



Health, Wellbeing & Fitness to Study Policy

August 2021

Review: August 2023

1 Introduction

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework to guide decision making in complex student welfare cases. This policy has been developed to work in conjunction with other key College procedures and policies including:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality & Diversity Policy
- Student Code of Conduct
- Examination Policy

Reigate College is committed to supporting all students and recognises the importance of a student's health and wellbeing in relation to their academic progression and ability to access a broader College experience. The College has a responsibility to support students to feel and function well, to maximise their potential. The College will also treat students in a manner that is consistent with the College's Equality & Diversity Policy and mission statement:

- High quality education in a supportive community.

Where a student is clearly having difficulty at College for verifiable medical reasons, the College will try to support the student by making reasonable adjustments, in order to help the student reach their full potential and maintain a daily routine.

However, it is important 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 both internal to the College and externally, to maintain a reasonable academic progress. Therefore, it must be noted that:

- We are not a distance-learning College. Whilst it is reasonable for subject teachers and support staff to be flexible with attendance due to ill health on a temporary basis, prolonged periods of absence cannot be sustained
- There may be times when the nature of a student's ill health may require support beyond the expertise or capacity that we can reasonably offer
- Occasionally a student's ill health may present a health and safety hazard to either themselves or those around them, which is unmanageable in a mainstream educational setting.
- Staff at the College cannot diagnose a student's ill health, particularly mental health.
- If a student presents with an ongoing health (particularly mental health) issue that impacts their education, then there is an expectation that student should seek support from services internally at College and also externally. Internally, all students can access counselling through 'Relate' and for those who are over 18 years, there is the service provided by Dorking Health Care, which they can access. Externally, a student may need to seek support from their GP and from specialist mental health services such as CAMHS if required.

1.1 Promotion of positive Health & Wellbeing

Reigate College aims to provide all students with access to opportunities which will help to improve their health and wellbeing through a variety of means, such as:

- The College Tutorial Programme
- Access to a Tutor, Senior Tutor or Pastoral Director
- Self-help pages on the College VLE (Moodle)
- Instagram page dedicated to Wellbeing – @RCWellbeing
- College wide community events
- Free access to the College's Gym
- A range of free weekly activities
- Wellbeing assessments available for all students
- Mentors – Both Staff and Students
- Access to onsite external counselling
- Partnership with external support services e.g. Mindful, Dorking Talking Therapies.

2 Joining the College

Students are encouraged to disclose any physical or mental health need as part of their application. This disclosure will in no way prejudice any decision about the application; on the contrary, it is used to establish how best we can respond to the individual need and what reasonable adjustments can be made.

In cases where a complex or significant physical or mental health condition is disclosed, it may be appropriate that further information is sought from health professionals or that confirmation is obtained from a medical professional that the student is 'fit to study'.

A **Fit to Study Form** (see Appendix B) must be submitted prior to enrolment, otherwise this process cannot be completed. A senior member of the Pastoral Team will enrol the student onto a suitable, agreed programme of study. Information regarding this student will be passed onto the delegated Pastoral Monitor of the student, who will ensure appropriate support is in place for the student from the outset.

Students in this category will meet their Pastoral Monitor regularly. In these meetings, a review of whether a student is meeting required expectations with regards to attendance, punctuality, and performance. If a student is not meeting the required standards, support in place will be reviewed and a meeting arranged with parents/guardians to determine whether it is in the student's best interests to continue (see Appendix C).

3 Studying at the College

If students do not disclose a pre-existing physical or mental health condition on application, then it is unlikely that they will receive support or reasonable adjustment unless the condition becomes clear to a member of staff. Early disclosure of issues is therefore, vital to allow us to assess how best to support students.

Students are made aware of the extensive range of student support services at the College, both during the induction period and as part of the ongoing Tutorial Programme (see section 1.1). If a student wants or needs to disclose any information, they can do this by seeing any member of staff, though it is suggested that the student meets with their Senior Tutor. If a parent/guardian wants or needs to disclose any information, they can contact the Student Services Manager. Information will then be passed on to the relevant members of staff.

