



1. Statement of Intent and Scope

- 1.1. Students who make the choice to study at HNC do so in the knowledge that the College is a values-based organisation with high standards and non-negotiable expectations. Students who commit completely to the College's culture will, over the duration of their study programme, become their best self - educated, enriched and enlightened.
- 1.2. HNC is committed to supporting students and recognises the importance of a student's health and wellbeing in relation to their academic progression. This policy outlines the process and procedures to be followed when a student's health, wellbeing and / or behaviour affects their ability to cope at College, to attend, study or progress on their course or when their health, wellbeing or behaviour poses a risk to the health and safety of self and / or others.
- 1.3. This policy applies to all students enrolled at the College and all staff employed by the College. When implementing this policy, staff are required to adhere to the processes and procedures as described whilst using their professional judgement to ensure that the principles underpinning this policy are consistently applied. In following this policy's procedures and intent, the College will achieve a fair outcome in each individual case to which the policy applies.
- 1.4. The College's commitment to equality is demonstrated through its determination that every student receives a high quality learning experience, which will enable them to fulfil their potential. The Fitness to Attend & Study Procedure will be implemented in a manner which maintains and supports each individual's attendance at College if at all possible.
- 1.5. The College is committed to supporting student wellbeing and recognises that a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health and behavioural issues is critical to student learning and academic achievement. This philosophy underpins how we strive to make reasonable adjustment for any student. In doing so we fully comply with the Equality Act 2010. It is important, however, to recognise what is reasonable and the limits to the individual support that can be provided in an educational setting. There will be times when a student's physical or mental health is so affected that they are no longer able, despite support, within the College and / or externally, to maintain reasonable academic attendance and / or progress.
- 1.6. The following require consideration:
 - Full attendance is the College expectation.
 - HNC is not a distance-learning College and, while it is reasonable for subject teachers and operational colleagues to be flexible on a temporary basis, prolonged periods of absence are not sustainable. In exceptional circumstances, such as a global pandemic which may involve full or partial lockdown as containment strategies, the College will use remote learning, supported by teachers and others, as appropriate. The College expects students to fully engage with this remote learning via the online platform the College deploys, and where necessary, will support students to do so.
 - An indicative medically evidenced reasonable adjustment is 90%.
 - There may be times when the nature of a student's ill health can require support beyond the expertise or capacity that the College can reasonably offer.
 - Occasionally a student's ill health may present a health and safety risk to either themselves or others that is unmanageable in a mainstream educational setting.



There are therefore occasions where, for one or more of the reasons above, it will be the College's professional judgement that, in the best interests of a student, commencing or continuing at HNC is no longer an option.

1.7. The Fitness to Attend & Study Policy aims to provide:

- A framework to guide decision making in complex student welfare cases.
- A series of stages for reviewing fitness to attend and study.
- A list of possible outcomes of the Stage 3 fitness to attend and study process.

1.8. Associated documents:

- Admissions Policy
- Admissions Policy appendix SEND and CE guidelines
- Student ABC expectations
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND Policy
- Attendance and Behaviour for Learning Policy

2. Procedures

2.1. Phase 1 - Admissions

Refer to the College's Admissions Policy, available via the website.

2.2. Phase 2 - On roll at the College

2.3. If a student does not disclose a pre-existing physical or mental health condition on application, then it is unlikely that s/he will receive support or reasonable adjustment until the condition becomes clear to the College. If a pre-existing physical or mental health condition is disclosed or becomes evident after enrolment, which was not disclosed during the admissions process, the College reserves the right to move immediately to Stage 3 of the fitness to attend and study process.

2.4. A student's fitness to attend and study may come to the point that it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to engage effectively with HNC's educational provision. This may be the result of a wide range of circumstances, which include, but are not limited to:

- Serious concerns about the student emerge from a third party (e.g. friend, multi-agency partner, parent) which indicates that there is a need to address their fitness to attend and study.
- A student has told a member of the College's staff that they have a problem and / or has provided information which indicates that there is a need to address their fitness to attend and study.



