting inclusiveness and diversity. The College recognises that it has a moral and statutory duty to promote the health and welfare of those receiving education and training through the College.

South Lanarkshire College seeks to create an inclusive environment which enables all students to engage positively with their learning. Part of that inclusive learning environment requires the College to provide for the health, safety and wellbeing of all learners. Fitness to Study, as a term, encompasses the ability of a learner to engage positively with studying and not to have an adverse impact on other learners and/or staff.

This policy and associated procedures sets out how the College will respond when a learner is either in significant distress, has a medical condition which results in health and safety concerns or exhibits behaviours which may impact adversely on their personal wellbeing.

This procedure is intended to support learners to continue with their studies and/or provide the opportunity for them to pause attendance at College until they are more able to engage effectively in their course.

2. USE OF THE FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURE

This procedure is intended for use where the behaviour, disruption or risk presented by the learner is perceived to be of a serious or potentially-serious nature and is not a matter which should be dealt with under the Code of Student Behaviour. This will include situations where a learner appears unaware of the consequences of their behaviour, as a consequence of a medical condition, on others. This includes causing disruption or distress, and/or where concerns exist about the safety of the learner or of others.

The College will seek to protect the interests of the learner while considering the needs of other learners, staff and visitors to the College campus.

In the first instance consideration should be given as to how Student Support services could be deployed in order to maintain active engagement by the learner in their studies.

3. INVOKING FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURES

Fitness to Study procedures should be used, when:

- There is a concern that suggests that the behaviours or disruptions demonstrated poses a serious risk of harm to the learner, other learners, staff visitors to the College.
- If previous reports of concerns have resulted to offers of welfare and wellbeing support but the learner does not respond by engaging and concerning behaviours continue or escalate.
- When medical or health conditions prevents the learner from participating actively in learning, deemed essential to their learning.
- If there is reason to believe that behaviours are due to a mental health condition.
- If the Fitness to Study Procedure has been previously used, but behaviours concerns have returned or continue to escalate.
- If a learner has engaged with the College or external counselling services and a risk assessment indicates a serious risk of harm to self or others that cannot be adequately supported and managed through internal support frameworks and the learner does not willingly engage with external support.

4. PROCEDURES

Once there is a concern on the continuation of a learner's fitness to study, a case will be presented by the by the College Safeguarding team addressing the full context of the concern, and a decision will be taken on whether to proceed with a formal procedure by conducting a Fitness to Study Meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is:

- To ensure the learner is aware of the concerns.
- To enable the views of the learner to be heard and considered.
- To consider any relevant medical evidence.
- To agree an action plan to manage risks or bring about changes in unacceptable behaviour.
- To explore possible alternative attendance modes to allow for a learner to recuperate.
- To explain possible outcomes if serious concerns remain.

At any point in the procedure the College may require the consideration of suspending a learner where there are serious concerns about the health, safety and wellbeing of the learner or those around them, or serious disruption to the College activities. At the agreement of the Chair of the meeting, the learner can also bring an advocate to the fitness to study meetings.

5. INITIAL ACTIONS

Where practicable the initial stages of intervention should be through the normal College procedures with regard to attendance and performance concerns, as doubts about a learner's fitness to study may not yet have been identified. This is most likely in cases where health issues have not been disclosed to the College before joining or a new health issue which has arisen since enrolment is causing problems that have not yet been disclosed to the College

6. STAGE ONE: INFORMAL

Once concerns have been raised about a learner's fitness to study, the Curriculum Manager will meet with them and explain that concerns about their fitness to study have been raised. The learner will be made aware of the precise nature of the concern. The Curriculum Manager, supported by the Safeguarding Team will attempt to resolve the matter by informal discussions with the learner.

The learner should be encouraged to explain their situation and views on the matter and will be encouraged to use one or more of the support services offered by the College if appropriate, such as:

- A referral may be made to an external organisation such as a healthcare professional if this is deemed appropriate.
- The Curriculum Manager should consider with the learner whether any specific academic arrangements or other types of support could be applied to help them study more effectively.
- The meeting outcomes will be logged on the learner's Personal Learning Support Plans.
- The Curriculum Manager, will, where appropriate, contact the learner's parents/carers if they are aged 16-18 and ensure that they are fully aware of the concerns raised and any actions arising from the meeting.
- A review period will be set of no more than 2 College weeks from the date of the meeting.

