



MidKent College

Student Engagement Policy 2025/2026

Document Revision History		
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V1	November 2023	New policy
V2	July 2024	Major update to terminology, previously known as Student Disciplinary Policy
V3	November 2025	Minor update, clarity on attendance monitoring and examples of misconduct to include racism and bullying. Additional section added regarding exemptions to the usual policy.

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Policy Cross References

This policy should be read in conjunction with any other associated policies, with particular reference to:

Policy Name	Policy Number
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy	MKC-Safeguarding-002
Complaints and Appeals Policy	MKC-Curriculum-001

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Introduction

MidKent College welcomes all students and prides itself on:

- Providing an environment that enables students to achieve
- Creating opportunities
- Transforming lives

All students are welcomed, valued and respected. We encourage mutual respect and tolerance amongst the whole college community and acknowledge the role that behaviour has on learning. We recognise that an environment where positive behaviour is promoted leads to greater levels of student engagement. We celebrate the achievements of all students and seek to understand the reasons that lead to low levels of engagement, and challenging or negative behaviours.

This policy aims to:

- Promote a relational approach to managing behaviour.
- Recognise the support needed to encourage high levels of engagement and positive behaviours.
- Encourage a culture where mutual respect is valued by all.
- Ensure staff take a consistent approach to support engagement.
- Ensure, when necessary, that sanctions are effective, fair and consistent.
- Enable students to take responsibility for their behaviours, recognising the impact on themselves and others.
- Create a safe environment where students can learn without fear of discrimination, bullying, harassment or disruption by others.
- Recognise there will be occasions where health difficulties or personal circumstances impact a student's ability to maintain their fitness to study and engage in learning, and ensure adjustments/support is provided wherever possible to promote engagement.
- Define the process to support students struggling to engage as a result of additional learning needs, mental health difficulties, temporary or long-term disabilities.

It is expected that all college staff promote positive behaviour in the following ways:

- All MidKent College teaching staff will set the expectations for behaviour, including attendance, with the class at the beginning of the year.
- Students meeting expectations and engaging on their course will be regularly praised and recognised.
- Where a student is not engaging, staff will aim to identify and meet the need being communicated through a behaviour at the earliest opportunity prior to applying any sanctions.
- Students will be supported to understand the consequences to inappropriate behaviour through the fair and consistent application of sanctions.

It is expected that all students behave in a way that is respectful of staff, other students and the learning environment in line with the expectations set by their curriculum area.

This policy applies to all members of the college community, including all staff and students.

Policy Principles

Supporting Engagement and Positive Behaviour

All MidKent College students will be treated with respect and supported to understand the expectations of them in college. If a student is not engaging fully with learning or displaying negative behaviour, staff will take a professionally curious approach to try and understand the reasons for the behaviour. Where appropriate, formal disciplinary processes can be used alongside Fitness to Study meetings and Additional Learning Support Reviews. Students can be supported to improve their engagement using the following mechanisms:

1. Fitness to Study Meetings
2. Additional Learning Support Reviews
3. Coaching Conversations
4. Formal Warnings
5. Final Warnings
6. Inclusion Panel Hearings

Whenever possible, restorative interventions should be implemented before resorting to formal disciplinary actions. If, however, restorative practice is not successful or the behaviour is such that a sanction must be applied disciplinary actions may be necessary. Reasons for disciplinary action include, but are not limited to:

- Persistent and repeated disruption of others' learning.
- Persistent non-attendance or lateness which is not associated with an underlying need.
- Ongoing disrespectful behaviour towards other learners, staff, or visitors.
- Misuse or illegal use of the internet/IT equipment on or offsite.
- Continuous improper use of mobile phones or audio devices in classrooms (both physical and online) or on College premises.
- Displaying aggressive behaviour, discrimination (including racism), harassment, or bullying, including online conduct.
- Any allegation of child-on-child abuse.

- Allowing others to access the premises using their ID card.
- Allowing non-students to access College online activities and forums.
- Violating Health & Safety policies, such as unsafe practices in workshops.
- Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs on College premises or during any College-related activities, including online.
- Committing any criminal offense, such as:
 - Endangering or causing injury to others;
 - Possession of an offensive weapon;
 - Theft
 - Wilful damage to College property, equipment, or accommodation; and
 - Hate crimes.

It is expected that individual tutors manage incidents of low-level disruption in classrooms using coaching techniques. Staff can request training on managing low-level disruptions effectively through the Advanced Practitioner team.

On the rare occasion that suspension or direction to remote learning is necessary, the following strategies will be used to help the student reintegrate:

- Curriculum staff will maintain contact with the young person, setting work and regularly checking in to see how they are progressing.
- Staff will place the young person's voice at the heart of each step.
- If it is appropriate for them to return to the College, staff will discuss the support needed to enable the young person to reintegrate at the right time for them.

All conversations about behaviour and engagement will be recorded on the College's ProMonitor system within the learner 'meetings and comments' section. If a behaviour intervention is instigated, the notes will form a valuable part of the substantiating evidence. All correspondence with students and parents/carers/guardians should be typed and processed by the relevant curriculum administrator who will ensure that the documents are uploaded onto ProMonitor.

