

FITNESS TO STUDY AND REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT PROCEDURE

Audience	All Stakeholders
Status / review cycle	Three Yearly
Current review	March 2026
Next review	March 2029
Review committee	Strategy & Policy Committee & Full Board
Staff lead	Robin Hester- Director of Safeguarding and EDI and Kate Parsons- Assistant Principal
Trustee lead	Liz Gilroy-Scott

1. Introduction

Esher Sixth Form College provides full-time, on-site education for young people aged 16–19. The College aims to create a culture of high expectations and outstanding achievement while promoting the values of inclusivity, community and empowerment. This philosophy underpins how the College strives to make reasonable adjustments and provide best endeavour support for students with physical or mental health needs, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Children and Families Act 2014.

It is important to be clear about what is reasonable within an educational setting and the limits of individual support that can be provided within a sixth form college. To promote consistency and fairness, full-time, on-site attendance is necessary for the following reasons:

- Full-time, on-site education ensures students receive structured, high-quality instruction, peer collaboration, and access to college resources and support, which are critical for academic success.
- In coursework-based subjects, on-site supervision is necessary to verify the authenticity of student work. Remote learning or long periods of non-attendance compromise academic integrity.
- Managing a consistent, on-site timetable ensures effective resource allocation and avoids setting precedents that could disrupt the College’s educational model.
- Maintaining full-time, on-site attendance ensures equity among students, avoiding unfair advantages or bespoke arrangements that could create disparities.
- The College has a responsibility to safeguard students, including monitoring wellbeing through regular, face-to-face interaction.
- While the College makes reasonable adjustments, these do not extend to creating bespoke off-site programmes, as this would exceed the reasonable capacity of the College.

Esher Sixth Form College provides full-time, on-site education. While short-term flexibility with attendance may be appropriate in response to ill health, prolonged or ongoing absence is not sustainable within a sixth form college setting.

There may be occasions where:

- a student’s physical or mental health requires support beyond the expertise or capacity that the College can reasonably provide;

- a student's health needs present a health and safety risk to themselves or others that cannot be safely managed in a mainstream educational environment; or
- despite reasonable adjustments and support, a student is unable to maintain sufficient engagement to access their programme of study.

In such circumstances, and for one or more of the reasons outlined above, the College may determine that, in the best interests of the student, continuing at the College is no longer the most appropriate option.

2. Studying at the College

Students are encouraged to disclose any physical or mental health needs as part of the application process. Disclosure will not disadvantage an applicant and enables the College to consider appropriate support, reasonable adjustments and transition arrangements.

Where a complex or significant physical or mental health condition is disclosed, the College may request further information from medical professionals and may arrange a transition meeting to discuss the student's needs, proposed programme of study and any reasonable adjustments that can be put in place. Adjustment to a sixth form college environment can be challenging, and attendance at Admissions Interview, Taster Day, Enrolment and Induction is compulsory and forms an important part of a successful transition.

Where a health condition is not disclosed prior to entry, support and reasonable adjustments may still be considered once the issue becomes known to the College. Early disclosure is strongly encouraged, as it allows staff to respond appropriately and avoid exacerbating difficulties through lack of awareness.

During a student's time at the College, health needs may change. Where a physical or mental health issue begins to affect attendance, engagement or progress, the College will work with the student and parents/carers to consider reasonable adjustments and appropriate support, which will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective.

3. Limits to Study and Support

Whether a physical or mental health condition is identified prior to joining the College or during a student's time at the College, there are reasonable limits to the support that can be provided. These limits relate both to expectations around academic engagement and to the nature, location and duration of support that can reasonably be offered within a sixth form college setting.

Academic Progress and Viability

Each case will be considered on its individual merits; however, a minimum level of attendance and engagement must be maintained to enable a student to realistically achieve. Academic progress depends on participation in classroom activity, and prolonged periods of complete absence or persistently low attendance will make a student's studies non-viable.

In relation to coursework and homework, short-term flexibility and extensions may be appropriate. However, where a student falls significantly behind deadlines over an extended period, there may come a point at which catching up is no longer possible. Expectations regarding attendance and assessment will be set on a case-by-case basis, taking account of individual circumstances.

Support

On a short-term and temporary basis, teaching staff may liaise with students via email or Teams where appropriate. This cannot be sustained long-term, and the College is not able to provide individualised remote learning or online lessons. Esher Sixth Form College is not a distance-learning provider and does not have the resources, expertise or remit to offer bespoke off-site provision.

The College can provide pastoral and wellbeing support through its Counselling Team, tutors and Tutor Team Leaders, within defined parameters. Where appropriate, the College will refer students to external services and maintain liaison with those services. The College is not able to provide complex medical or psychiatric support, which must be accessed through appropriate external professionals.

All support provided by the College must take place on site. Pastoral and support resources are finite and must be available equitably to all students.

4. Fitness to Study Process

The College's default position is to support all students to complete their studies successfully and achieve their potential. Each student's circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of medical evidence, the views of the student and parents/carers, and the reasonable adjustments and support available within a sixth form college setting.

There may be occasions where, despite reasonable adjustments and best endeavour support, a student's physical or mental health significantly affects their ability to maintain fitness to study. In such circumstances, the College must consider whether continued study remains in the student's best interests and consistent with its duty of care.