- A student has not engaged with meaningful study for a period of time causing concern from subject teachers and / or progress tutor.
 - The student's disposition is such that it indicates there may be a need to address an underlying health issue. For example, if a student has demonstrated mood swings or unusual behaviour, an inability to attend lessons or concentrate throughout lessons, shown signs of depression, become withdrawn / aggressive / distressed / irritable, is becoming intimidating to others, is communicating suicidal thoughts or is self harming to a point where the College considers the support required to be beyond the expertise or capacity that we can reasonably offer.
 - Staff have a reasonable belief that a student poses a threat to themselves or others.
 - Behaviour, otherwise dealt with as a disciplinary matter, which could be considered the result of an underlying physical or mental health problem.
 - The student's attendance, academic performance, physical behaviour or demeanour is not acceptable and this is thought to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health problem.
 - Attendance falls below 95%.
- 2.5 Early full disclosure of issues is vital to allow staff to assess how best to accommodate students and to provide appropriate support.
- 2.6 HNC will always seek to provide appropriate support to any student with ill health, whether the condition was pre-existing or commences during study at the College. Students are made aware of the range of support available at the College, both during induction and as part of the on-going Aspire curriculum.
- 2.7 The supportive measures may also involve referral to outside agencies, such as CAMHS or the student's GP. This will particularly apply where the health condition causes significant concern, as the capacity of the College in providing medical support is finite and the responsibility for medical support lies with the external services.
- 2.8 In crisis situations, where there are immediate and grave concerns for a student's health or well-being, staff will judge how best to provide first aid and whether emergency services should be called. In these situations, and if applicable, colleagues will endeavour to contact parents / carers as soon as possible.
- 2.9 It is important to be clear about what is reasonable in an educational setting and the limits to the support that can be offered will be communicated to the student and the parent / carer where applicable. These include both the flexibility HNC can offer regarding progress (attendance, punctuality, engaging in lessons, meeting assessment and behavioural expectations) and the support (type, location, frequency) required for a student to effectively engage with the College's educational offer.
- 2.10 A minimum level of attendance needs to be maintained to allow a student to effectively engage with the College's educational offer. HNC is not a distance-learning College and, while it is reasonable for subject teachers and support staff to be flexible on a temporary basis, extended periods of complete absence or poor attendance will reduce a student's capacity to effectively engage with the College's educational. The specific expectations regarding attendance and assessment will depend on the individual's circumstances and the professional judgement of staff. An indicative measure would be 95% attendance, or 90% as a medically evidenced reasonable adjustment.

3. Fitness to Attend & Study



- 3.1. The College is committed to enabling all students to complete their programme of study successfully and achieve their potential. There are occasions, however, when physical or mental health issues are so complex or significant that this is not possible. Each student will be considered on a case by case basis.
- 3.2. Where it is decided that a student may be able to continue with their studies an assessment of need will be completed by the College to determine if it is within our expertise and capacity to reasonably offer the support required. The responsibility to obtain and supply evidence of fitness to attend and study, and any involved costs, lies with the student / parent / carer. This evidence may only be for a finite period and if circumstances change will be re-assessed and possibly required again.
- 3.3. Ideally, a clear consensus would always emerge regarding the best way to progress, however, this will not always be the case. There will be occasions where the College believes that it has exhausted the support options available, it has made reasonable adjustments, but the student is unable to effectively engage with the College's educational offer. These situations impact negatively both on the student, since their welfare is at risk, and on the College, since there is an excessive and unreasonable demand on resources. If the College reaches a decision, after consultation with the student, parents / carers (if applicable) and medical professionals (where appropriate), that a student is not in a position to effectively engage with the College's educational offer, the College will provide advice and guidance on the range of alternative options available.
- 3.4. Where there is no consensus regarding the student's capacity to effectively engage with the College's educational offer, the stages below will be followed (please note that in exceptional circumstances the College will move immediately to stage 3 if it considers it appropriate to do so):

Stage 1

- A Stage 1 letter is sent home detailing the supportive steps that the College will implement to enable the student to effectively engage with the College's educational offer. Supportive targets will be set. The student's engagement will be reviewed 10 term time days later.
- If the student demonstrates their capacity to effectively engage with the College's educational offer, staff will continue to monitor progress and offer support.
- If at stage 1, the student meets their supportive target(s), but there is a need to review their capacity to effectively engage with the College's educational offer at a future date, then it will be appropriate to begin again at stage 1. However, should a further occasion arise (having previously been on stage 1 twice) then the process would begin at stage 2.

Stage 2

- If at review, the student is not engaging effectively with the College's educational offer, as measured by the progress that they have made towards achieving their supportive target(s), a stage 2 letter will be sent home resetting supportive target(s). The student's engagement will be reviewed 10 term time days later.
- If at stage 2 the student demonstrates their capacity to effectively engage with the College's educational offer, they are likely to be placed on a monitoring contract to support sustained attendance / engagement / progress. Should the student's engagement with the College's educational offer reduce within three calendar months of the stage 2 outcome, the process will begin again at stage 2.