Positive Behaviour and Restorative Practice Intervention Stages

The following interventions can be used to help promote engagement and ensure sanctions are applied consistently:

1. Fitness to Study Meetings
2. Additional Learning Support Reviews
3. Coaching Conversations
4. Formal Warnings
5. Final Warnings
6. Inclusion Panel Hearings

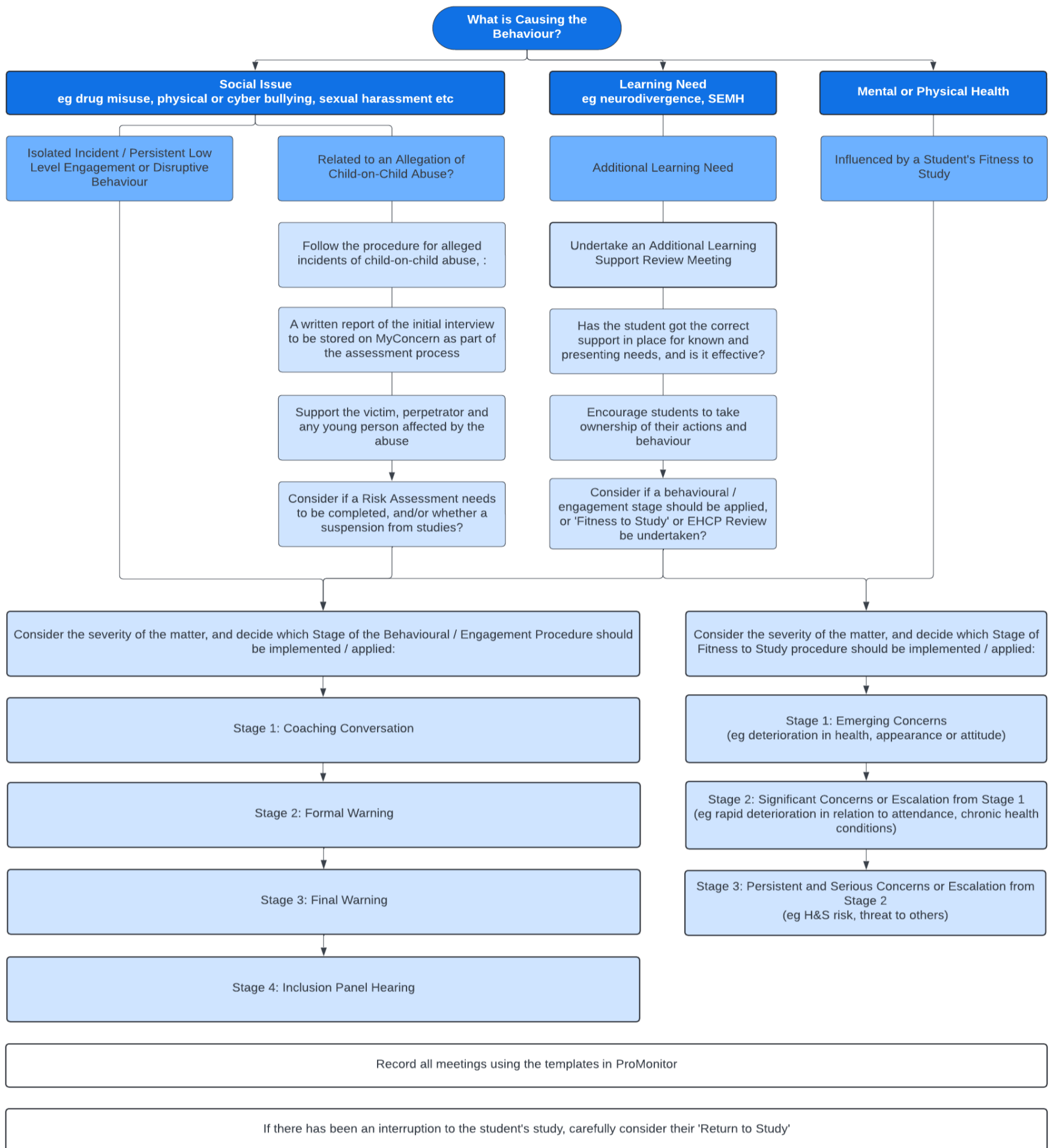
When deciding on the best approach to respond to a low-level of engagement or persistent negative behaviour, consider the following:

Exceptions to this Policy

While this policy applies to all students enrolled at MidKent College, there are specific circumstances where the standard engagement processes may not apply, such as:

- If a student has not attended at all for a period of two weeks or more since enrolment, without (prior) notification, a withdrawal may be processed as a "no show".
- If a student does not attend for four consecutive weeks and fails to engage with reasonable attempts by college staff to support their return through one of the engagement stages, a withdrawal may be processed without convening an Inclusion Panel, provided that all efforts to understand and address barriers to attendance have been documented. This must be approved by a Director of Curriculum. For students with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who have not attended for four weeks post-enrolment, the College will process a withdrawal while continuing to work with the local authority to discuss suitable alternative provision at an Emergency Annual Review and/or request a change of placement. If MidKent College remains the most appropriate placement following this partnership review, the student's enrolment can be reinstated.