If any information provided shows that the student is 'at risk', a risk assessment will be completed and if appropriate, a safety plan. This will be conducted by a senior member of the Pastoral Team or delegated alternate. Support will then be offered to the student, which may involve referral to outside agencies such as CAMHS or the student's GP.

4 Support

It is reasonable for teaching staff, on a short-term temporary basis, to liaise with students via email or on Microsoft Teams. This cannot continue in the long-term, as we are not a distance-learning College.

Departmental and Pastoral support will be provided. Pastoral support will be managed by a Senior Tutor or a senior member of the Pastoral Team. The College cannot provide complex medical, psychological or psychiatric support.

Whilst the student has problems with their health, they should:

- Complete work that has been set (as much as possible) and return it
- See if they can attend other sessions (if normal timetabled lessons are missed)

Parents/guardians should ensure that up-to-date medical evidence and (if applicable) care plan pathways have been provided.

5 Academic Progress

Each case needs to be considered on its merits, but it is clear that a minimum level of overall attendance needs to be maintained to allow a student to realistically achieve. Academic success depends on engagement in classroom activity, so excessively long periods of complete absence or very poor attendance will make a student's studies untenable. With regards to coursework and homework, if students fall significantly behind with their deadlines, despite extensions being offered, then continuing will not be viable. This might include falling behind with their work/coursework to the extent that they are not likely pass their qualification. A decision on this will be made by the Head of Department or delegated alternate, in conjunction with a senior member of the Pastoral Team. Prior to this, the College will:

- Ensure 'reasonable' support/adjustment has been provided for the student
- Fully consult the student's teachers and other curriculum, pastoral and Learning Support staff
- Consult with the student and/or their parent/guardians
- Refer the student to external agencies, if applicable.

6 Support after Long-Term Absence

For any student who has had a long period away from College, a delegated pastoral monitor will conduct a meeting with the student when they return. Parents may be required to attend. Support for the student will be agreed at this meeting. The student may also need to provide evidence from a medical professional that they are fit to study at College (see appendix A and B).

7 Timetable Adjustments

On a case-by-case basis, reasonable adjustments will be considered and applied where possible. Where sufficient evidence is provided, it might be reasonable to look at an adjusted or reduced timetable for the student on a short-term basis. However, this is in exceptional circumstances as the College does not offer part-time programmes of study. If this is the case, all parties will be consulted before it is agreed, including student, parent/guardian, Head of Department(s), and anyone else involved in supporting the student. These cases must be agreed by the student's Pastoral Director/Director for Mental Health and Wellbeing.

8 Fitness to Study

There are occasions when physical or mental health issues are so complex/significant that it is not possible for a student to complete their programme of study. Ideally, a clear consensus from all parties would emerge about the best way forward for the student, but this will not always be the case. There will be situations where the College believes that it has exhausted the support options available and made sufficient reasonable adjustments, but the student is unable to maintain their fitness to study.

If the College, the student and the parents/guardians all agree that a student should withdraw, then this will be actioned. Where there is no consensus that withdrawal is the most appropriate outcome, then considerations will be made to the students' performance, as stated in point 5. In these cases, the College reserves the right to withdraw the student for the current academic year.

9 Withdrawn Student

Once the student has been withdrawn for health reasons the College will:

- Offer careers and progression advice
- Pass the student's name to Surrey County Council Youth Services (or alternative) so that additional support can be sought
- Write to the student/parents/guardians to inform them of the decision
- In some cases, provide the student with a letter offering them a break in learning with the opportunity to restart the following year (see point 10)

10 Restart

In exceptional circumstances, it may be appropriate to offer a conditional restart at College. Students can only ever restart once. They must restart their studies in the following academic year and before they turn 19 years of age.

