



## **Fitness to Study Policy**

### **Purpose**

The Inspire Education Group (IEG) seeks to ensure that all its students are able to study and take advantage of the educational opportunities on offer to the best of their abilities in a supportive and inclusive environment. The IEG recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Principles of Natural Justice to ensure that it makes reasonable adjustments to address any substantial disadvantages that students with disabilities may face in accessing the services, facilities and benefits the Group has to offer.

Fitness to Study relates to a student's capacity to engage satisfactorily with study, including in relation to academic matters and life generally on campus. This policy is intended for use in cases in which the health and well-being or risk presented by the student is perceived to need initial support, or of a serious or potentially serious nature.

Early intervention in a student's mental health and well-being can avoid a crisis. This policy has three formal stages depending on the perceived level of risk, the severity of the circumstances and the student's engagement with efforts to respond. Based on the perceived level of risk to the health, safety and mental well-being of the student or others, this policy may be invoked at any of its three levels.

Students should be involved in the management of their own mental and physical well-being wherever possible. However, there may be times when a student is unwilling or unable to work within these procedures. Lack of engagement with this policy may lead to the Group invoking disciplinary procedures.

This policy may also be applied if there are concerns about a student prior to admission to the Group, which may result in a refusal of a place on application or during the induction period if it is identified that the student's needs cannot be met.

### **Scope**

All students. The only exception is where a student is on a course of study at the University Centre Peterborough, which has a separate policy.

### **The Policy Statement**

The aim is to enable a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health issues and act to support a student's learning, academic achievement and the enhancement of the student experience.

**Policy Name:** STU003 Fitness to Study Policy

**Policy Author:** Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support

**Issue:** June 2025

Page **1** of **2**

**Approved by:** Policy Approval Group

**Review Date:** June 2027

**Site:** Inspire Insights, Student Hub, IEG Website

The Group will undertake to support a student if they present a health concern, risk to themselves or a risk to others.

A student's fitness to study may be questioned if their health problems are:

- Disrupting their studies or the studies of others
- Resulting in unreasonable demands being placed on staff or other students
- Prohibiting them from coming onsite or engaging satisfactorily in their studies

This policy is not designed to be used to address academic performance or issues relating to attendance, poor behaviour or individual mitigating circumstances. It is intended to be used as an alternative to any disciplinary procedure where there is sufficient concern that a student's well-being could be affected as a result of disability, ill health or have an impact on the health and safety of the student or other persons. Any decision made on a student's fitness to study will be made through a collective process of consideration of the ability to study, learn and complete their programme of study.

## **Responsibilities**

Individual responsibilities are described under the procedural stages. Although support staff working with individual students can provide evidence of the student's fitness to study, **it is the responsibility of the curriculum staff member** to ensure this policy and procedure is implemented when a concern arises.

Fitness to study cannot lead to withdrawal for students with an EHCP, as at a tribunal, it would be considered an unlawful exclusion. They can be on Fitness to Study as it is a supportive measure and to re-engage a student in their studies.

If a student with an EHCP is being supported by the Fitness to Study Policy, but is unable to attend to complete their course, an interim meeting with the Local Authority will be scheduled to assess IEG's ability to meet their needs.

## **Related Documentation**

- SAF001 – Safeguarding for All Policy
- STU004 - Student Positive Behaviour Policy
- Appendix 1 – Indicators of Concern and Procedures



## **Fitness to Study Policy**

### **Indicators of concern regarding fitness to study**

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:

- Serious concerns about the student emerge from a third party, e.g. friend, colleague, placement provider, member of the public, employer, multi-agency partner, or parent, which indicates that there is a need to address fitness to study
- 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
- 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 well-being concerns, shown signs of depression, become withdrawn/aggressive/distressed/irritable, or is becoming intimidating to others
- Behaviour, otherwise dealt with as a disciplinary matter, which is considered may be the result of an underlying physical or mental health problem or a learning disability or a learning difficulty (learners with EHCP, learners with ADHD, learners with ASD, or other SEND needs). Learners with an EHCP may also use the EHCP review process in conjunction with or instead of the fitness to study process
- Where a student has been hospitalised as a result of an attempt on their own life as part of their return to college plan

