

## **Dixons Sixth Form Academy**

### **Fitness to study Policy**

#### **1.0 Before joining the college**

During enrolment, the college encourages students to disclose any support which will be required to support their mental, physical health or any learning needs. Any disclosure will not prejudice any decision about an offer of a place at the college. Any information disclosed will be used to establish how best to respond to the individual needs of the student. The college may need to seek further information from appropriate health professionals and other agencies in order to adequately support the student.

#### **1.1 Studying at college**

Once a student joins the college, their progress tutor will assess their individual needs, where appropriate. If these needs require adjustments to be made by the college in terms of its delivery of education, evidence must be provided. The evidence must be from a recognised health professional who has sufficient knowledge of the student's needs and the context of how the student is progressing in college. The final decision on a student's programme of study will always be made by the college. This may lead to a support plan being agreed by other staff in the college, such as a counsellor or safeguarding lead. Consent will always be sought from students to involve parents and carers in these decisions, however, in exceptional circumstances, confidentiality may need to be broken without the student's consent. Equally, in certain cases, confidentiality will need to be respected where the student requests it. The college is aware of its Equality Act duties to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities.

#### **1.2 Fitness to study**

There may be occasions when a student's mental or physical health are so affected that it becomes untenable for them to sustain their studies, despite the support put in place.

A minimum level of attendance needs to be maintained to allow a student to make academic progress. Dixons Sixth Form is not a distance learning institution and whilst it is reasonable to ask staff to support students with remote learning on a temporary basis, this cannot be sustained in the long term. If a student falls significantly behind with classwork, independent work and/or coursework deadline, despite extensions being offered, there comes a point when catching up is not viable. The specific expectations regarding attendance and assessment will depend on the individual's circumstances. The college will make a decision on the threshold for this policy being implemented, depending on these individual circumstances.

Such circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- When a student's ill health required support beyond the expertise or capacity of the college
- When a student's health presents a health and safety risk to themselves or others
- When a student, due to period of absence, cannot reasonably complete their studies

#### **1.3 Support**

Once the college takes the decision to implement the Fitness to Study policy. Support may take the form of the structure below. However, as each student's circumstances will be complex and specific to their needs, this is merely a suggested structure of support and will be implemented according to a student's unique circumstances.

##### **Stage 1**

A meeting will take place with the student and the Progress tutor, with parents/carers being invited to attend if appropriate to the situation. This meeting will outline the concerns raised about a student's progress and/or attendance. A support plan will be determined and a review date set, usually no longer than two weeks from initiating the support plan. The support will be logged on Improve (the college online platform) with specific actions set out.

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## **Stage 2**

Following a review of the support plan set out in Stage 1, a follow up meeting will take place again with the student, Progress tutor, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (usually the Assistant Principal for Progress) and parents/carers where appropriate. A further support plan with specific targets will be drawn up and a review date set, usually no longer than two weeks from initiating the support plan. The support plan will be logged on Improve.

## **Stage 3**

If, following the support outlined above, there is no improvement, a formal meeting with the student, the Principal, another member of the Senior Leadership Team (usually the Assistant Principal for Progress) the Progress tutor and any other relevant stakeholders will take place. For example, the college counsellor, safeguarding lead, Progress officer or other relevant colleagues. Again, parents/carers would be invited to attend as appropriate. At this stage, after review evidence on Improve and the advice of relevant health professionals where appropriate, the Principal will take a decision regarding the student's place in the college. The student may choose to withdraw their place at this stage. In some cases, the student will be offered a restart the following academic year, if this is appropriate to their circumstances and in their best interests. This can only ever happen once and they must restart the following academic year before they turn 19 years old.

## **2.0 Right to Appeal**

An appeal may be made by the student. This must be made in writing to the Chair of Governors within 35 working days of the final meeting.

### **2.1 Appeals Process**

Where an appeal is made to the Chair of Governors, an appeal panel will be formed of two governors. An appeal hearing will normally be held within 15 working days of receipt of the request. The student and their parents/carers will be informed in writing of the date, time and place of the appeal hearing. The student and their parent/carer will be given a copy of this policy. The outcome of the appeal hearing will be provided in writing within 5 working days of the date of the hearing. There is no further right of appeal from the decision of the appeal panel, however a complaint can be raised to the ESFA.