

FITNESS TO STUDY

A framework to support students to enable them to progress and achieve.

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Introduction

- i. This policy has been developed as part of St David's College's commitment to realise the potential of all in our community as encompassed in our mission:

'A Catholic College for the community seeking to discover and realise the full potential of all, in an atmosphere of love, service and respect inspired by Christ.'

- ii. This policy seeks to support learners to achieve their full potential by encouraging their full participation in college life so they can progress successfully, both academically and spiritually in their lives.
- iii. As a college we are committed to removing barriers to learning and will work with learners promote their inclusion in all that the college has to offer.
- iv. We recognise the profound impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on individuals' wellbeing and development. We are committed to adopting a trauma-informed approach in our policies and practices to create a safe, supportive, and healing environment for all.
- v. We want to support all learners through a graduated, Trauma informed response to ensure that learners are able to progress and achieve.
- vi. The college follows the All-Wales Child Safeguarding procedures in relation to specific and identifiable wellbeing issues that prevent and learners from accessing their education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.
- vii. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:
 - **Studentship Policy**
 - **Learner Attendance Policy**
 - **All Wales Safeguarding Procedures**
 - **Safeguarding Policy**
 - **Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.**
 - **Learner Complaints**
 - **Substance Misuse Policy**

- **Equality and Diversity**
- **Health and Safety Policy**

Policy Scope

- i. The college expects all learners to maintain the core expectations, enabling us to create a learning environment which is safe for all.
- ii. As a Trauma-Informed college, St David's acknowledges that there may be many circumstances where wider context, specialist intervention and impact on self and/or others may mean that a learner is unable to recognise or determine that they are placing unreasonable demands on themselves, college staff or that their circumstances are having a profound and disturbing impact on the success and wellbeing of themselves and/or others.
- iii. The college is committed to supporting learners with disabilities and learning needs in ways that meets their individual needs effectively, putting in the appropriate reasonable adjustments.
- iv. This policy outlines the procedure for managing cases where a learner's physical and mental health is preventing them from benefiting from the provision of education the college can offer or is having an adverse impact on the learning experience of others and has extended beyond the realms of reasonable adjustments and/or the pastoral and wellbeing support the college can offer.
- v. The college outlines the support and actions the college will undertake, where a learner is unable to meet the college expectations of being '**ready, respectful and safe**' and it is deemed not appropriate to apply the college's studentship policy due to the learner's circumstances.
- vi. Where the behaviour of a learner presents an immediate significant risk to the safety of themselves or others, the appropriate emergency services should be notified immediately.
- vii. It is not necessary to progress through each stage of the process in every case. Identification of the appropriate stage of the procedure to use will be determined following a risk assessment by the college. Where a serious risk is identified, the procedure may be entered at

stage 2 or 3 depending on the level of risk. Should a learner be unwilling to participate in the procedures, the process will continue in their absence with all options remaining available.

- viii. The college reserves the right to remove any learner from enrolment if they have been continuously absent from the college for a period not less than four weeks and the college has been unable, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the learner.
- ix. The College will take **reasonable** steps to ensure that no learners are placed at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability, additional learning need, trauma experience or history.
- x. '**Reasonable**' includes consideration that the college does not compromise academic standards, the ability to achieve the requirements set out by the awarding body, health and safety or the relevant interest of other individuals.
- xi. This is not a legal document.

Handling concerns and disclosures

Personal data is handled, processed and stored in accordance with GDPR. Sensitive personal or confidential data will be held by the safeguarding team and only shared with consent from the learner or where:

- A learner's behaviour threatens their safety or the safety of others
- A member of college would be liable to civil or criminal penalty for failing to disclose.

Initial support and guidance

- i. Prior to this process being invoked, in the majority of cases, there must be evidence which demonstrates an ongoing supportive dialogue between the learner, staff and, if appropriate, parent/guardian. Evidence of these must be uploaded on to Staff Advantage / MyConcern.
- ii. Pastoral tutors retain responsibility for attendance monitoring and updating staff on any actions agreed in meetings with the learner and/or parents. In a case regarding a safeguarding issue, the urgency of the situation may require the process being actioned without such a prior dialogue.

- iii. Where a disclosure is made whilst on the course, the ALN or Wellbeing team should be notified immediately. Any safeguarding matters arising from this disclosure need to be raised with a member of the safeguarding team.
- iv. Where attendance, behaviour and/or engagement with learning is impacted by health concerns, pastoral tutors will support learners through a Health and Additional Support plan (Appendix 1)

Admission processes

- i. As a Trauma-Informed college, St David's recognises the importance of ensuring that all learners have fair access to appropriate learning opportunities which enables them to fulfil their highest potential. It is essential that the college fulfils its own duties in ensuring that applicants are physically and emotionally fit and able to undertake and participate in all aspects of learning.
- ii. The college must have regard to its duty of care in relation to safety, health and wellbeing and safeguarding of its learners and staff. Where the college feels that there is insufficient information available to make an informed decision around managing risk based on disclosure, we will request an applicant's express permission to obtain further information and evidence from relevant professionals. If the learner declines the colleges request for permission to seek further information, the college reserves the right to highlight this in any risk assessment.

