



**LAURUS**  
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TRUST

## **Fit to Study Policy**

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Review date – Sept 24

Next review date – Sept 26

Reviewed by – Trust Board

## **Fit to Study Policy**

Concerns about a student/pupil's wellbeing should be acted upon promptly. Early intervention may prevent situations developing into crises at a later stage. If you have concerns regarding a student/pupil's health and consider that it is posing a risk to his/her own health, safety or wellbeing, or that of others, contact the Pastoral team for advice (Laurus Secondaries) or the Head of School (Laurus Primaries).

Laurus Schools are educational institutions for full time students/pupils. We are committed to tailoring education to individual needs and promoting inclusivity and tolerance. In doing so we fully comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

It is important, however, to be clear about what is reasonable in an educational setting and the limits to the individual support that can be provided within school. Our staff provide outstanding care for all students/pupils, but there will be times when a student/pupil's physical or mental health are so affected that they are no longer able to maintain reasonable academic progress, despite support both internal and external to the school.

- We are not a distance-learning establishment therefore prolonged periods of absence cannot be accommodated. However, on a temporary basis, it is reasonable for subject teachers and support staff to be flexible with attendance due to ill health.
- There may be times when the nature of a student/pupil's ill health will require support beyond the expertise or capacity that we can reasonably offer.
- Occasionally a student/pupil's ill health may present a health and safety hazard to either themselves or those around them that is unmanageable in a mainstream educational setting.

There are therefore occasions where, for one or more of the reasons above, it will be our judgement that, in the best interests of a student/pupil, continuing in school is no longer the best option.

## Introduction

1. The Trust is committed to supporting student/pupil wellbeing and recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health issues is critical to student/pupil learning, academic achievement and to the wider student/pupil experience.
2. The Trust also recognises that there may be instances where a student/pupil's physical or mental health may give rise to concerns about the student/pupil's fitness to study, for example the student/pupil's capacity to engage with his/her studies and/or to function more widely as a member of the school community. Such instances may arise where, for example, the school is concerned that:
  - a student/pupil poses a risk to his/her own health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of others
  - a student/pupil's behaviour is (or is at risk of) adversely affecting the teaching, learning and/or experience of other students/pupils
  - a student/pupil's behaviour is (or is at risk of) adversely affecting the day-to-day activities of the school
  - a student/pupil's support needs fall outside the scope of the support and other services which the school can reasonably be expected to provide
3. The Trust recognises that concerns may be raised by a variety of individuals, for example school staff, other students/pupils, and third parties (such as health professionals). This policy seeks to promote early intervention, active collaboration between staff, students/pupils, parents/carers and third parties, and consistency of approach.

Matters will be dealt with sensitively and non-judgmentally and in a coordinated manner across the school. Whilst the school will seek to work with students/pupils in a spirit of cooperation, cases may arise in which it may, under this policy, determine that a student/pupil is unfit to study and cannot attend school at that time.

4. In implementing this policy, the Trust will at all times remain mindful of its duty of care and its obligations to students/pupils under the Equality Act 2010, including in appropriate cases its obligation to make reasonable adjustments. It will also remain mindful of the confidential and sensitive nature of fitness to study matters and of its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
5. School staff dealing with students/pupils at any and all levels of this policy will consider what support may be offered to students/pupils both from within the school (for example, by the Pastoral team, SENDCo, the school nurse or the counsellor) and externally (for example, directing or referring students/pupils to local GPs or mental health services). Students/pupils, parents and carers will be directed to seek support.
6. All matters dealt with under this policy will be dealt with according to the individual circumstances. Whilst the school anticipates that such cases will be exceptional, it reserves the right at any level of this policy to vary the process it follows in dealing

with a matter in the interests of fairness and/or health and safety (for example, in crisis situations, or where it is concerned that a student/pupil's attendance at a meeting would be unduly stressful, or where the student/pupil is in hospital).

7. Should a student (Secondary) or a parent/carer (Primary) be unwilling or unable to participate at any level of this policy or to attend a meeting, the school may nonetheless follow this policy where it is reasonable to do so. The school may, where it is reasonable to do so, deal with issues on the basis of written reports and/or statements in the absence of the student/pupil and/or his/her representative or parent/carer.
8. School will monitor and record all incidents falling within the terms of this policy.

## Implementation of the Fit to Study Policy and Procedure

9. This policy will be implemented when the Head of School reasonably believes that a student/pupil about whom a fit to study concern has been raised poses a serious risk to:
  - his/her health, safety and/or wellbeing and/or that of others
  - their own progress or that of other students/pupils in their learning environment *and if* immediate action is required, he or she may agree to:
  - the student/pupil not being able to continue their studies at school until confirmation is received from a medical professional that the individual is fit to study, or advice received from a mental health practitioner to this effect.
10. When a student/pupil is denied access to the school building the Pastoral team (Secondary) or Head of School (Primary) will maintain contact and provide support to the student/pupil.

## Procedure

11. Concerns about a student/pupil's fitness to study will be dealt with under the following procedure which has three levels of action:
  - a. **Level 1 (Informal):** Initial and/or emerging concerns
  - b. **Level 2:** Continuing and/or serious concerns
  - c. **Level 3:** Persistent and/or critical concerns
12. The procedure may be entered at any level, without any requirement for an earlier level to have been commenced or exhausted, although it is hoped that most situations can be remedied by action taken at the informal level. At which level the procedure is implemented will depend on factors such as the nature of the concern, the seriousness of any risk posed, the student/pupil's perception of his/her behaviour, and the response of the student/pupil to any steps taken by the school to manage the situation.