### **Procedure**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Individuals/teams to be present (where appropriate)</b>
Initial discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Student Mentor</b> to discuss with the student emerging concerns</li><li>• <b>Student Mentor</b> to inform Wellbeing/Welfare/ALS and refer for any support needs</li><li>• ALS/Welfare team to alert relevant professionals (i.e. SEND caseworker, Early Help Worker, Social Worker, Virtual School)</li><li>• <b>Student Mentor</b> to record details on ProMonitor and, if under 18, inform Parent/Carer of initial concerns</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student Mentor</li><li>• Tutor</li><li>• Wellbeing/Welfare Team</li><li>• ALS team</li></ul>

**Policy Name:** STU003 - Fitness to Study Policy - Appendix 1

**Policy Author:** Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support

**Issue:** June 2025

Page 1 of 9

**Approved by:** Policy Approval Group

**Review Date:** June 2027

**Site:** Inspire Insights, Student Hub, IEG Website



Stage 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Led by <b>Curriculum Lead/HoF/AHoF</b></li> <li>Explain concerns with the student around F2S and Policy</li> <li>Agree actions</li> <li>Inform the Wellbeing/Welfare ALS Safeguarding Team, who may consider weekly welfare meetings/check-ins</li> <li><b>Curriculum Lead/HoF/AHoF</b> to record details on ProMonitor and inform the parent/carer if not present at the meeting.</li> <li>Review meeting date to be agreed 2 weeks after the Stage 1 meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Faculty Curriculum Lead/Assistant Head of Faculty</li> <li>Welfare team</li> <li>ALS team/LSC</li> <li>Parent/Carer</li> </ul>
Stage 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Curriculum Lead/HoF/AHoF/Curriculum Admin</b> to set up a case meeting with the Wellbeing/Welfare, ALS/Safeguarding Team, and relevant external services</li> <li><b>Agree support plan and timeframe</b></li> <li>Set up a follow-up meeting. Involve relevant internal/external agencies/parents/carers, where relevant</li> <li><b>Curriculum Lead/HoF/AHoF/Tutor</b> to record details on ProMonitor, including the support plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Faculty Curriculum Lead/Assistant Head of Faculty</li> <li>Welfare team</li> <li>ALS team/LSC</li> <li>Parent/Carer</li> </ul>
Stage 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Curriculum Lead/HoF/AHoF/Curriculum Admin</b> to set up final Case Meeting with relevant professionals/emergency case meeting depending on severity</li> <li>Set up a follow-up meeting involving relevant internal/external agencies/parents/carers, where relevant</li> <li><b>Curriculum Lead/HoF/AHoF/Tutor</b> to record details on ProMonitor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Head of Faculty Curriculum Lead/Assistant Head of Faculty</li> <li>Welfare team</li> <li>ALS team/LSC</li> <li>Parent/Carer</li> </ul>

## **Initial support and guidance to students**

In advance of this policy being invoked, informal discussion(s) between the student and their Student Mentor may be initiated by either the student or a member of staff, where initial emerging concerns about the student's wellbeing and/or health warrant this. The informal discussion(s) should give the student the opportunity to explain their perception of the matter.

The Student Mentor should refer the student to the Welfare team if their behaviours relate to an ongoing or emerging mental health concern.

If a student has made an attempt on their life that has resulted in a hospital visit, then a return to college meeting should be held. This should include, where practicably possible, the student, Student Mentor/member of Curriculum, a member of the Welfare team, and parents/carers. A member of the ALS team should also be present if appropriate. The student should automatically go to Stage 1 of the Fitness to Study.

The student should be referred to one or more of the support services offered by the College, as appropriate. It should be made clear to the student that concerns relating to their mental and/or physical health may need to be referred to specialist support as appropriate (including multi-agency partners).