Stage 1: Emerging Concerns

Applies where emerging concerns about a learner's behaviour, health, safety or wellbeing are raised. These concerns could include:

- **Any behaviour that adversely impacts others**
- **Behaviour that makes learning impossible**
- **Angry Outbursts**
- **Complete disengagement**
- **Symptoms of Psychosis**
- **Declining poor mental and emotional health requiring risk management**
- **Extended periods of absence due to poor mental or physical health**

- i. A supportive exploratory meeting will be arranged involving relevant staff such as the learner's Pastoral tutor, subject teachers, the appropriate Learning Area Managers, Wellbeing and Safeguarding officers or the Directors of Safeguarding and Studentship, Wellbeing and Pastoral Care or Additional Learning Needs.
- ii. A health and additional support plan (HASP) will be produced where support will be offered to the learner. This will agree actions with the learner and what additional support the college can provide to support the learner to maximise their engagement with their studies.
- iii. In all cases where a learner is under the age of 18, a parent / carer should be contacted and present wherever possible. If the learner is over 18 years of age, they are entitled to support from a "trusted adult" but not from any legal representative.
- iv. Evidence for the need for a stage one meeting must be provided and an action plan will be drawn up with the learner. Permission will be sought to disclose pertinent information to relevant staff as appropriate.

Stage 2: Continuing or strong initial concerns

Applies when continuing or serious concerns about a learner's health, safety or mental wellbeing are raised. This could include instances where the learner has not engaged with the support offered by the college as agreed in their HASP. Staff should refer to a member of the wellbeing or safeguarding team.

- i. A supportive exploratory meeting will be arranged involving relevant staff such as the learner's Pastoral tutor, subject teachers, the appropriate Learning Area Managers, Wellbeing and Safeguarding officers or the Directors of Safeguarding and Studentship, Wellbeing and Pastoral Care or Additional Learning Needs. Where suitable external agency personnel will be invited.
- ii. In all cases involving learners aged under 18 a parent/carer should be contacted and present wherever possible. If the learner is aged over 18 years, they are entitled to support from a trusted adult, but not from any legal representative.

- iii. Discussions will involve establishing whether further reasonable adjustments or support can be put into place to enable the learner to continue their studies. Their HASP will be revisited and reviewed.

The outcome may be:

- Withdrawal from the course with a view to re-enrolling at a future date.
 - Transfer to an alternative course.
- iv. If a learner is asked to withdraw from a course of study, they will be asked to do so voluntarily. If a learner refuses, then the case will be passed to Director of Studentship and Safeguarding or the Director for Wellbeing and Pastoral Care for consideration for a suspension from college.

Stage 3: Immediate and serious concern or no progress from stage 2

Applies when there are immediate and serious issues or where no progress from previous concerns has been made and where the learner's actions or behaviours are putting the health, safety, wellbeing or academic progress of themselves or others at significant risk or is likely to adversely affect the reputation of the college.

- i. If the case is the result of an incident which falls into one of the above categories, the college will make every effort to ensure they minimise any immediate danger to the learner or others. The Directors of Studentship and Safeguarding, or the Director of Wellbeing and Pastoral Care or member of SLT should be informed immediately.
- ii. The learner should be asked to work remotely until a case conference can be convened – this should occur within 5 working days.
- iii. A letter stating the above will be sent to the learner's home address and parents if the learner is under the age of 18.
- iv. A case conference will be held with relevant parties from the following: Director of studentship and Safeguarding, the Director of Wellbeing and Pastoral Care, Director of Additional Learning Needs and a relevant Learning Area Manager.

- v. In all cases where the learner is under the age of 18, a parent or carer is requested to attend. Any medical or legal reports relating to the learner should be presented to panel to facilitate the construction of a risk assessment.

- vi. If the case conference was convened as a result of an immediate and serious incident the risk assessment will inform whether a supportive action plan can be put in place in order for the learner to remain at the college. If this is the case, the action plan/ risk assessment should be revisited within **three** college weeks to ensure progress is being made.

- vii. If the panel has met as a result of no progress against concerns, a decision should be made about whether the learner remains on their course.