## Level 1 - Informal – Initial and/or Emerging Concerns

13. Initial or emerging concerns about a student/pupil's fitness to study will normally be

dealt with informally by the Pastoral team (Secondary) or Head of School (Primary). A meeting will be arranged, the purpose of which will be to discuss appropriate guidance and advice.

14. The aim of the meeting will be to discuss the concern, any support needs the student/pupil may have, and to seek to identify the student/pupil's perception of the concern. The staff member may also consult with other relevant staff members in order to deal with the matter and to provide appropriate support to the student/pupil.
15. The staff member will determine whether the student/pupil's fitness to study is impaired, or may become impaired, and any actions to be taken. The action plan may include one or more of the following outcomes:
  - adjusted timetable/provision
  - extensions to deadlines
  - counselling/interventions

## **Level 2 – Continuing and/or Serious Concerns**

16. Continuing and/or serious concerns about a student/pupil's fitness to study will normally be dealt with under Level 2.
17. Secondary-aged students will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the concern, any support needs the student may have, and to seek to identify the student's perception of the concern with their Head of Year and a senior member of the Pastoral team. This will be adapted for primary aged pupils by inviting parents/carers in to discuss the concern with the Head of School. Records of any previous meetings under this policy and any action plan will be made available.
18. A discussion will take place to determine whether the student/pupil's fitness to study is impaired or may become impaired and discuss actions to be taken.

Actions may include:

- support arrangements and/or reasonable adjustments to be put in place for the student/pupil.
- an action plan to be drawn up, where possible with the agreement of the student/pupil, setting out how the matter will be managed and any requirements to be placed on the student/pupil (for example, in respect of his/her future conduct or support he or she will seek).
- adjusted timetable/provision
- extensions to deadlines
- counselling/interventions
- contact with the parents/carers of secondary-aged students will be made at this level
- the matter to be referred to another level
- a recommendation to the student/parent or carer of the pupil that s/he take a period of voluntary interruption to their studies

### **Level 3 - Persistent and/or Critical Concerns**

19. Persistent and/or critical concerns about a student/pupil's fitness to study will be dealt with under Level 3.
20. The student and their parents/carers (Secondary) or parent/carer (Primary) will be invited into school to attend a formal meeting to discuss the viability of continuing their studies, to discuss the nature of the concerns and consider possible outcomes. Any relevant external professionals may be invited to attend and guidance and advice will be sought from them.
21. The meeting will determine whether the student/pupil's fitness to study is impaired, or may become impaired, and any actions to be taken. Such actions may include (but are not limited to) one or more of the following outcomes:
- support arrangements and/or reasonable adjustments to be put in place for the student/pupil
  - an action plan to be drawn up, where possible with the agreement of the student/pupil, setting out how the matter will be managed and any requirements to be placed on the student/pupil (for example, in respect of his/her future conduct or support he or she needs to seek)
  - the student/pupil be withdrawn from school or other school related activity
  - the student/pupil be permitted to continue on a part-time basis or to study by means of formal or informal distance learning with appropriate support
  - a recommendation to the student or parent/carer of a primary-aged pupil that s/he take a period of voluntary interruption to studies
  - a recommendation that the student/pupil be suspended from their programme of study for a stated period of time, with or without conditions, for any subsequent return to study
  - a recommendation that the student's place in school is no longer tenable.

### **Return to Study**

22. The Head of school will determine whether to permit the student/pupil to return to study. In reaching his or her decision, he or she may consult with relevant school staff and/or external professionals. He or she may impose conditions upon any return to study (for example, relating to the student/pupil's conduct, any support the student or parent/carer of a primary-aged pupil should seek and/or his or her academic progress).

The Head of School and the Pastoral team will consider any support and/or reasonable adjustments which should be put in place for the student/pupil in connection with his/her return to study and will be responsible for ensuring that any support and reasonable adjustments identified are provided/made.

23. The decision of the Head of School is final.

In the event of an appeal being received, a separate independent panel made up of three governors will investigate and establish any action taken by the school and will make the final decision as to whether or not the appeal is justified.

24. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the following Trust's policies:

- Data Protection Policy
- Privacy Notice – Students (Secondary)
- Equality Policy
- Individual Secondary School Policy/Primary Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy – See individual School Policy

## Equality Impact Assessments

<p>Names and titles of people involved with this assessment</p>	<p><b>Dr M Sackville-Ford</b> <b>Trust Director of Inclusion</b></p>
<p><b>Title of Policy – Fit to Study</b></p>	
<p>Impact assessment carried out with regard to identified characteristics</p>	<p>Race <input type="checkbox"/> /</p> <p>Disability <input type="checkbox"/> /</p> <p>Sex <input type="checkbox"/> /</p> <p>Age <input type="checkbox"/> /</p> <p>Religious belief <input type="checkbox"/> /</p> <p>Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> /</p> <p>Gender Reassignment <input type="checkbox"/> /</p>
<p>Summary of any issues/proposed changes</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Date</p>	<p><b>18/09/2024</b></p>
<p>Date of next review</p>	<p><b>Sept 2026</b></p>