Before the restart, students must show that they are 'fit to study' by providing verifiable medical evidence and evidence of routine (see appendix A and B). Please note, there may be legitimate reasons e.g. specification change, why this is not always possible.

In these situations, it is up to the student to contact the Admissions Manager and Senior Tutor with an application form by 31 May to confirm they wish to restart.

The following additional conditions will then apply:

- If the student is restarting their Lower Sixth or Intermediate year, they will have to attend Induction Day

Restarters will automatically be monitored by a delegated Pastoral Monitor.

11 Return to College after a 'crisis'

See appendix D for what a 'crisis' might include for the purposes of this Policy.

If a student has been deemed fit enough to return to College by a medical professional, the student will meet one of the safeguarding team before they resume attending lessons/activities. A member of the safeguard team or designated alternate will continue to monitor that student for the next four working weeks (if applicable).

If a student has been identified through a crisis or received a diagnosis of a mental health issue or is receiving support either through CAMHS or another organisation, it could be that an Individual Care Plan is written up and agreed. The plan will be written consulting the pupil, parents/guardians and relevant professionals. The plan works using an 'Assess, Plan, Do and Review' cycle (see appendix C).

When a student returns in this instance, if the student is unable to keep themselves safe by following an agreed plan, it will be deemed that the College environment is not suitable for the student and therefore they will be withdrawn from College role. Section 10 of this Policy may be considered.

Please note, the College is an open site, where students have 'free periods'. Therefore, we do not have the resources to:

- Account for a student's whereabouts at all times.
- Ensure a student's safety at all times.

Appendix A: Checklist of Evidence for Fitness to Study

The students and/or the parents must provide evidence that the student is fit to study. Evidence of the following is required:

- 1 Letter or email from medical practitioner that the student is fit to undertake a programme of study at Reigate College. The medical practitioner needs to be aware of the demands that a programme of study may put upon a student and believe that the student can cope with this. Specific reference should be made to:
 - Ability to attend College regularly
 - Ability to complete regular academic study
 - Ability to cope with exam and coursework pressure
 - Ability to manage in the open and unsupervised nature of the College site
 - Ability to cope with being in the large College community of over 2,500 students
 - Any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made

Appendix B is a pro forma that the medical practitioner can complete.

- 2 Proof of sustained routine in the student's life for example attendance at school/college/employment/voluntary work or recognised programme of rehabilitation.
- 3 Proof of regular and ongoing engagement with support services/medical services/social services as directed by the medical practitioner.

Appendix B: Fitness to Study Form

Medical Professional Pro Forma

In my professional opinion, _____ (Student Name),
is fit to study at Reigate College.

Please tick and comment on each of the following points. The above named student has the:

	Yes	No
1 Ability to attend College regularly Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Ability to complete regular academic study Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Ability to cope with exam and coursework pressure Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Ability to manage in the open and unsupervised nature of the College site Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Ability to cope with being in the large College community of over 2,500 students Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please specify any reasonable adjustments that may need to be made in order for the student to meet the above:

Name: _____ Position/Profession: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Official Organisation Stamp:

Appendix C – Monitoring Guidance

For all students who are receiving monitoring meetings cover the framework of **Assess, Plan, Do, Review**. The Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle is an educational tool which follows guidance for students who have barriers to their learning which affect (for example) attendance, behaviour, wellbeing or mental health. It acts as a checklist and helps to systemise and clarify the process to all parties, ensuring the student is achieving and is well enough to be in College.

Assess

Assess the needs of the student and how their attendance, punctuality has been

Plan

Agree a plan and targets that the student must try to adhere to, incorporating any reasonable adjustments.

Do

The student continues with their courses and communicates if struggling.

Review

Pastoral member of staff to review progress.

This monitoring is completed by a member of the safeguarding team. The cycle will continue until the risk has decreased.

Appendix D – Following a Crisis

- Suicide attempt
 - Student has been hospitalised as a result of serious mental health difficulties
 - Serious self-harm
- This list is not exhaustive.