

# **Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study (HWSS) Policy and Procedure**

## **1 Introduction**

Backstage Academy aims to be welcoming and inclusive by successfully admitting and supporting students with a broad range of needs.

The Academy recognises the importance of a student's health and wellbeing in relation to his/her academic progression and wider Academy experience.

The Academy aims to maintain an empowering environment which is safe and conducive to the wellbeing of all.

The Academy aims to enable all students to have opportunities to fully engage with all aspects of their student life, removing barriers as necessary, so that all students have the opportunity to achieve their maximum potential.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Ensure that students who are experiencing health or wellbeing difficulties are supported to achieve their potential within a supportive and inclusive environment;
- Provide a clear set of procedures which can be used by staff and students when a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviours may be having a negative impact on their ability to engage with their studies, progress academically and function at the Academy;
- Ensure that students are able to make informed decisions regarding options available to them;
- Ensure a consistent, co-ordinated and sensitive approach to managing situations or behaviours which have become a concern;
- Provide a clear set of procedures which can be used by staff when a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviours may have a detrimental impact on the ability of other students to engage with their studies, or on the ability of the Academy to carry out its business;
- Provide a suitable and co-ordinated response by academic and support staff, in circumstances where it is not considered appropriate to apply other internal procedures such as the 'Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Policy';
- Encourage early intervention and active collaboration between all staff in managing situations where there are concerns regarding a student's fitness to study;
- Ensure that the Academy has provided the student with appropriate, proportionate and reasonable support/adjustments to enable them to complete their studies;
- Ensure that academic staff and professional service staff work together where appropriate so that students experience a consistent and fair process.

It is the aim of the Academy to promote independence, self-awareness and personal responsibility amongst students. In this context the HWSS Policy and Procedure encourages students to take an active part in the management of their health and wellbeing so that they can fulfil their academic potential and make the most of their student experience.

The aim of the procedure is to support students to remain on their programme of study wherever possible. However, it is acknowledged that there may be occasions where all options have been exhausted, and the student is not well enough to continue their studies, in which case suspension or withdrawal from studies may be deemed to be the best outcome. In these instances, the student

must be advised to speak to the Student Support team as this may have an impact on the student's future funding eligibility.

## Scope

The Policy applies to all students enrolled at Backstage Academy.

## 2. How and when should the Health, Wellbeing and Supporting Study Procedure be used?

The Health, Wellbeing and Supported Study Procedure should be considered as an alternative to other means of managing concern (for example the Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Policy or University of Bolton academic regulations where academic progress is unsatisfactory), where there is sufficient belief that a student's academic progress, attendance and/or behaviour could be the result of physical health and /or mental health support need or a disability. The Policy may also be used when the Academy has concerns about the impact of a student's behaviour on their own safety or the experience and/or safety of others.

The Procedure seeks to address these issues and promote early interventions as far as possible to support students and minimise the impact on their academic progression and wider Academy experience.

Instances where a student's health, wellbeing and/or behaviours cause the Academy concern regarding their fitness to study may occur for a wide variety of reasons. These could include, but are not restricted to, the following examples:

- A student has declared themselves unfit to study and/or has disclosed that ongoing study is having a detrimental impact on their health;
- A student has disclosed complex personal circumstances (for example health, family or financial issues) which are having a negative impact on their health or wellbeing resulting in them being unfit to study;
- A student poses a risk to their own health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of others and there is reason to consider that this is the result of a health or wellbeing issue;
- A student has submitted frequent applications for mitigating circumstances and/or appeals as a result of ongoing health concerns;
- There is significant deterioration in a student's physical or mental health;
- A student is unable or refuses to appreciate risks of physical damage to themselves or others;
- There is significant deterioration in a student's attitude and/or a student is unable or refuses to engage effectively and independently in lectures, tutorials, support sessions and private study (with appropriate support mechanisms, physical and reasonable study support adjustments as necessary). This includes not attending scheduled sessions, not submitting work and repeatedly not responding to emails from the Academy. Whilst individually such behaviours would normally be dealt with under other more appropriate policies and

procedures eg Student Attendance and Engagement Policy, when present together such behaviours may be indicative of an emerging issue;

- A student is unable to undertake assessment and engage with the assessment process (with appropriate adjustments as necessary);
- A student displays evidence of a deterioration of their mood/ mental state or a change in their usual behaviour that is a cause for concern ;
- Concerns are raised about a student by a third party;
- A student's condition, conduct or behaviour places unreasonable demands on staff or other members of the Backstage Academy community; or in the case of students who are on placement, placing unreasonable demands on the staff of the placement provider.