Be Professionally Curious



The Four Stages of the Disciplinary Procedure

Stage 1: Coaching Conversation

The Coaching Conversation is designed to be student-led, encouraging reflection through a structured discussion. It aims to help students understand the impact of their actions on themselves, others and on the learning experience for all, thus preventing repeat behaviour without punitive measures. Actions agreed upon during this process should be documented on ProMonitor to aid the student.

Possible reasons for a Coaching Conversation could include the following misconduct:

- Low-level or decline in attendance.
- Low-level or decline in a student's engagement with learning.
- Low-level of disruptive behaviour or a decline in behaviour.
- Emerging concerns about a student's physical or mental wellbeing, or ability to engage which do not reach the Fitness to Study threshold.

Participants:

- The student.
- Staff issuing the Coaching Conversation request.
- Student advocate (offered and included, if requested).

Parents/carers/guardians of students under 18 will be informed of Coaching Conversations if there are persistent concerns or a student's behaviour is having an adverse effect on their wellbeing or the wellbeing of others in the College community. Staff should consider if the parents/carers/guardians of young people with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) should be invited to support Coaching Conversations.

Issuers:

Coaching Conversations can be issued by Progress and Performance Tutors, Curriculum Tutors, and the Student Experience Team in collaboration with the Curriculum team.

Process:

- Students must be present for the conversation. If the student fails to attend the arranged meeting 3 times the meeting may be progressed to Stage 2.
- Students should reflect on their behaviour and are encouraged to identify strategies/targets to improve this.
- Specific actions are agreed and reviewed on a set date.
- Document the outcome of the conversation on ProMonitor in the meetings section with a comment to notify relevant staff.
- Referrals for additional support can be made to Additional Learning Support (ALS) or external agencies, as needed.
- Parents/carers/guardians and/or external agencies are informed via letter if this is proportionate with the behaviour.

- A student can have multiple coaching conversations to address different behaviour, however, after 3 Coaching Conversations proceed to the Formal Warning stage for further infractions of the same behaviour.
- Reasonable adjustments should be made to ensure all students and parents/carers/guardians can access and engage fully with the meeting.

Stage 2: Formal Warning

Formal Warnings should support improvement and include Restorative Practice, when appropriate. They address more significant issues than minor classroom disruptions. The structured discussion aims to help students understand the broader impact of their actions and can be an outcome from an Additional Learning Support Review.

Possible reasons for a Stage 2 Formal Warning disciplinary could include the following misconduct:

- No improvement since the Coaching Conversation(s).
- Students are not engaging with the support agreed at the Fitness to Study Meeting.
- Breach of Health and Safety policy and legislation.
- Verbal abuse of students or staff (direct or indirect).
- Academic misconduct. Serious or repeated disruption to learning.
- Non-compliance with a reasonable request from staff.
- Conduct that damages the reputation of the College.

Participants:

- The student.
- Staff issuing the Formal Warning.
- Student advocate (offered and included, if requested).
- Parents/carers/guardians (always invited).
- Support agencies (invited when appropriate).

Issuers:

Formal Warnings can be issued by Curriculum Managers, Directors of Curriculum, and the Student Experience Team in partnership with the curriculum team.

Process:

- Students must be present and informed of the appeal process. If the student fails to attend the arranged meeting 3 times, the Formal Warning may be issued in their absence.
- Formal Warnings will always include how we can support students to improve their engagement.
- Specific actions are agreed upon, recorded on ProMonitor and reviewed on a set date.
- Students are informed that the Formal Warning lasts 3 months and remains on their record for the academic year.
- Document the outcome on ProMonitor in the meetings section with a comment to notify relevant staff.

- Referrals for additional support can be made to Additional Learning Support or external agencies, as needed.
- A letter is sent to the student detailing the disciplinary level, appeal process, and support information.
- Parents/carers/guardians and/or external agencies are informed via letter for any student who was under the age of 18 on 31 August prior to their enrolment.
- Reasonable adjustments should be made to ensure all students and parents/carers/guardians can access and engage fully with the meeting.

Stage 3: Final Warning

The Final Warning clearly outlines required behavioural changes and specifies actions that could trigger an Inclusion Panel Hearing request, potentially leading to exclusion from the College.

Possible reasons for a Stage 3 Final Warning disciplinary could include the following serious misconduct:

- No improvement since the Stage 2 Formal Warning.
- Vandalism.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Alcohol or drugs related incident.
- Serious breach of Health and Safety policy and legislation.
- Serious academic misconduct.
- Serious incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination.
- Serious misconduct that damages the reputation of the College.
- Misuse or illegal use of the internet/IT equipment on or offsite.

Participants:

- The student.
- Staff issuing the Final Warning.
- Student advocate (offered and included, if requested).
- Parents/carers/guardians (always invited).
- Support agencies (invited when appropriate).

Issuers:

Final Warnings can be issued by the Director of Curriculum and the Student Support Managers in partnership with the curriculum team.

Process:

- Final Warnings will always include how we can support students to improve their engagement.
- The Final Warning specifies required behavioural changes and actions that could trigger an Inclusion Panel Hearing request.
- Students are informed that the Final Warning lasts 6 months and remains on their record for the academic year.

