

# Student Support

## Policy and Procedures

<b>Quality Assurance Benchmarking</b>		
This policy and procedure maps to the following external quality assurance frameworks:		
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## 1. POLICY STATEMENT

West Dean College of Arts & Conservation, incorporating KLC School of Design (“the College”, “West Dean College”, “West Dean”) acknowledges its duty of care towards its students and staff, and the importance of supporting the health and wellbeing of its students in relation to their academic progression and their wider student experience. This Policy forms part of the College’s commitment to promoting a safe, healthy and supportive environment in which to learn, study and work, aims to promote a culture which encourages and supports self-disclosure of support needs.

The College supports the principle of equal opportunities and therefore no student will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of disability, religion, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, political beliefs, age, sexual orientation, gender or marital status.

This policy sets out the types of support available to students with disclosed disabilities, mental health conditions or other educational needs as well as the support available to any other vulnerable student.

This document should be read in conjunction with the following College Policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Admissions Policy and Procedures
- Student Record Keeping Policy
- Data Protection guidance for students
- Student Assessment Policy
- Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure

## 2. INTRODUCTION

Where a student has disclosed any disability or special educational needs during the application stage, further information will be sought with regards to the type and level of support required. Information provided will be shared with relevant members of academic or support staff to ensure appropriate levels of support are in place for students at the start of the programme of study. Periodical follow-up meetings/tutorials will be held with students in receipt of support to ensure that the support provided by the College remains effective and at the appropriate level.

Where information is not provided during application but is disclosed at a later stage similar processes will be followed to ensure support is provided as soon as practically possible.



Students who have not been formally assessed for educational needs may be required to undergo such an assessment in order for the College to ascertain the appropriate level of support required.

### 3. SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

The Vice Principal provides the strategic direction for, and overall coordination, management and support of student support service at both the West Dean and Bloomsbury Campus and to students studying through Online Learning. Services and resources provided to students and staff who work with students are normally free of charge; those provided by external bodies may be at a charge set by the provider themselves.

#### 3.1. Information, Advice and Guidance

Staff members have expertise and experience in a wide range of aspects of student academic development, health and well-being, general support and guidance, and equal opportunities. Information, advice and guidance are offered to applicants, prospective & enrolled students, staff and the institution, and includes:

- individual responses to specific enquiries;
- Committee membership
- Design and delivery of training (workshops, training programmes)
- Contributions to conferences and seminars

#### 3.2. Publications and other resources

Student Support Service staff members produce a wide range of information resources and guidance materials relating to their areas of expertise and experience. These include targeted self-help guidance leaflets and web resources (for example, on study skills, mental health and well-being topics) and more substantial documents such as programme and student handbooks.

#### 3.3. Referral

Student Support Service staff members endeavour to respond positively to all enquiries but there may be occasions when students are referred to another source of information or help, either within the College or outside. Reasons for this referral will normally be discussed and adequate information given to help the student to make effective contact with relevant services or agencies.

#### 3.4. Student Welfare

The Student Welfare Team is available five days a week to provide practical and emotional support for matters relating to their welfare and/or wellbeing. They are available for face-to-face and online meetings for students across both campuses. They can provide confidential advice and support, guidance through college processes and signposting to



internal and external student support services. (i.e. Counselling, learning support, academic registry)

### **3.5. Student Counselling**

The College is committed to providing students with the support they need to achieve a successful student life and understands that mental health and wellbeing are very important for student success.

#### **3.5.1. Service Aims**

The Counselling Service aims to offer the following to Degree and Diploma students at West Dean:

- Free one-to-one short-term or long-term counselling, by appointment
- Mediation between students

#### **3.5.2. Referral and Appointments**

The Welfare team can refer students where appropriate for Counselling sessions. Further information about how to contact the Counselling Service and arrange appointments can be provided by the Welfare Team.

### **3.6. Study Skills Support**

West Dean College offers Study Skills support for Diploma and Degree students. This support is optional and comprises bookable one-to-one 30-minute sessions. Students may attend sessions on a regular basis (weekly) or from time to time when specific support is required. Contact details and availability for the Study Skills Support Tutor are published on the VLE.