The HWSS Procedure will not be used when there is a deterioration in a student's behaviour, attitude, attendance and/or engagement which is not caused by issues of health and wellbeing. Other appropriate Academy policies and procedures will be invoked on these occasions.

### **3. Guiding Principles**

- Backstage Academy is a community and as such decisions will be made in the context of the whole community giving due regard to the health and wellbeing of staff and other students;
- The best interests of the student are considered in relation to their personal situation, their health, wellbeing and/or disability;
- All students are allocated a Personal Tutor and are encouraged to engage with this support and discuss any challenges with their Personal Tutor as early as possible as their first point of reference;
- The Academy has a wide range of support services and students will be encouraged and supported to engage with these services as the need is identified;
- The procedure has three levels, Stage 1 – Emerging Concern/Early Intervention, Stage 2 – Significant and/or ongoing concerns and Stage 3 – Critical, serious or persistent concerns. At Stage 2 and Stage 3 of this procedure the student is entitled to be accompanied to meetings by a student representative;
- Students may not bring legal representation to any meeting without prior consent obtained from the Head of Institution which will only be granted in exceptional circumstances;
- Backstage Academy operates under General Data Protection Regulations 2018;
- The Academy is mindful of its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and all decisions will be proportionate and carefully considered;
- On a case by case basis, students will be kept informed of progress and provided with a written explanation regarding any decisions or actions to be taken;
- Where possible, decisions will be made in agreement with the student;
- Students are able to make independent decisions about their own fitness to study at any time and can request advice about the options which may be available to support them (including but not limited to access to support services, requesting an extension, applying for Mitigating Circumstances or requesting an interruption/ suspension to their studies);
- In the event that students choose to or are required to interrupt their studies, they will be directed to seek financial and funding advice;

- If the student does not attend a formal meeting within the procedure, either in person or via video conferencing facilities, the Academy reserves the right to continue with the meeting in the student's absence, consider the issues and make decisions based on the information available;
- The Academy reserves the right to escalate matters to Stage 2 or Stage 3 of this procedure without passing through the intermediate stage(s) if a student presents serious concerns or risks to the wellbeing of themselves or others.

It is possible that the use of any formal procedure may cause stress and anxiety, particularly if the role and purpose of the procedure is not understood. In order to minimise the risk of causing additional stress, these procedures should be used sensitively, ensuring that students understand the focus on their best interests, and that all possible steps are taken to minimise additional concerns and anxieties experienced by the student.

Concerns should be acted on promptly as early intervention and support can result in better outcomes for the student and may avoid the situation becoming more complex.

#### **4. Temporary Exclusion/Suspension from the Academy**

The Academy may determine that there is a good and urgent cause why a student should not continue to attend the Academy due to health, wellbeing or behavioural concerns or where it is felt the student's continuing attendance may hamper an investigation. In such circumstances the student may be suspended from studies by the Head of Institution (or in the Head of Institution's absence the Head of Institution's nominee providing the nominee is a member of the Senior Leadership Team and they inform the Head of Institution of the suspension so that they may affirm the action). The suspension will be confirmed to the student in writing.

#### **5. Temporary Suspension from Work Placement**

The Academy may determine that a student's work placement arrangements (as part of their academic programme) are to be temporarily suspended if it is considered by the Course Leader (or nominee) that there are good and/or urgent causes for concern and risk to the student and/or others in a placement setting that requires mitigation. The temporary suspension of the work placement arrangements will be notified to the student in writing.

#### **6. Variations to the procedure**

The Academy reserves the right to vary any stage of this Procedure as it deems appropriate in order to comply with any current legal obligations and best practice.

Where mention is made in this procedure of action by a specific post holder or role holder, this action may be delegated to an appropriate nominee where warranted by the circumstances, for example, where there is or may be any potential conflict of roles or interests, or the specific post holder or role holder is absent, so long as the nominee has appropriate experience to be able to act on behalf of the specific post or role holder.

## **7. Other relevant policies and procedures**

The Academy's Student Mental Health Policy complements this Policy and Procedure and can be found on the Backstage Academy website.

There are a number of other Backstage Academy and University of Bolton policies and procedures that may be relevant. These include but are not limited to:

- Academic Appeals Regulations and Procedures
- Mitigating Circumstances Regulations and Procedures
- Student Suspension Policy
- Student Non-Academic Disciplinary Policy

## **8. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed every three years and any changes reported to and approved by the Academic Board.

## **9. Completion of Procedures and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator**

In the letter confirming the outcome of the appeals hearing, the student will be notified by way of the accompanying Completion of Procedures letter of their right to request an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.