- Students must be present and informed of the appeal process. If the student fails to attend the arranged meeting 2 times, the Final Warning may be issued in their absence.
- Document the outcome on ProMonitor in the meetings section with a comment to notify relevant staff.
- A letter is sent to the student detailing the disciplinary level, appeal process, and support information.
- Parents/carers/guardians and/or external agencies are informed via letter for any student who was under the age of 18 on 31 August prior to their enrolment.
- Reasonable adjustments should be made to ensure all students and parents/carers/guardians can access and engage fully with the meeting.
- Referrals for additional support can be made to ALS or external agencies, as needed.

Stage 4: Inclusion Panel Hearings for Exclusion/Withdrawal

Inclusion Panel Hearings are convened for extreme behavioural incidents or persistent issues, leading to escalating warnings. They assess whether the student should be withdrawn from their current programme of study. Only a Director of Curriculum or Executive Director may take this action. The student and their parents/carers/guardians (in the case of students under 18 years old at the start of the academic year) and/or employer (in the case of an Apprentice) will be invited to an Inclusion Panel Hearing and the outcome will be confirmed in writing. The student has the right of appeal to the Principal of the College within 14 calendar days from the date of the letter confirming the outcome of the hearing. Possible reasons for progressing straight to an Inclusion Panel Hearing include:

- Serious allegations of child-on-child abuse, assault or bullying.
- Wilful negligence leading to injury, loss or damage.
- Conduct that places others in danger (in or outside of College).
- Possession of items that could be used as a weapon.
- Serious alcohol or drug misuse.
- Serious misconduct that damages the reputation of the College.
- Serious vandalism.

Issues:

Inclusion Panel Hearings can be requested by a Director of Curriculum, the Director of Safeguarding or the Director of Additional Learning Support and Supported Learning as long as the following apply/have been considered:

- Appropriate warnings must be issued before requesting an Inclusion Panel Hearing unless it is a single extreme incident.
- The Final Warning must clearly indicate required behavioural changes.
- Consideration is given to mitigating circumstances.
- The Director of Curriculum must document the request for an Inclusion Panel Hearing on ProMonitor.
- Support provided prior to the request must be evidenced on ProMonitor.

- The disciplinary process engages the student, allowing them to reflect and voice their perspective.

Facilitators:

Any Director or Executive Director can facilitate an Inclusion Panel Hearing. Where possible, Inclusion Panel Hearings will be conducted by a Director who has had limited prior involvement with the student to ensure impartiality.

Participants:

- The student.
- Student advocate (offered and included, if requested).
- Parents/carers/guardians (always invited).
- Support agencies (invited when appropriate).
- Curriculum Manager and/or Director of Curriculum, or an Investigating Officer presenting the evidence.
- Panel facilitators.

Process:

- Students must receive at least 3 days' notice of the hearing.
- Hearings occur within 10 College days of the request.
- Evidence is presented by the Curriculum Manager, Director of Curriculum or investigating officer.
- Associated statements or information to be provided to the Chair in advance.
- The panel can ask questions of both staff and student.
- The student and their advocate can present their case against exclusion. If a student declines to attend, the panel may go ahead in their absence.
- The panel deliberates and may recall either side for clarification or discussion.
- Decisions are based on reasonable probability.
- Possible outcomes include:
 - Continuation in the current programme.
 - Transfer to an alternative programme.
 - Remote learning.
 - Exclusion for the remainder of the academic year.
 - Permanent exclusion.
- The decision is communicated in person or by phone, followed by a letter to the student, parents/carers/guardians and, where appropriate, external agencies within 5 working days of the Inclusion Panel Hearing.
- All Inclusion Panel Hearings are minuted, with minutes available upon request from the Curriculum Administrator.
- Document the outcome of the Inclusion Panel Hearing on ProMonitor in the meetings section with a comment to notify relevant staff.
- Should it be required, an Inclusion Panel Hearing can be adjourned to allow more evidence to be acquired. The date when the hearing can resume should be agreed at the hearing and should be no later than 5 college days from the adjourned hearing.
- Appeals are heard by an Executive Director or the Principal.
- Reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure all students and parents/carers/guardians can access and engage fully with the meeting.

Additional Notes:

For students with an EHCP, an Emergency EHCP Review is required prior to exclusion, wherein evidence of all reasonable steps taken to support the student and provide the provision outlined in section F of the EHCP will be presented and reviewed.

For students studying in the “Enhance Provision” direction to study from the “Enhance” base rooms may be used as an alternative to exclusion. This would require the authorisation of an Executive Director and would only be granted if the behaviour is directly linked to additional learning needs and would not pose a risk to the student or others.

Suspension or Directed to Remote Learning

In cases of suspected or alleged gross misconduct, a student may be suspended or directed to remote learning pending an investigation and Inclusion Panel Hearing. Suspensions can be authorised by:

- An Executive Director, Director or Director of Curriculum.
- The Curriculum Manager responsible for department in which the student is studying.
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (in the case of safeguarding concerns).

The Executive Assistant to the Executive Director for Curriculum and Quality must be immediately informed of any suspensions.

So as not to adversely impact a student’s progress on their course, the curriculum team should, wherever possible, support the student to continue their learning offsite, setting work and regularly checking in to see how they are progressing. All communication with students during their suspension is to be logged on ProMonitor. Staff will place the young person’s voice at the heart of each step. If it is appropriate for them to return to the College, staff will discuss the support needed to enable the young person to reintegrate at the right time for them.