Where the College, medical professionals, the student and parents/carers agree that withdrawal is the most appropriate outcome, this will be actioned. Where there is no consensus, the staged Fitness to Study process below will be followed:

Overview:

- At each stage, expectations and reasonable adjustments will be agreed and recorded.
- Parents/carers will be included in communications at each stage.
- Progress will be reviewed within agreed timescales (usually two weeks).
- Where sufficient progress is made, no further action will be taken.
- Where some progress is made, a further review period may be agreed.
- Where insufficient progress is made, the concern may be escalated to the next stage.

Fitness to Study and Reasonable Adjustment		
LEVEL	Intervention	Staff
0	Assessment and Reasonable Adjustment	Tutor Team Leader
1	N/A	N/A
2	N/A	N/A
3	Fitness to Study Concern	Tutor Team Leader
4	Fitness to Study Continuing Concern	Tutor Team Leader
5	Fitness to Study Director Concern	Director of Safeguarding and EDI

Level 0- Reasonable Adjustment and Fitness to Study Assessment

- Used where a physical or mental health issue is having a significant impact on a student's ability to engage with their study programme.
- The Tutor Team Leader (TTL) will meet with the student and parents/carers to discuss concerns and agree appropriate reasonable adjustments to support attendance and engagement. These adjustments will be communicated to relevant staff.
- Medical evidence may be requested from a professional involved in the student's care to inform support, treatment planning and prognosis.
- A review date is set 2-4 weeks after the agreement of the reasonable adjustments.

Level 3- Fitness to Study Concern

- Used where reasonable adjustments at Level 0 have not resulted in sufficient improvement within an agreed timeframe (usually 2-4 weeks).
- A Fitness to Study Concern will be raised, outlining concerns, confirming reasonable adjustments in place and setting clear expectations for improvement. Progress will be reviewed within agreed timescales.
- Where concerns are resolved, the student will remain at this level for ongoing monitoring. If issues re-emerge, targets may be reset at this stage.

Level 4 – Fitness to Study Continuing Concern

- Used where sufficient progress has not been made in response to a Fitness to Study Concern.
- Concerns and expectations will be reviewed and reset, with continued monitoring of attendance and engagement. Progress will be reviewed within agreed timescales.
- Where concerns are resolved, the student will remain at this level for monitoring. If issues re-emerge, targets may be reset at this stage.

Level 5 – Fitness to Study Director Concern

- Used where sufficient progress has not been made in response to a Continuing Fitness to Study Concern.
- The Director of Safeguarding and EDI will review the case, including the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments and ongoing fitness to study. Expectations will be clarified and progress reviewed within agreed timescales.

The ongoing viability of a Level 5 student's place at the College will be reviewed at key points in the academic year, after the termly release of grades as a minimum. This review will comprise of feedback from subject teachers and any other relevant staff, a review of attendance and attainment data, and an inclusion review.

At this review point there are 3 possible outcomes:

1. Further support needs are identified and implemented
2. The student may be removed from a course
3. A recommendation is made by the Director for a Case Conference due to significant concerns about viability. A possible outcome of a Case Conference is permanent exclusion.

The Exclusions and Appeals Procedure can be found on the College website.

5. Restarting at the College

In certain circumstances, the College may offer a conditional restart. A student may restart only once, must restart in the September of the following academic year, and must be under the age of 19 at the point of restart. A restart will not be permitted where a student was required to leave at the Case Conference stage.

A restart is most likely to be successful where the student has engaged with appropriate medical support outside the College and has had sufficient time to respond to that support (typically a minimum of six months). Where there is no clear engagement with prescribed medical support or insufficient time for recovery, a restart is less likely to be appropriate.

Where a restart is offered, responsibility rests with the student and parents/carers to ensure the student is sufficiently recovered to engage with a full-time academic programme. On withdrawal, the College will confirm the conditions that must be met in order to restart. These will include:

1. A letter from a professional involved in the student's care confirming current health needs, treatment and prognosis, and that the student is not fit to engage in full-time study at the point of withdrawal.
2. Attendance at a restart interview in May/June prior to restarting to review recovery and the proposed programme of study.
3. A further letter from a professional involved in the student's care, provided at or before re-enrolment, confirming that the student is fit to study on a full-time programme.
4. Where a student has an EHCP, re-consultation with the local authority to confirm that needs can be met within College resources.

Failure to meet any of these conditions will result in the restart offer being withdrawn.

In July, a College representative (normally the Director of Safeguarding and EDI) will write to parents/carers confirming enrolment arrangements, required medical documentation and seeking written confirmation that the student intends to restart.

As programmes are agreed at enrolment, students may not be able to prepare in advance. Where appropriate, restarters—particularly those restarting the 6.2 year—may have additional supervised study or support added to their timetable to allow time to catch up. Reasonable adjustments will also be reviewed at, or shortly after, re-enrolment.

All restarters will be monitored by their Tutor Team Leader and will move directly to Fitness to Study Concern (Level 3) if similar issues re-emerge.

Other documentation associated with this procedure

- Behaviour and Engagement Policy
- The Student Contract
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Exclusion and Appeals Procedure