## **Factors Affecting Engagement**

Below are examples of circumstances that might impact a student's ability to study, including:

- **Safeguarding Concerns:** This could include experiencing or being at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any situation that compromises their safety and well-being
- **Young Carer/Parent Responsibilities:** The significant time, emotional, and practical demands of caring for a family member or raising a child
- **Significant Personal or Family Difficulties:** Bereavement, financial hardship, homelessness, domestic issues, etc
- **Disability-Related Support Needs:** While often linked to health, it's important to acknowledge the broader impact of disabilities on access to learning
- **Other External Factors:** Involvement in legal proceedings, significant community responsibilities, etc

It is hoped that in most cases, issues can be resolved at this informal stage, and that students will respond positively, taking advantage of the support available.

The Group may, when there are reasonable concerns regarding a student's fitness to study, their safety, or the safety of others, require the student to provide medical or expert reports and advice, which may include risk assessments. This may include, but is not limited to, assessments from qualified healthcare professionals or other relevant experts. The purpose of these reports and assessments is to assist the college in determining appropriate support



measures and ensuring the student's ability to engage safely and effectively in their studies. The student will be informed of the specific reasons for this request and will be given a reasonable time to provide the necessary information.

Where it is suspected that a student's behaviour may be related to an ongoing or emerging mental health problem, or a learning disability or specific learning difficulty (learners with EHCP, learners with ADHD, learners with ASD or other SEND needs), the Wellbeing/Welfare team must be consulted. In cases of emergency, the College's Safeguarding processes must be implemented.

Any informal discussions, advice and undertakings made by the staff concerned and/or the student should be documented and recorded on Pro-monitor.

## **Stage 1**

Where concerns remain following informal intervention, the following action is required:

- The Curriculum Lead/Head of Faculty/Assistant Head of Faculty should approach the student and explain that concerns about their fitness to study have emerged, and explain the fitness to study policy. The student should be given the opportunity to outline their views on the concerns. The Student Mentor and a member of the Welfare team may also be involved in this discussion, where appropriate
- The student should be asked to authorise full disclosure to the College of the results of any related medical history. The student should be informed of the purpose of the meeting and advised of any documents they may need to bring
- The various sources of support open to the student to address the concerns should be outlined, and the student encouraged to utilise them. These may include the Wellbeing/Welfare team, including safeguarding designated staff, Additional Learning Support (ALS) or external agencies. If the student has an EHCP, then the Local Authority must be informed by a member of the ALS team
- It should be made clear to the student that it is their responsibility to be fit for study and that there is a recognised concern within the College

At the end of any discussion:

- The Curriculum Lead/Head of Faculty/Assistant Head of Faculty shall record any mutually agreed-upon actions and timeframe as a support plan and ask the student to sign
- If the student declines to sign the support plan, the member of staff shall note that fact on the plan as well as confirming that the plan is, in their belief, an accurate reflection of the agreed actions agree
- Inform the relevant Wellbeing/Welfare/Safeguarding/ALS who are involved that this policy is being invoked
- If the NoK is not present at the meeting, then they should be informed of the discussion and outcome. This should be sensitively considered and in agreement with the student



- The student should be made aware that any actions will be reviewed after a 2-week period, or another mutually agreed-upon time frame; a follow-up review meeting should be agreed upon for 2 weeks after the Stage 1 meeting
- Ensure a copy of the plan is recorded on ProMonitor

If the student is unable or unwilling to cooperate with the above process, they should be informed that continuation of the same, or any additional cause for concern, could result in their fitness to study being more widely considered by moving to Stage 2 of this Policy.

## **Stage 2**

Continuing or significant concerns about an individual student's health, safety, mental well-being and/or ability to study as evidenced by a significant deterioration in health, appearance, attitude and/or wellbeing might require a further/initial response from the College and will be noted as a Stage 2 case under this policy.