A suspension will not normally last in excess of 20 calendar days maximum, however an Executive Director or Director can extend this duration in exceptional circumstances e.g. whilst a police investigation takes place.

A written account of the reasons for the suspension or direction to remote learning, and formal confirmation of the suspension/direction to remote learning will be sent to the student, with a copy sent to the parents/carers/guardians if the student is under the age of 18 at the start of the academic year.

Students who are accessing the “Enhance” Specialist Provision may be directed to study from the “Enhance” base rooms rather than offsite, if appropriate. This would require the authorisation of an Executive Director and would only be granted if the behaviour is directly linked to additional learning needs and would not pose a risk to the student or others.

Appeals

The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Principal of the College within 14 calendar days of the exclusion letter. Appeals against expulsion may normally be made for one of the following reasons:

- The judgement is incorrect or flawed.
- The sanction imposed is unduly harsh.
- New evidence has become available which may change the initial judgement.

The Principal has the right to amend the sanction initially imposed at the disciplinary meeting. In some cases, this may result in an increased penalty. The decision will stand until any appeal concludes. The Principal is able to appoint an Executive Director or Director to review the appeal on his behalf.

For further information about the Appeals process, please consult MidKent College's Complaints and Appeals Policy, which can be located on our website.

Fitness to Study Meetings

Fitness to Study meetings support students with additional learning needs, significant physical or mental health issues to engage in learning, in line with the Equality Act 2010. The College aims to promote equality, eliminate discrimination, and foster an inclusive community.

The process is used when a student's behaviour, low engagement, or academic progress may be due to health or disability issues, or when it affects others' health and safety. It explores support options to help the student engage in learning. Students must take steps to stay fit to study once adjustments are made. If a student can't engage in support or treatment, the College may use Fitness to Study procedures to determine if they can continue as a student.

The Fitness to Study process has 3 stages. The stages reflect the degree of concern and/or perceived seriousness of the situation. The process can be entered at any stage. However, in most cases, Stage 1 and 2 should be used before escalation to Stage 3. If the concerns are not addressed by the recommended and agreed actions, the next stage may be instigated.

Fitness to Study Process – Stage 1

Stage 1 is used when there are emerging concerns about a student's health, wellbeing or behaviour and the impact on their ability to achieve or progress on their course. Concerns may include a significant deterioration in health, appearance and/or attitude, particularly where there is an impact on attendance, ability to meet deadlines, succeed academically or participate in normal College life.

Parents, carers or guardians of those students under the age of 18 should be contacted, informed of the concerns and invited to attend the Fitness to Study

meeting. This applies to any student aged 18 or under (unless they turned 18 prior to the start of the academic year) or those with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Participants:

- The student.
- Student advocate (offered and included, if requested).
- Parents/carers/guardians (where appropriate).
- Curriculum Manager and/or course Tutor.
- Support agencies (invited when appropriate).
- A Student Welfare Officer.
- A member of the ALS team (where appropriate).

Issues:

Stage 1 of the Fitness to Study process can be initiated by Curriculum Managers, Directors or a member of the Welfare team.

Process:

The member of staff instigating the process should:

- Identify and clarify the issues arising.
- Collate information regarding the student.
- Clarify what action has been taken so far and whether the issues have been discussed with the student.
- A meeting with the student should then be arranged and the following points should be considered and included, as appropriate:
 - Identification/explanation of the concern.
 - Clarification of the appropriate College boundaries and Code of Conduct.
 - Opportunity for the student to give their perspective of what is happening.
 - Signposting to relevant services within the College.
 - Consideration of what provision can be put in place to support the student to minimise concerns, for which members of staff will be responsible.
 - Notes of the meeting must be kept on ProMonitor and relevant staff notified
 - Agreement of a date to review the situation. The length of time between the meetings should be agreed by all present, but should be no longer than 4 weeks.
 - Explanation that continuation of the same or any additional concerns could result in escalation to Stage 2 of the Fitness of Study process.
- If the student does not attend any of the agreed meetings:
 - The situation can be discussed in their absence.
 - The agreed action plan, support options and timescale for completion must be communicated to the student.

- Parents/carers/guardians and/or external agencies are to be informed via letter for any student who was under the age of 18 on 31 August prior to their enrolment, or with an EHCP.

Fitness to Study Process – Stage 2

Stage 2 of the process is used where there is significant concern, or as an escalation from Stage 1.

Parents/carers/guardians should be contacted and informed of the continuing or new concerns for any student aged 18 or under (unless they turned 18 prior to the start of the academic year) or those with an EHCP.

Participants:

A Stage 2 meeting should include:

- The student.
- Parents/carers/guardians (where appropriate).
- Director of Curriculum.
- The member of staff expressing concern or those responsible for monitoring the actions at Stage 1.
- Other support services e.g. Student Support Services, ALS, or Student Welfare Officer.

Issues:

Stage 2 of the Fitness to Study process can be initiated by Directors of Curriculum, Additional Learning Support Team Leaders or a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Process:

A minimum of 24 hours' notice should be given of the meeting.