The sessions can provide individual support in the following areas:

- Time management and organisation
- Effective reading and note-taking: planning your reading; formats for note-taking and organisation
- Effective writing skills: the writing process; structure and organisation; academic style; clarity; cohesion; types of document (essays; reports; artists' statements; journals; dissertations); proof-reading and editing
- Feedback on your written work
- Effective presentations: organisation and structure; preparing slides; presentation skills
- English language support for international students.

### **3.7. Disability Support**



The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. West Dean is committed to offering support for any of these conditions that could affect a student's ability to perform on an equal level with their fellow students. These may include:

- Dyslexia and other learning difficulties and differences such as dyspraxia, dyscalculia dysgraphia, or attention deficit disorder
- Visual impairment
- Hearing impairment
- Mobility impairment
- Mental health illness
- Unseen illnesses such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, chronic fatigue, HIV, Irritable bowel syndrome, diabetes, epilepsy, cystic fibrosis,
- Autistic spectrum disorder

#### **3.7.1. Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)**

The OfS assesses annually whether diploma and degree courses at West Dean College will be approved for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). All validated courses are usually eligible for DSA support. West Dean College is not a DSA support provider, which means that students need to apply individually for DSA and arrange for assessments through the Student Loans Company. Any DSA payments will be paid to students directly and not to the College.

#### **3.8. Reasonable Adjustments and Alternative Forms of Assessment**

In line with the Equality Act 2010, the College makes reasonable adjustments to support students with a disability in higher education. The College's aim is to support students to study as independently as possible during their time at West Dean College.

Where a student has declared a disability or health condition (mental or physical), supported by a statement prepared by an appropriate expert, which may impact on the standard and quality of work produced for assessment, the College will consider making reasonable adjustments or applying alternative forms of assessment to enable fair assessment to take place.

Reasonable adjustments refer to a "measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students". They are designed to place students with disability on a more equal footing, and not to give them any kind of advantage. Reasonable adjustments made for a student with disability will maintain the academic integrity of the qualification and not cause a health or



safety risk for another student(s) or negatively impact upon the learning experience of another student(s).

In considering alternative forms of assessment, equal opportunity, not a guaranteed outcome, will be the objective. The principle of alternative forms of assessment is that an assessor will not be expected to lower standards to accommodate students with a disability but rather are required to give them a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned.

### **3.8.1. Learning Support Plans**

As part of inclusive teaching and learning practice, the College has introduced Learning Support Plans (LSPs) to all courses. When students declare disability or physical/mental health condition, Student Welfare will meet them to discuss what reasonable adjustments to their learning may be required.

In order for the College to create a Learning Support Plan and for a student to apply for DSA, they will need a Diagnostic Assessment Report from either; a psychologist registered with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) or, a specialist dyslexia teacher with a current Assessment Practising Certificate (APC). For any physical or mental health conditions, students should provide evidence from a GP or other medical professional (e.g. consultant, therapist, psychiatric nurse) confirming diagnosis.

### **3.9. Mitigating Circumstances**

In the event of a student becoming unable to submit work in time of submit their usual standard of work in time, a claim for mitigating circumstances can be submitted.

Students must provide documentary evidence that confirms sudden, unforeseen and temporary conditions or events before the relevant Unit Board meeting. The evidence needs to be submitted to the Unit Board with a completed claim form which can be downloaded from the Student VLE. Students must inform their Subject/Course Leader of any cause which may affect their performance or attendance at assessment. Minor illness and everyday problems, normally experienced in the course of daily life, will not be accepted nor will long term conditions or health issues for which anticipatory forms of support exist. Only under these conditions are mitigating circumstances considered.

All students are given a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate academic achievement. A student with accepted mitigating evidence impacting on a unit assessment shall be offered the opportunity to re-submit their work as for the first time. The original mark shall be expunged from the student record. Where a lower mark is obtained at this new submission this mark shall be recorded. This principle applies in order to ensure equality of opportunity for all students.



## 4. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Any information provided by or with regards to student will be handled with sensitivity, care and discretion and in accordance with the College's Data Protection guidance for students and GDPR.