• Stage 3

- A case conference (the Safeguarding Team, teachers, the Wellbeing Manager, the student's Progress Tutor, their Head of Faculty and Assistant Principals as appropriate) review the student's capacity to effectively engage with the College's educational offer. The panel will make a determination about the next steps to support the student to achieve a level of effective engagement with the College's educational offer. The student and parents / carers will be notified of the decision.

The possible outcomes at this stage are:

- An extension of stage 2.
- A wellbeing pause for the remainder of the academic year, with the option to restart education at the beginning of the next academic year*. Should a restart at the beginning of the next academic year be determined as the most appropriate outcome, then the student will be required to provide evidence that their health has improved sufficiently so that they are fit to resume their education.

*In a small number of cases, a wellbeing pause may not be possible, for example a restart has already occurred during the student's time at the College, or there is no coherent study programme for the student to follow. The College will always provide advice and guidance on alternative progression routes at this stage.

- 3.5. There may be occasions when the College will be advised by medical professionals that it is unsafe for the student to attend. This advice will always supersede College policy and a wellbeing pause will be implemented with immediate effect.

4. Appeals

- 4.1. Appeals regarding applications or admissions (see 2.1) must follow the admissions policy.
- 4.2. For students who are on roll, students / parents / carers will have the opportunity to appeal against the decision. In order to make an appeal they must write to the Principal within 5 HNC term time days, as published on the College's website, of the communicated outcome of the case conference. The Principal, or a delegate of the Principal, will review the decision and will report the outcome of the review in writing to the appellant within 10 HNC term time days, as published on the College website, of receipt of the appeal.
- 4.3. Please note: The Principal, or the delegate of the Principal's decision cannot be challenged. Any appeals against the outcome of the review can only be to challenge that due process (as described in this policy) has not been followed. This appeal must be made in writing within 5 HNC term time days, as published on the College's website, of receipt decision to the Chair of the Corporation via the Clerk, who can be contacted by emailing info@huddnewcoll.ac.uk and placing FAO Clerk of the Corporation in the subject box.

5. Review of Policy and communication

The Senior Leadership Team own this policy, which will be published on the College's website.

HNC Policies, Protocols and Procedures

Fitness to Attend & Study Policy



Version	Date	Author(s)	Comments	Approval Route/ Date	Date of Next Review
1	Feb 2020	Lee Goddard	Creation of policy	SLT Feb 2020	Feb 2022
2	September 2020	Lee Goddard	Addition to 1.4 in response to the Covid 19 global pandemic	SLT September 2020	Feb 2022
3	January 2022	Lee Goddard	Bi-annual review and informed by practice	SLT January 2022	Feb 2024
4	July 2022	Lee Goddard	Informed by practice	SLT July 2022	July 2024
5	July 2023	Lee Goddard	Informed by practice	SLT July 2023	July 2025
6	October 2023	Lee Goddard	In line with the College admissions policy	SLT October 2023	July 2025
7	June 2024	Lee Goddard	Informed by practice	SLT June 2024	July 2026

HNC Policies, Protocols and Procedures

Fitness to Attend & Study Policy



Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy being assessed	Fitness to Attend and Study Policy
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy	The purpose of the policy is to clearly identify the process of assessing a student's fitness to attend and study at HNC and the steps taken to identify reasonable adjustments on behalf of the College.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Research of sector policies and consultation with Learning Support, Safeguarding and Pastoral senior leaders.
4. Who is affected by the policy?	HNC students and students applying to join HNC
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy?	The policy will be the basis for all decision making and processes with regards to identifying whether support can be reasonably expected to be provided. . The policy will be reviewed bi-annually.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment made
Disability	Neither	The policy sets out the College's processes when assessing whether it can be reasonably expected to provide support for individual students and their circumstances.	N/A
Gender reassignment	Neither	As explained for disability	N/A
Marriage or civil partnership	Neither	As explained for disability	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	Neither	As explained for disability	N/A
Race	Neither	As explained for disability	N/A
Religion or belief	Neither	As explained for disability	N/A
Sexual orientation	Neither	As explained for disability	N/A

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Sex (gender)	Neither	As explained for disability	N/A
Age	Neither	As explained for disability	N/A

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	The policy describes the processes to ensure that all student's support needs can be met by the College.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant Box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .	✓	The basis of the policy is to be clear that the College seeks to support all students unless it is / becomes an unreasonable request to do so.
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

Reviewed by: (Author)	Lee Goddard.
Date:	June 2024
Review date (if applicable):	July 2026

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Fitness to Attend & Study Policy



Approval by: (SLT review)	Catherine Cushnie
Date:	June 2024