The meeting should cover the following:

- Identification/explanation of the concern (provide clear and specific examples) and any past relevant information, including notes from the Stage 1 meeting, if undertaken.
- Opportunity for the student to give their perception of the issues/concerns.
- Clarification of the student's responsibility at the College e.g. to be 'well enough' to study and be respectful of others.
- Clarification of agreed actions and support options to change or improve the current situation.
- Explicit clarification of the consequences of failing to complete the agreed actions, and/or a continuation or worsening of the cause for concern.
- Agreement of any interim monitoring or measures.
- Notes of the meeting must be kept on ProMonitor and the relevant staff notified.

- Agreement of a date to review the situation. The length of time between the meeting should be agreed by all, but should be no longer than 2 weeks at Stage 2.
- If the situation becomes more complex at the end of the review stage, an escalation to Stage 3 may be appropriate.
- If the student does not attend any of the agreed meetings:
 - The situation can be discussed in their absence.
 - The agreed action plan, support options and timescale for completion must be communicated to the student.
- Parents/carers/guardians and/or external agencies are to be informed via letter for any student who was under the age of 18 on 31 August prior to their enrolment, or with an EHCP.

Fitness to Study Process – Stage 3

Stage 3 of the process is used where there is persistent and serious concern about a student's health, wellbeing and/or ability to study and cope at College. In the majority of cases, this stage will follow attempts to address concerns through Stages 1 and 2. Where Stage 3 is an escalation from Stages 1 and 2, it is vital that clear records are in place of communication with parents/carers/guardians for any student who was under the age of 18 on 31 August prior to their enrolment, or with an EHCP. In some cases, however, it may be appropriate to proceed directly to Stage 3, for example:

- Where health, wellbeing and ability to study are seriously compromised.
- When all the options to address the situation have been explored and a wider College perspective is required.
- When a higher level of authority and decision-making is required.
- When there are serious concerns regarding the risk to the health and safety of the student and where there is a perceived risk and threat to others.

Participants:

The Stage 3 meeting will bring together staff from the student's faculty and Student Support, including appropriate representative from the following:

- The student's curriculum area, usually the Director of Curriculum and the Course Tutor.
- Representative from ALS, if appropriate.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, if appropriate.

This can be chaired by any of the attending Directors.

The student and parents, carers or guardians (if the student is under 18), should be informed in writing of the meeting and its purpose at least 2 working days before the meeting.

Issues:

The decision to call a Stage 3 meeting will be made by the appropriate Director of Curriculum, or at the request of the Director of Safeguarding or the Director of Additional Learning Support and Supported Learning.

Process:

Where possible, the Stage 3 meeting will be to ensure that the College considers all possible options to enable the student to continue with their studies. However, escalation to Stage 3 signifies a real concern about the student's ability to continue to study and the meeting will consider whether it may in the best interest of the student to consider an interruption or withdrawal from their programme of study.

At the meeting, the following should be considered:

- Summary of the presenting issues, concerns being raised and past relevant information, including any documentation from Stages 1 and 2.
- Opportunity for the student to give their perception of the current issues and, if appropriate, the history of the events, past experiences and whether they have engaged with any strategies put in place to address the concerns.
- Clarification of the options available to the student at this stage e.g. reduced/altered timetable, distance learning, change of course aim or withdrawal of the student.
- Clarification of agreed actions/options and support services that the learner is encouraged to access.
- Explicit clarification of failing to complete the agreed actions, and/or a continuation of concern.
- Agreement of any interim monitoring measures.
- Date and time of next meeting, if appropriate.
- In cases where an interruption is the outcome, the meeting should consider and make explicit what is required from the student and what needs to happen before they are permitted to return to study.
- Where withdrawal is the outcome of the Stage 3 meeting, the agreement of an Executive Director must be obtained, and Admissions and MIS informed.
- If appropriate, referrals to external agencies could be made.
- In the event the student does not attend, the meeting can take place in their absence, but all decisions must be communicated to the student within 2 working days. A report of the meeting and agreed actions should be documented by the Chair of the Stage 3 meeting and a copy sent to the student and, for any student who was under the age of 18 on 31 August prior to their enrolment or with an EHCP, parents/carers/guardians and/or external agencies.

Return to Study

In cases where the agreed outcome of a Fitness to Study meeting is an interruption of study, the student will be asked to provide satisfactory evidence to show they have overcome the original difficulties and is well enough to return to study. The

nature of the evidence required from the learner will be dependent on the individual circumstances in each case. In all cases, it is expected that a report be provided from a recognised independent health professional with sufficient knowledge of the health and wellbeing of the student during the period of interruption that satisfactorily addresses any potential impact that returning to study might have.

Prior to the student returning to study, a meeting must be held with the Curriculum Manager and/or a member of the Welfare Team, whoever is most appropriate, before a decision is made. During this meeting, a Risk Assessment will be carried out to ascertain if the student continues to pose a risk to themselves or others. The student may be asked to provide confirmation that they are continuing to access any course of treatment prescribed by the professionals involved with their care. The outcome of the meeting should be recorded in the Fitness to Study Review on ProMonitor.