### 1. APPENDIX 1 - SUPPORTING VULNERABLE STUDENTS: A GUIDE FOR STAFF

#### 4.1. Introduction

This guide aims to:

- Raise awareness of the kinds of difficulties that students may face;
- Provide practical; advice to help staff respond effectively;
- Assist staff in supporting the College's obligations under Prevent
- Identify the most appropriate sources of advice for staff

##### 4.1.1. Student difficulties

Students can experience a number of complex challenges and for those students who are already vulnerable, particular support may be needed.

The sorts of difficulties students may encounter include:

- Physical or mental illness
- Excessive alcohol or drug use
- Relationship difficulties
- Exposure to extremist groups
- Financial difficulties
- Difficult life transitions
- Sexual or other forms of harassment

##### 4.1.2. Staff responsibilities

There are some key points to remember when considering the responsibility that staff have for the general welfare of our students:



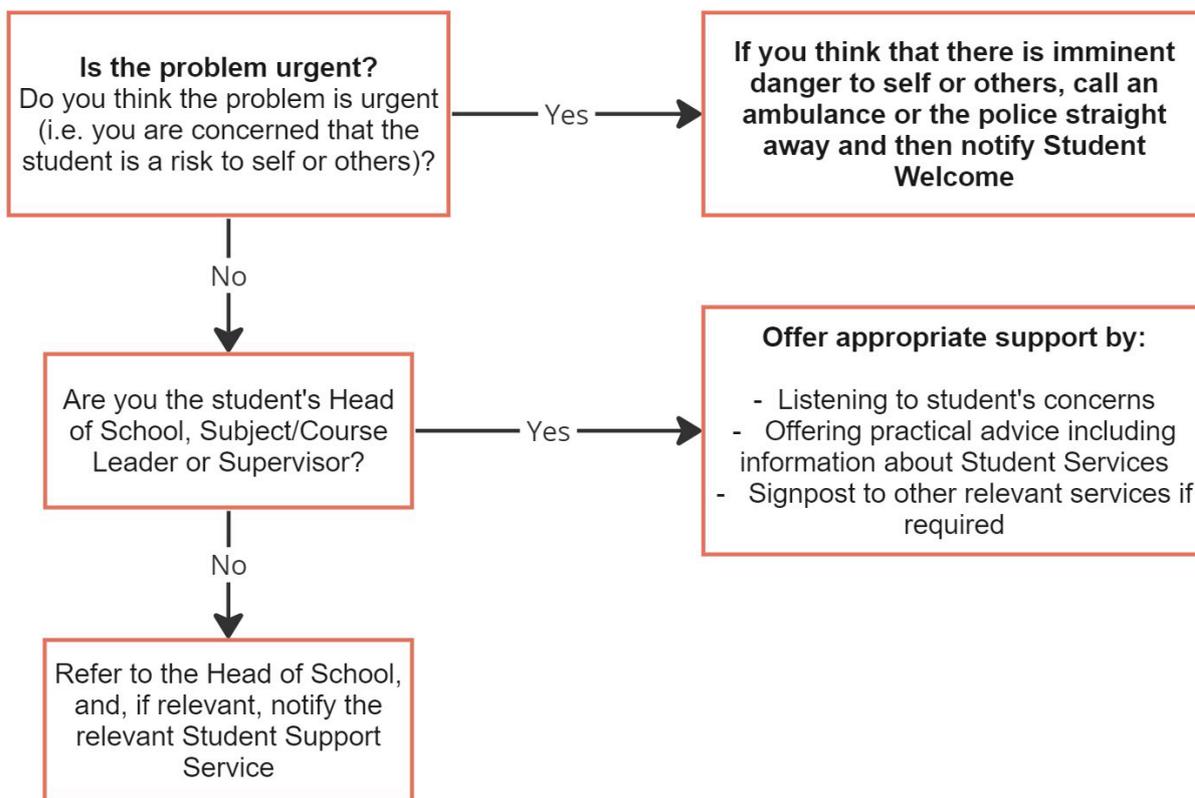
- Students who are over 18 years of age are adults and the College does not act in loco parentis for them. However, it does have a duty of care.
- The College has a statutory duty to respond effectively where there is a concern that students are at risk of radicalisation.
- The College has a well-established commitment to supporting the wellbeing of its students.
- In many instances this consists of signposting the appropriate services either within or external to the College rather than individual staff members trying to address the issues themselves.