## **Case Meeting**

- The purpose of a case meeting is to bring together all relevant internal and external parties to collaboratively discuss and determine the most effective ways to support a student's success. This meeting adopts a tailored approach, meaning the support strategies will be specifically designed to meet the individual needs of the student, and a holistic perspective, considering all aspects of their well-being, including academic, social, emotional, and personal factors. Crucially, this case meeting is a key step in a support process, taking place after an initial Stage 1 meeting where concerns are first identified, and before a follow-up meeting planned approximately two weeks later to review the implemented support strategies and their impact
- The Head of Faculty/Assistant Head of Faculty should liaise with the Wellbeing/Safeguarding/ALS staff member who has been informed and or involved as outlined in Stage 1. They will support the coordination of a case meeting involving relevant internal and external representation of those who can best provide expert and specialist advice
- The case meeting will advise or make recommendations on how to best support the student and confirm who the member of staff with primary responsibility for managing the case going forward will be

## **Follow-Up Meeting**

- It is expected that, following the initial case meeting, the student and parents/carers will be invited to a follow-up meeting to discuss and agree on the implementation and support recommended at the case meeting
- Where relevant and appropriate, internal and external professionals relating to the student will be invited to the meeting in order to support the student and the process. This should include a member of the ALS team, where appropriate



The purpose of the meeting will be to ensure that:

- The student is made fully aware of the nature of the concerns which have been raised
- To hear and consider the student's views and to ascertain the student's perception of the issues identified, and also to ensure that the student clearly understands the College's expectations regarding fitness to study
- The best way to proceed is agreed upon. For example, this could include a support plan, a reduced timetable for an agreed period
- The student is fully aware of the possible outcomes if difficulties remain
- The parent(s)/carer(s) will be fully informed about the concerns, support process, procedures and likely outcomes. For students under 18, there is an expectation that they will attend meetings. However, if they are unable to attend, they will be required to provide written confirmation that the meeting can proceed in their absence

**A Support Plan** should be agreed upon, to include:

- Support for the student, where appropriate
- Agreed on academic/conduct-related expectations for the student to observe
- Agreed review of the study programme to support the student to achieve parts or all of their studies
- Agreed actions with review dates
- Consequences of not adhering to the agreed actions
- Consequences of the continuation of the causes for concern
- If the student declines to sign the Support Plan, the Head of Faculty shall note that fact on the plan, as well as confirming that the plan is, in their belief, an accurate reflection of the actions agreed
- A copy of the record should be recorded on ProMonitor

The Head of Faculty/Assistant Head of Faculty is responsible for checking that the steps agreed in the support plan are implemented and reviewing progress against the plan.

Lack of engagement with any part of this procedure may lead to immediate escalation to Level 3 of this policy or formal disciplinary measures being invoked.

Students may remain at Stage 2 for the duration of their study, provided it is having a positive impact and is regularly reviewed every two weeks.

### **Stage 3**

Stage 3 may be initiated due to:

- Serious or unresolved concerns about a student's actions, health, safety, mental wellbeing and/or ability to study that have not been resolved during Stage 2

**Policy Name:** STU003 - Fitness to Study Policy - Appendix 1

**Policy Author:** Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support

**Issue:** June 2025

Page **6** of **9**

**Approved by:** Policy Approval Group

**Review Date:** June 2027

**Site:** Inspire Insights, Student Hub, IEG Website



- Persistent and/or serious significant concerns raised about a student's actions, health, safety, or mental well-being that are putting the health, safety, well-being and/or academic progress of his/her self or themselves or other members of the College community at significant risk will, exceptionally, cause Stage 3 to be initiated without reference to Stages 1 and 2

### **Stage 3 Final Case Meeting**

A case meeting will be convened by the Welfare team/Deputy DSL in consultation with the Curriculum and support teams. We invite those who can best provide expert and specialist advice on the case being considered and those who need to be there because of their relationship with the student, including their personal tutor or designated staff member. The case meeting will make recommendations on the most appropriate course of action. Where a student has an EHCP, the Local Authority must be invited to attend.

The Deputy DSL will notify the Head of Faculty and Assistant Principal, Student Experience and Support, of the decision reached and recommendations by the members of the case meeting.

#### **If emergency action is required:**

Exceptionally, where it is felt that a student's well-being is deteriorating quickly, immediate emergency action may be taken. An emergency case meeting with the

Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support/Assistant Principal Curriculum must take place, and immediate action agreed upon. The case meeting will consider holistically and, as immediately as possible, the concerns raised, including the student's perception of these concerns, and will seek to ensure that immediate support, as appropriate, is put in place for the student. It may consider various options, including recommending additional support strategies, action plans, or referral to other agencies.