The decision to allow a student to return to study will be made by the appropriate Director of Curriculum, Director of Safeguarding or Director of ALS and Supported Learning, as appropriate, in consultation with the Curriculum Managers and Welfare team. Where a student has been deemed as a potential risk of harm to themselves or others and they have been removed from the premises by ambulance, referred to their GP, taken to hospital or collected by a responsible adult, a recovery period of 5 days must be put in place (this may be extended, if necessary). In certain circumstances, for example, if the student poses a risk to their own health, or to the safety and wellbeing of other persons, it may be deemed that it is not in the student's best interests to continue their studies until their condition has improved. This should be decided at an Inclusion Panel Hearing. The Director of Curriculum for the area of Study or Director of Safeguarding will instigate this process.

Additional Learning Support Review Meeting

MidKent College recognises that behaviour is a form of communication. For some students with additional learning needs, challenging behaviour and low-level disruptive behaviour can be a sign that they have not yet learned the appropriate behaviour for college environment, or that their support needs are not being met appropriately.

All MidKent College staff take an inclusive approach to supporting young people with additional learning needs to develop socially appropriate behaviours as we believe this is an essential life skill. Supporting our young people to develop strategies to manage their behaviour will help them develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments, enable them to better understand workplace expectations and respond to others appropriately.

Whilst we strive to support students to develop these behaviours, we recognise that some students with additional learning needs do, at times, display behaviour that challenges staff and their peers. In cases where this is persistent or negatively impacts the learning or wellbeing of others, this behaviour will be examined in an Additional Learning Support Review Meeting.

These meetings will be held in partnership with the student, students' parents/guardians/carers, curriculum staff, ALS and Student Support to:

- Identify the behaviours that are deemed to be challenging.
- Discuss the impact this has on other students.
- Explore why the behaviours may be occurring.
- Validate and respect the views of the student.
- Set expectations for behaviour moving forward.
- Agree additional support required to set the student up for success.
- Agree a review period.

In the first instance, this meeting should be seen as a positive meeting that enables students to develop their social thinking skills and manage their needs without negatively impacting others. This should encourage students to accept and take responsibility for their behaviour rather than be seen as a punishment. However, in cases where a student's behaviour does not improve or the impact on others poses a risk to other students' wellbeing, a disciplinary sanction may be issued in line with the levels that apply to all other students.

Possible outcomes of an Additional Learning Support Review Meeting include any combination of the following:

- Agreeing targets for improved behaviour.
- Increasing/decreasing the support available to students for them to take ownership of their behaviour.
- Applying a disciplinary sanction alongside targets for improvement.

In cases where a student's behaviour poses a significant risk to others or prevents others from learning, withdrawal or a break in learning may be considered in line with the Fitness to Study procedure.

Procedure for Responding to Allegations of Child-on-Child Abuse

MidKent College recognises that all children are capable of abusing their peers. We take these instances of abuse seriously and apply the same weight to these concerns as we would to abuse perpetrated by an adult.

We recognise that child-on-child abuse can manifest itself in a whole spectrum of behaviours including, but not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying.
- Sexual violence and harassment.
- Physical abuse.
- Sending unsolicited messages or sexual images "sexting".
- Upskirting (now a criminal offence and has reporting requirements).
- Initiation / hazing type violence and rituals.

This procedure defines our organisational approach to any issue that could constitute child-on-child abuse. We are committed to upholding our duty to safeguard young people from incidents of child-on-child abuse and all staff should be aware of their responsibility to respond to any incident of child-on-child abuse. This procedure concentrates on child-on-child abuse in the context of bullying, sexual harassment and sexual violence. It is compliant with the statutory guidance on child-on-child abuse as set out in the Keeping Children Safe in Education Act 2024 (KCSiE 2024) and should be implemented in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Procedures

In cases where child-on-child abuse is identified, staff must follow our safeguarding procedure for reporting a concern and/or the disciplinary process. Staff should take a contextual approach to support all children and young people who have been affected by child-on-child abuse. This may mean referring all students involved in an incident of child-on-child abuse to the Student Support and Welfare team so they can access appropriate support and guidance.

Initial Response to Alleged Incidents of Child-on-Child Abuse

All responses to reports of child-on-child abuse will be made on a case-by-case basis, with the Designated Safeguarding Leads using their professional judgement to support faculty staff to determine the most appropriate next steps. This will be supported by other agencies such as social care and/or the police, as required. In all instances, College staff will:

- Take all reports seriously and reassure the victim that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Staff will not promise confidentiality as the concern will need to be shared further, for example, with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, social care/police, and parents/carers/guardians. Staff will, however, only share the report with those people who are necessary to progress it.
- A written report will be made as soon after the disclosure as possible, recording the facts as presented by the child. These may be used as part of a statutory assessment if the case is escalated later. These reports will be stored by the Safeguarding team on the MyConcern platform.
- Where the report includes an online element, the College will follow advice on searching, screening and confiscation. Staff will not view or forward images unless unavoidable and only if another member of staff (preferably a Designated Safeguarding Lead) is present.

If a report of child-on-child abuse includes sexual violence, a Designated Safeguarding Lead will complete a Risk Assessment to consider the risks posed to the following:

- The victim.
- The alleged perpetrator.
- All of the alleged victim's and perpetrator's peers.
- Wider student cohort.
- Staff.

Risk Assessments will be shared with faculty staff on a need-to-know basis, with the view to reducing risk, and stored securely by the Safeguarding team.