#### **4.2. How do you know if a student is vulnerable?**

It is inevitably difficult to identify with certainty when a student is vulnerable. However, the following list may be useful:

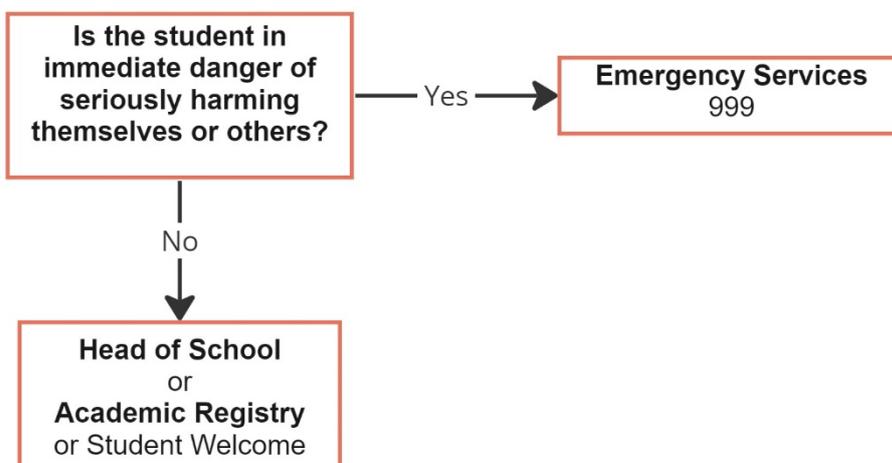
- Inappropriate emotional affect (e.g. excessively angry, agitated, visibly upset, withdrawn)
- Sudden changes in personal appearance (e.g. significant weight change, signs of fatigue, unexpected visible bruising)
- Pattern of poor attendance