The following outcomes may be considered:

- Withdrawal of place at college
- Completion of course as a distance learner

Appeals

- i. The learner has a right of appeal where the decision has been made to exclude. All appeals should be made in writing to the designated member of the senior leadership team within five working days of the decision. Their decision will be final.

- ii. A decision to withdraw a learner's place at the college will preclude a learner applying for another course without evidence from an external professional, stating that they are fit to return to study and will convene a meeting with the learner and the external agency prior to an application being made to return.

Appendix 1 – Health and Additional Support Plan

Health and Additional Support Plan

Date of Plan:

Completed by:

Learner Information

Learner Name	
Learner Number	
Mobile Number	
Current Attendance	

Next of kin contact information

Contact Name, Email	
Mobile Number	
Relationship to learner	

Details of Learner's needs:

(Please discuss this with learner)

Area of need	What can college do?

Plan of support

Action	Person responsible	To be completed by (date)	Review Comments

Student agreement:

- I must engage with the support offered by college
- If I am absent, I must inform my tutor and subject teacher
- If I am absent, my parent/guardian must authorise my attendance through Parent Advantage and contact my tutor
- I will aim to meet the college target of 100% attendance and be punctual to all lessons.

Partnership agreement:

I sign here in agreement to complete the actions above and use this document jointly with the learner attendance policy:

Name (role)	Signature	Date

Review Date

Date	Reviewed by	Any Changes to plan?

Additional meeting notes

Date	Present at meeting	Notes

Internal Support at St David's College:

Department	Information	Link
Pastoral Support	We have a dedicated and professional teaching staff assisted by excellent support staff. All students will meet with their Pastoral Tutor twice a week to review their progress and follow our pastoral programme on Wellbeing.	https://www.stdavidscollege.ac.uk/study-and-subject-information/
Learner Support Centre	The Learner Support Centre (LSC) provides an inclusive and individualistic learning experience for our neurodiverse learners. The LSC is the place to go for support and advice for	https://www.stdavidscollege.ac.uk/learner-support/

	students struggling with any aspect of College Life, including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).	
Wellbeing and Safeguarding	Looking after your wellbeing and health plays a key role in being a successful student, managing your workload, and building necessary skills to deal with what life can throw your way. Our Wellbeing Team is available to speak with you and give you additional support throughout your time at St David's.	https://www.stdavidscollege.ac.uk/wellbeing-safeguarding/

Helpful External Resources:

Organisation	Information	Link
Samaritans	If you need someone to talk to, we listen. We won't judge or tell you what to do.	https://www.samaritans.org/wales/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/
Childline	We're here for you, whatever's on your mind. We'll support you. Guide you. Help you make decisions that are right for you. Our tips and techniques, ideas and inspiration, can help you feel more in control. And you can access them in your own time, at your own pace!	https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/
Mind	We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets support and respect.	https://www.mind.org.uk/
Careers Wales	At Careers Wales we can help you to plan your career, prepare to get a job, and find and apply for the right apprenticeships, courses and training.	https://careerswales.gov.wales/
Working Wales	At Working Wales, we're here to support you through these changing times with free advice, guidance and access to training to help you get into work or further your career.	https://workingwales.gov.wales/
Rate My Apprentice	Find Apprenticeships, Degree Apprenticeships, School Leaver Programmes & Jobs For School Leavers Search for apprenticeships and jobs for school and college leavers near you.	https://www.ratemyapprenticeship.co.uk/
Network 75	Graduate with a degree, 5 years work experience and no student debt! Network75 is a combined work placement and part-time study route to a degree	https://network75.southwales.ac.uk/

	allowing students to Work, Earn and Learn!	
Cardiff Family Advice and Support	Cardiff Family Help Team are an early intervention service offering high quality information, advice and assistance to children and young people aged 0-18 (or up to the age of 25 in the case of a vulnerable young person) and their families living in Cardiff.	https://www.cardiffamilies.co.uk/
Dewis Cymru	Dewis Cymru is the place to go if you want information or advice about your well-being – or want to know how you can help somebody else. Find help, services, and information near you.	https://www.dewis.wales/

Appendix 2 – Learner Risk Assessment

Name:	DoB:	Student ID:
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Background Information

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Threat:	Risk:
Aggravating Features:	Mitigating Features:

Risk Severity:	Risk Likelihood:	Impact Level:
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Parties Responsible:
Contact Telephone numbers:

	Acceptable	Tolerable	Undesirable	Intolerable
Improbable Risk is unlikely	LOW	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	HIGH
Possible Risk will likely occur	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	EXTREME
Probable Risk will Occur	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	EXTREME

Risk Assessment Action Plan

Potential Problem	Risks	Measures to Reduce Risk	Date Agreed by Learner