As part of the Risk Assessment process, the Safeguarding team will work with Curriculum Managers and Directors of Curriculum, as appropriate, to ensure that students are able to continue with their studies whilst any investigation takes place. This may mean making temporary changes to a learner's timetable or temporarily suspending a student in line with the disciplinary process. This decision will be made if we believe the alleged perpetrator poses an ongoing risk to the victim or other young people.

In all instances of alleged sexual violence, the alleged perpetrator will be removed from any classes they share with the victim, and we will consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator at a reasonable distance whilst at College. This separation will take place as soon as possible following the incident being reported to the police and before a criminal investigation is initiated. These actions are to support both students and should not be perceived as a judgment of guilt. The Safeguarding team will work closely with police/social care to determine what information is allowed to be shared with the alleged perpetrator/victim/staff so as not to disrupt or disturb a criminal investigation.

If the accuser does not wish to pursue this with the police or the police inform the Safeguarding team that they are not pursuing the alleged incident as a criminal investigation, the Safeguarding team will review Risk Assessments. At this point, any separation that interferes with a student's usual timetable will usually end, unless there is an ongoing risk to the victim or other young people.

Whilst completing any Risk Assessments, the Safeguarding team will also consider:

- The wishes of the victim and how they want to proceed.
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviour.
- The ages of the students involved.
- The developmental stages of the students involved.
- Any power imbalance between the students. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse.
- If there are ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students, school or College staff or visitors.
- Other related issues and wider context.

Although child-on-child abuse largely relates to reports of sexual misconduct, physical abuse is also considered to be child-on-child abuse. When dealing with other alleged behaviour which involves reports of, for example, emotional and/or physical abuse, Safeguarding staff can draw on aspects of Hackett's Continuum Model (see **Appendix 1**) to assess where the alleged behaviour falls on a spectrum and decide how to respond. This could include, for example, whether it:

- Is socially acceptable.
- Involves a single incident or has occurred over a period of time.
- Is socially acceptable within the peer group.
- Is problematic and concerning.
- Involves any overt elements of victimisation or discrimination e.g. related to race, gender, sexual orientation, physical, emotional, or intellectual vulnerability.
- Involves an element of coercion or pre-planning.
- Involves a power imbalance between the student(s) allegedly responsible for the behaviour.
- Involves a misuse of power.

Any report of child-on-child abuse which is deemed to be 'problematic', 'abusive' or 'violent' on the continuum must be followed up formally in line with the student disciplinary procedure.

Managing the Response to an Incident

Following this initial response, Designated Safeguarding Leads will advise on the next steps from the following options:

- Manage the incident internally through the student disciplinary process.
- Report the incident to the police and, where appropriate, social care.

Incidents can be managed internally when:

- It is not considered that the alleged perpetrator requires early help or statutory intervention and that it is appropriate to manage the incident through the disciplinary procedure.
- Providing additional education to the student and pastoral support through the Student Support Team is likely to be sufficient in reducing the likelihood of repeated abuse.
- The alleged behaviour is considered 'normal', 'inappropriate' or 'problematic' under Hackett's Continuum Model.
- No crime has been committed.

The decision to manage an incident internally will always be based on the principle that child-on-child abuse is never acceptable and will not be tolerated. These decisions will be documented and recorded as a confidential note on ProMonitor by the Designated Safeguarding Lead team. The Welfare team will continue to support the young people involved for as long as is deemed appropriate.

Parents and carers will be informed inline with the disciplinary processes or as advised by the police/social services if the incident cannot be managed internally. Victims' parents will always be informed by a member of the Welfare team to ensure that they have a voice in decision-making and can support their child appropriately, unless the College has reasonable belief this would put the young people at further risk of harm. All rationale for decisions will be documented on MyConcern and the Designated

Safeguarding Lead team will consult [‘When to Call the Police – Guidance for Schools & Colleges’](#) when making decisions when to call the police.

Quality and Monitoring

- Sample monitoring of disciplinary records for Stage 2: Formal Warning; Stage 3: Final Warning; and Stage 4: Inclusion Panel Hearings for Exclusion/Withdrawal will take place at least twice a year by Directors of Curriculum and Executive Directors to ensure that students are receiving equitable treatment under the procedures.
- An annual report will be made to the College Executive Team and to the Board of Governors, providing information regarding numbers, actions and outcomes of the application of the disciplinary procedure.

Policy Review and Evaluation

A review of this policy will be undertaken by the review date by the policy writer and appropriate members of the Executive team.

Policy Distribution

The current version of this document is available via SharePoint and on the College website. It does not contain confidential information and can be released to external parties.

Appendix 1

Hackett's Continuum Model

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
Developmentally expected	Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour	Problematic and concerning behaviour	Victimising intent or outcome	Physically violent sexual abuse
Socially acceptable	Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group	Developmentally unusual and socially unexpected	Includes misuse of power	Highly intrusive
Consensual, mutual, reciprocal	Context for behaviour may be inappropriate	No overt elements of victimisation	Coercion and force to ensure compliance	Instrumental violence which is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the child
Shared decision making	Generally consensual and reciprocal	Consent issues may be unclear	Intrusive	responsible for the behaviour
		May lack reciprocity or equal power	Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given	Sadism
		May include levels of compulsivity	May include elements of expressive violence	