#### **4.3. What is the most appropriate response if you have concerns about a student?**



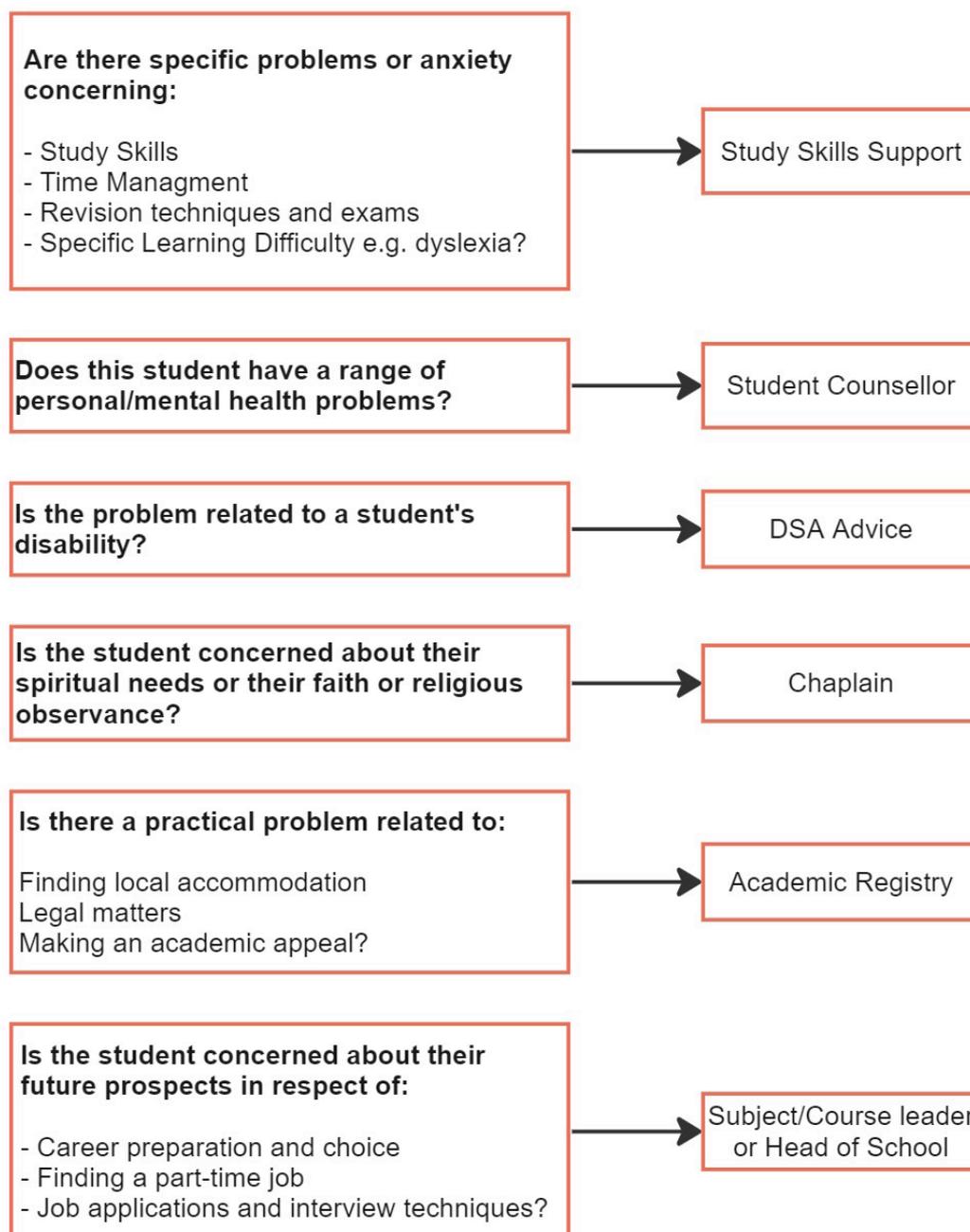


#### 4.4. What is the most appropriate source of help for students?





#### 4.5. Other sources of help



#### 4.6. How should you respond?

The first step would normally be to listen to the student in order to find out more about their situation. Encouraging the student to talk to you by showing your concern may reassure him or her and allay your own worries. You may discover that they are already seeing a doctor, counsellor, or mental health or other specialist adviser in the Student



Support Service. If you are not reassured by your conversation with the student or you are unable to get the student to talk openly, then you need to consider how best to proceed. There are two main courses of action that you could consider: directing the student to an appropriate source of help or offering further support yourself.

It is important both for your sake and that of the student that you do not let yourself get out of your depth or lose sight of the boundaries of your role. Student Support Services staff members have the benefit of specialist training and very broad experience to guide students appropriately and support them in learning how to manage their difficulties; they also know where students can find the most appropriate help and advice, whether that be within West Dean College or externally.

SSS staff and doctors may sometimes contact a student's subject/course leader (normally with the student's permission) for information or to discuss ways of helping a student to manage their academic work during an emotional crisis or period of illness. In many cases a partnership approach can be very effective, particularly if the student is willing for information to be shared in this way.

#### **4.6.1. Responding to emergencies**

Very occasionally a student exhibits behaviour that gives rise to considerable concern. There may be evidence of:

- suicidal thoughts;
- risk of serious harm to self or others;
- serious physical or mental illness;
- alcohol or substance abuse or addiction;
- hearing voices or holding fixed irrational beliefs;
- an inability to function effectively, academically or in other areas of life.

#### **4.6.2. Intermission and Fitness for Study**

There can be occasions when you are sufficiently concerned about a student's wellbeing and/or their academic engagement that you believe that they are not currently fit enough to continue their course. It may be appropriate to suggest to them that they consider applying for a period of intermission in order to aid recovery and you may be in a position to write a statement in support of an intermission request. If the student appears unwilling to seek help or accept that they are unwell or struggling, it may be necessary and in the student's best interests to take a Fitness for Study route, the formal stages of which can be found the Fitness to Study Policy.

## **Summary**

Student life can at times be inherently stressful. Moderate amounts of stress can be motivating and energising, but very high levels of stress, anxiety and distress can be



debilitating and impede academic development and performance. College staff can play a very important role in helping students to manage the stress of their lives, particularly those that relate to or have impact on their academic progress.

Often just listening to a student and showing that you are concerned is all that is required. By being aware of the symptoms and behaviours that are indicative of serious emotional or psychological distress, and of the appropriate support services available to students, you may be able to help to prevent a student's problems escalating or leading to academic failure. Prompt and appropriate referral can also help minimise the impact of a student's difficulties on fellow students and friends.