### **Stage 3 Follow-Up Meeting**

Following either the immediate emergency action or the initial referral to Stage 3 case meeting, the student and parent(s)/carer(s) will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss options for support in relation to their study programme and review:

- Agreed on academic/conduct-related expectations for the student to observe
- Agreed review of the study programme to support the student to achieve parts or all of their studies
- Agreed actions with review dates
- Consequences of not adhering to the agreed actions
- Consequences of the continuation of the causes for concern

**Policy Name:** STU003 - Fitness to Study Policy - Appendix 1

**Policy Author:** Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support

**Issue:** June 2025

Page **7** of **9**

**Approved by:** Policy Approval Group

**Review Date:** June 2027

**Site:** Inspire Insights, Student Hub, IEG Website

If, despite the College's best endeavours, the student is unable to attend the case conference, face to face, or remotely, the meeting may take place in their absence, with the outcome being communicated to the student subsequently.

In reaching a decision about the case, the College must be satisfied it has obtained and reviewed all possible relevant guidance about the student's condition to ensure that no reasonable alternative exists and that no reasonable adjustments would affect the position. Where there is doubt on these points, the meeting will be adjourned to allow further investigation.

Assistant Principal Curriculum/Student Experience and Support/ Assistant Principal Curriculum may decide to:

- Take no further action
- Require an enhanced action plan, which should include the steps to be taken and the required timescales
- Require the student to temporarily interrupt their studies
- Exclude the student

In cases where it is apparent that an individual student's present support needs are beyond the containment of the College for the time being and the limits of reasonableness have been reached in line with current legislation, a decision will be made that the student should be required to withdraw from full-time studies, subject to review on a specified date.

The outcomes and actions arising out of the meeting will be documented and sent to the student/parent/carer and their SEND Case Officer, if they have an EHCP, if not in attendance. All actions should have specific timeframes where appropriate, and adherence to such timeframes will be a condition of any re-entry to programmes of study.

## **Appeal**

The student shall have the right of appeal against any decision to require the student's studies to be temporarily interrupted or to exclude the student. Any Appeal must be made in writing to the Vice Principal within 12 working days.

The grounds for Appeal are:

- New evidence
- Procedural irregularity

The Appeal Panel, which will include the Vice Principal for Student and Staff Experience, shall have the power to determine its own procedures for the hearing, but generally:

- The student should indicate whether they will be attending the Panel Hearing and the names of those who will be accompanying them
- If the student and/or their representative fail to attend, without good reason, then the hearing may proceed without them

**Policy Name:** STU003 - Fitness to Study Policy - Appendix 1

**Policy Author:** Assistant Principal Student Experience and Support

**Issue:** June 2025

Page **8** of **9**

**Approved by:** Policy Approval Group

**Review Date:** June 2027

**Site:** Inspire Insights, Student Hub, IEG Website

## **Return to Study**

After a period of suspension on health grounds reached by mutual consent, the decision as to whether to permit the student to return to study will be made by the Assistant Principal Curriculum/Student Experience and Support, Deputy DSL and Head of Faculty.

Each student's case will depend upon the specific circumstances and context out of which concern arose and, in some cases, return to study will be dependent upon satisfactory medical advice/evidence of fitness to study and the provision of information about appropriate support services with a recommendation of the benefit of continuing to study with support.

A return to study plan will be drawn up highlighting what support is needed to enable the student to return to education, and, if appropriate, a risk assessment may be put in place to consider the experiences that gave rise to the suspension, and to minimise the risk of recurrence.

The student must provide their continued cooperation in this respect. Such review meetings may continue for part or all of their remaining time on the programme.

If returning to study is deemed not to be an option and the student is dissatisfied, then they should follow the Group's usual complaints procedure.

# FITNESS TO STUDY PROCEDURE



**Inspire**  
Education Group

Please follow the procedure below when assessing students' Fitness to Study:

