



Black Mountains College

Wellbeing to Study Policy and Procedure

2026

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1. Purpose of this Policy

- 1.1 BMC is committed to providing the best possible support for our students to enable them to complete their academic study successfully, in a safe and inclusive learning environment.
- 1.2 Fitness to study relates to a student's capacity to participate fully and satisfactorily as a student in relation to their academic studies and student life generally at the College.
- 1.3 This Policy and Procedure will apply where a student's mental or emotional wellbeing, physical health and/or behaviour is causing significant concern and/or having a detrimental impact on their ability to progress academically and function effectively at the College. This policy puts the student's welfare at the heart of the process.
- 1.4 This Policy and Procedure is intended to ensure an appropriate and coordinated response in situations where:
 - Concerns arise over a student's perceived fitness to study, and
 - Prompt action/intervention is deemed necessary, and
 - Other internal procedures (e.g. those relating to students' academic performance, fitness to practice, reasonable adjustment recommendations or Student Discipline Procedures) are deemed to be less appropriate or have already been exhausted.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all students registered to study across all modes of study, including undergraduate, professional students and full-time, part-time and distance learning students.
- 2.2 This policy applies to the College campus and any College related activities away from the College (such as sites of learning, field trips, work placements and study abroad/exchange).
- 2.3 This Policy and Procedure is applicable to all registered students throughout their time at the College, including those who are seeking a return to study and whose enrolment has previously been interrupted or suspended under this Policy.
- 2.4 Where it is deemed appropriate or necessary, the College may implement alternative procedures (e.g. the Student Discipline Procedures, or a course- specific fitness to practise procedure) instead of, or in addition to, acting under this Policy.

3. When this Policy should be used

- 3.1 This Policy should be used in circumstances where a student's fitness to study gives cause for concern and other procedures are not considered appropriate at that time or have already been exhausted. Examples of such situations include (but are not limited to) those in which:
 - There is evidence of significant non-engagement by the student with their studies, which have not been satisfactorily addressed through other interventions and procedures;



- A student's support needs are beyond the type or level of support which the College can reasonably be expected to provide (including, but not limited to, the student's health, wellbeing and/or disability support needs which cannot be mitigated through reasonable adjustments);
- A student's behaviour is adversely affecting the activities or reputation of the College or a placement provider;
- A student poses or is perceived to pose a risk to their own health, safety or wellbeing or that of other students or staff;
- A student's behaviour is adversely affecting the teaching, learning and/or experience of other students.

3.2 In taking action under this Policy, the College will be mindful of the sensitive and confidential nature of fitness to study matters and its obligations under all data protection legislation (including General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 and the Data Protection Act 2018 as well as the Special Educational Needs Disability Order NI (SENDO 2005).

4. General principles

- 4.1 Students are encouraged to seek appropriate practical and specialist support to manage and, where possible, mitigate the matters that give rise to concerns actioned under this Policy and Procedure.
- 4.2 All matters considered under this Policy and Procedure will be dealt with according to the individual circumstances. Whilst seeking to ensure consistency of approach and application, the College reserves the right to vary from the prescribed Procedure where it deems it necessary to do so in the interests of fairness and/or health and safety.
- 4.3 When a student is asked to attend a meeting which has been called to discuss or consider their fitness to study, they are entitled to be accompanied or represented by another person, e.g. a friend, relative, an adviser such as a health professional or support provider. The College does not permit students to have legal representation at these meetings.
- 4.4 If a student is unwilling or unable to attend a meeting or participate in any other aspect of the Procedure, the College may still follow the Procedure where it is reasonable to do so. The College may also deal with issues based on written reports and/or statements in the absence of the student and/or their representative.
- 4.5 References to specific College post holders in this Procedure will include the facility to nominate another staff member of equal or higher seniority to avoid potential conflicts of interest or responsibilities that may have an impact on the Procedure.



5. Overview

- 5.1 The Procedure has two distinct levels (Level 1 and Level 2) and includes provisions for temporary suspension in situations that require immediate action and a process for appeal against decisions.
- 5.2 Level 1 will typically be implemented in response to initial (non-critical) concerns about a student's fitness to study, with the intention of seeking a successful resolution of the matter at that Level through mostly informal interaction with the student.
- 5.3 Depending on the nature and/or severity of the concerns and the student's own response to the situation, the Procedure may be initiated directly at Level 2 without any requirement for Level 1 to have been implemented or exhausted.
- 5.4 This Procedure will be undertaken in a transparent manner. The student will be notified of the identity of the staff member dealing with the case (the Case Officer) and, subject to any obligations of confidentiality, will normally be informed of the identity of anyone that the College consults about the case.
- 5.5 Prior to implementing this Procedure, College staff are expected to consult with the Student Services team to ensure that the student's immediate support needs are adequately considered and to confirm the appropriateness of invoking this Procedure.
- 5.6 The student should be encouraged to engage with the Student Services team wellbeing services offered by the College and (where appropriate) external providers.
- 5.7 The Case Officer should ensure that the student is provided with a copy of this Policy and Procedure when initiating action under this Procedure.

6. Procedure – Level 1: Initial concerns

- 6.1 When concerns are raised about a student's fitness to study, a member of College staff will act as Case Officer. The Case Officer will be appointed by a more senior member of staff and is likely to be a person who knows the student (e.g. a personal tutor, course director, Student Support Lead).
- 6.2 The Case Officer will consult with BMC Student Services and other College staff, external professionals and others, as appropriate, to gather relevant information about the matter and confirm that this Fitness to Study Procedure is the most appropriate means of dealing with the matter. They will also discuss whether it would be appropriate/supportive for them to attend the meeting, however the Case Officer must notify the student of any such attendee in advance of the meeting.
- 6.3 The Case Officer will contact the student to advise them of the concern about their fitness to study and the nature of the concern. They will also confirm and explain that the matter will be dealt with at Level 1 under the provisions of this Procedure. The Case Officer will arrange a meeting with the student, giving at least three working days' notice.
- 6.4 The Case Officer should remind the student that they are entitled to be accompanied at the meeting (e.g. a friend, relative, an adviser such as a health professional or support provider) and ask them to confirm in advance the name and relationship of any person who will accompany and/or represent them at the meeting. However, the



Case Officer is permitted to continue with the Procedure if the student is unable or unwilling to participate.

6.5 During the meeting, the Case officer will:

- Explain the concern
- Discuss its perceived impact/implications and the student's perception of the matter
- Allow the student opportunity to respond to the concern
- Identify any related support needs the student may have, and
- Allow the Case Officer to reach an informed decision on the matter

6.6 After considering the advice and input received from others, including any comments/representations made by the student, the Case Officer will determine whether the student's fitness to study is impaired and what actions (if any) need to be taken. This may include one or more of the following:

- a) Implementation of appropriate support arrangements and/or reasonable adjustments for the student
- b) A time-bound action plan to be drawn up, with the agreement of the student (where possible), setting out the ways in which the matter will be managed including any obligations on the part of the student (e.g. in respect of their conduct, engagement with studies, or additional support that they should seek)
- c) Other action taken with the objective of resolving the matter at Level 1
- d) Escalation of the matter to Level 2 of this Procedure.

6.7 The student's wellbeing should always be considered when communicating the outcome of the Case Officer's decision at each stage of the procedure and this should be done in person where reasonable and practicable (with support if appropriate). The student must also be notified in writing (normally within five working days of the meeting), with reasons, and any actions to be taken.

6.8 Notes of the meeting with the student will be recorded and retained on the student's record.

6.9 The student has the right to appeal against the Case Officer's decision. The Appeal process is set out in our Appeals Policy and Procedure, which is accessible via the Student Portal.

7. Procedure – Level 2:

7.1 Serious and/or continuing concerns Note: Level 2 of the Procedure can be used where, in the opinion of the College, action already taken at Level 1 has not resulted in a satisfactory outcome, or the concern is sufficiently serious or persistent as to require the Procedure to be initiated directly at Level 2. 7.1. A member of academic staff of suitable seniority and experience appropriate to the case will be nominated by the College Director to take on the role of Case Officer.



- 7.2 The Case Officer should consult with the other relevant College staff, external professionals and other persons (as appropriate) to gather relevant information about the matter at any point in this Procedure. This consultation may become a formal case review meeting at the Case Officer's discretion.
- 7.3 The Case Officer will contact the student to advise them of the concern about their fitness to study and the nature of that concern, and to confirm that the matter is to be dealt with at Level 2 under the provisions of this Procedure. The Case Officer will arrange a meeting with the student, giving at least three working days' notice. The Case Officer may invite other College staff and/or external professionals to attend the meeting (where they deem it appropriate) and must notify the student of any such attendee in advance of the meeting.
- 7.4 The Case Officer should remind the student that they are entitled to be accompanied at the meeting (e.g. a friend, relative, an adviser from such as a health professional or support provider), and ask them to confirm in advance the name and relationship of any person who will accompany and/or represent them at the meeting. For avoidance of doubt, the Case Officer is at liberty to continue with the Procedure in the event that the student is unable or unwilling to participate.
- 7.5 During the meeting, the Case officer will:
- Explain the concern
 - Discuss its perceived impact/implications and the student's perception of the matter
 - Allow the student opportunity to respond to the concern
 - Identify any related support needs the student may have, and
 - Allow the Case Officer to reach an informed decision on the matter.
- 7.6 After taking account of the advice/information made available, including any comments/representations made by the student, the Case Officer will determine whether the student's fitness to study is impaired and what actions (if any) need to be taken. In deciding on the actions to be taken the Case Officer will have due regard for the implications they may have for the student's financial support; advice may be sought from the Student Services Team. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:
- a) Implementation of appropriate support arrangements and/or reasonable adjustments for the student;
 - b) A time-bound action plan to be drawn up, with the agreement of the student (where possible), setting out the ways in which the matter will be managed and any obligations on the part of the student (e.g. in respect of his/her conduct, engagement with studies, or additional support that they should seek);
 - c) A recommendation to the student take a voluntary leave of absence from study and/or from the relevant area of activity as appropriate (e.g. student accommodation);
 - d) A decision to withdraw the student from any current placement, overseas study or other College related activity;



e) Permitting the student to continue their studies on a part-time basis or to study away from the College if this is practicable;

f) Imposing a formal suspension of study for a stated period of time and/or exclusion from specified College facilities/activities, with or without conditions for any subsequent return to study or readmission to those facilities/activities. (See section 8);

g) Termination of the student's studies at the College. (See section 9).

7.7 The Case Officer may choose to communicate their decision verbally in person to the student (with support if appropriate), particularly where circumstances indicate a need for prompt notification. The student must also formally be notified in writing (normally within five working days of the meeting), with reasons for the decision and details of any actions to be taken.

7.8 Minutes from the meeting with the student and the decision of the Case Officer (including the rationale for that decision) will be recorded and retained by the student's Head of School as part of the student's formal records.

7.9 The student has the right to appeal against the Case Officer's decision at Level 2. The Appeal process is set out in section 10 (Right of Appeal).

8. Formal Suspension (for a specified period)

8.1 If the Case Officer considers that the student should be subject to a formal suspension from study (or exclusion from certain College facilities/activities) for a specific timeframe, the proposed suspension must be referred to the appropriate Lead for Further or Higher Education within the student's Faculty for consideration and approval.

8.2 When the student is informed of the decision to suspend, they will also be provided with details of any conditions associated with eligibility to return to study or for readmission to the facilities/activities from which the student is being excluded.

8.3 The College Director will liaise with the Student Services Team and relevant academic staff to ensure that a plan to support the student's return to study (where required) is developed and implemented.

9. Termination of Studies

9.1 If the Case Officer considers that the student's studies should be terminated, this must be referred to the College Director for consideration. They will then be responsible for submitting the request for Termination of Studies to the Board of Trustees for approval.

9.2 If the decision to terminate the student's studies is approved by Board of Trustees in accordance with section 9.1 above, the student's wellbeing should be considered when communicating this outcome and this should be done in person/verbally where reasonable and practicable (with support if appropriate). The student must also be



informed of the decision in writing together with reasons and any resulting consequences (e.g. entitlement to partial qualification for studies completed).

10. Right of Appeal

10.1 For appeals please refer to the Black Mountains College Appeals procedure.

11. Document Control Information

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1.3	September 2026	Fenella Lloyd	September 2027