Depending on the concerns raised the Curriculum Manager, they may choose to follow the process above and review or move immediately to stage 2 as detailed below.

7. STAGE TWO: FITNESS TO STUDY CONCERN

If the issues raised are of sufficient concern, or if informal actions have not resulted in the improvement needed, the Curriculum Manager, will agree a Learning Contract which seeks to enable the student to continue with their studies. This contract will be recorded formally on the learner's Personal Learning Support Plans (PLSP) and will contain:

- Details of the concerns around the learner's fitness to study
- Current actions by the college, learner, parents/carers, healthcare professionals or other relevant bodies in relation to the current fitness to study concerns
- A timescale for review and resolution. This should normally be no more than 4 College weeks from the date of the meeting.

Additional interim meetings may also be scheduled to monitor the situation and progress made by the learner. The Curriculum Manager, and other relevant College staff should help the learner access the support available to them to enable them to continue with their studies as agreed. The expectation is, however, that the learner will take personal responsibility and engage positively with the support plan put in place by all parties.

If the concerns have not been addressed and support has not been sought, or sufficient progress has not been made the case will move to the next stage of the process.

8. STAGE THREE: FITNESS TO STUDY REVIEW

If concerns remain despite previous stages of intervention, a review panel meeting will be held to determine the next course of action. Attendees at this meeting will be:

- An Associate Principal , - Chair
- A Curriculum Manager from another area
- Any external organisations where support is provided to the to the learner – Only if agreed by the Chair)

The purpose of the review panel is to assess the learner's fitness to study in the context of their current study programme and decide on the next course of action in the best interest of all parties. The College may seek additional information in the form of assessments from medical professionals or other relevant bodies where appropriate. The learner and learner's parents/carers may be invited to attend the meeting should this be deemed necessary by the Chair.

The outcomes of the meeting will be communicated to the learner and parents/carers. These are (but not limited to):

- No further action required
- To recommend specific further academic or pastoral support arrangements are put in place to assist with on-going support at College
- To implement a revised study programme for the learner
- A suspension or an agreed break in learning with a resumption or restart of their programme at an appropriate point in the future
- Withdrawal of College place

9. RIGHT OF APPEAL

The learner may appeal against the outcomes of the Fitness to Study Review. A letter or email setting out the grounds of appeal should be addressed to complaints@slc.ac.uk to be received within 10 days of the date on which the panel outcomes were made.

The procedure of an appeal will be the same as that set out under the Complaints Policy and Procedure.

APPENDIX A – REQUIREMENT FOR MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

An outcome of either the Fitness to Study Meeting or the Fitness to Study Action Plan Review may be a requirement for the learner to seek medical assessment to enable the College to address the learner's difficulties in the most effective manner possible and make an accurate assessment of risk.

The medical assessment may be used to determine:

- The nature and extent of any medical condition from which the learner may be suffering.
- Their prognosis.
- The extent to which it may affect his/her fitness to study and manage the demands of learner life.
- Any impact it may have or risk it may pose to others.
- Whether any additional steps should be taken by our College in light of the medical condition, to enable the learner to study effectively.
- Whether the learner will be receiving any on-going medical treatment or support.

Medical evidence/assessment submitted should be from a recognised health professional who has sufficient knowledge of the nature and extent of the learner's medical situation and the concerns that led to intermission/suspension, to be able to make an informed statement of the learner's fitness to study.

The learner will be asked to authorise full disclosure to the Safeguarding Team of the results of any assessment. The College recognises that any such information disclosed will constitute "sensitive data" for the purposes of the GDPR will be handled, processed and stored in-line with the Data Protection Policy GDPR.

Should the learner decline to undertake a medical assessment, the College may either continue this procedure based on the information available to it.



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