

Academic Performance Procedure

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Purpose

At The Bedford College Group we are committed to providing a learning environment in which learners can fulfil their potential and participate freely in college activities. All staff are expected to help and support learners in achieving high standards of performance and success, and have a shared responsibility to raise expectations and aspirations.

Principles

The Academic Performance Procedure is designed to:

- provide a framework for addressing issues of academic neglect
- encourage all learners to meet the high standards of attendance, punctuality and work performance expected by the college
- ensure that learners know what is expected of them
- ensure that learners understand the consequences of poor performance and academic neglect
- ensure consistent and just treatment for all regardless of disability, age, race, gender, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity
- ensure procedural fairness

The Academic Performance Procedure is separate from, but runs parallel to, the Learner Disciplinary (Misconduct) Procedure, which should be used to address issues of unacceptable behaviour. Like the Disciplinary (Misconduct) Procedure it is underpinned by the Learner Code of Conduct, which clearly sets out for learners the college's expectations of them in relation to all aspects of their college life. The Code of Conduct is shown at annex A, and highlights those areas which fall within scope of this procedure. Examples of causes for concern are included at annex B.

Definitions

The term 'learner' is used throughout this procedure and relates to anyone whom is enrolled at the College. This includes Study Programmes, Part Time, Higher Education and Apprenticeships.

Equality and Diversity Statement

The Bedford College Group is committed to the advancement and promotion of equality and diversity. We aim to provide a learning environment which values individuals equally regardless of disability, age, race, gender (sex), religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

It is our duty and obligation under the Equality Act 2010 to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different groups

This procedure will be implemented in accordance with our equality and diversity policy, and learners subject to action relating to academic performance will not be discriminated against or victimised on any grounds.

Procedure

Issues relating to academic performance and academic neglect, including poor attendance and punctuality, failure to submit work on time, under-performance and under-achievement, of work, must be dealt with by the Course Managers, Subject Teachers / Personal Achievement Tutor / Subject Personal Tutors / Training Coordinator / Apprenticeship's Specialist. Clear targets to address the relevant issue(s) should be set and reviewed.

Notification of any issues must be communicated to the parent / guardian / employer, as early as possible, to ensure that they are aware of any concerns.

If, however, following intervention and target setting, the learner still fails to achieve the required standard within the set review period, formal action may be taken under this procedure immediately.

Fast Track Procedure – First Six Weeks

There is a fast track procedure which may be used to address academic performance issues **only**, during the first 6 weeks of a learner's programme **only**, in order to facilitate transfer onto a more appropriate opportunity. See annex D for further guidance.

Mental Health / Wellbeing

Learners whom declare that they have mental health / wellbeing issues as reasons for academic performance concerns must be referred to the Fitness to Study Procedure and a Support Management Plan conducted prior to being taken through these procedures. A brief notice of the meeting held should be added to ProMonitor under the meeting type as 'Student Support Meeting'.

Looked After Children

Learners whom are looked after or leaving care must not receive a disciplinary warning until the Director of Student Services (Designated Teacher for Looked After Children) has been informed.

Learners with Educational Health Care Plans (EHCP)

Learners with Educational Health Care Plans must not receive a disciplinary warning until a discussion has taken place with the Director of Progression Pathways.

Apprenticeship Learners (All Ages)

Apprenticeship learners committing academic offences such lateness, absence, behaviour, late work, plagiarism, cheating etc should be dealt with through this procedure, but the incident should be reported by the Training Coordinator, to the employer, as it is their responsibility.

The levels of responsibility, investigation/interview procedure and possible outcomes are as for all other misconduct.

Any records of disciplinary should be recorded on OneFile by the Training Coordinator.

ID Cards

Learners who forget their ID card on a regular basis will be disciplined, as appropriate. Please see page 7 for the flowchart detailing the process for the first six weeks and the remainder of the year.

Framework

The procedure operates on a series of warnings – stages 1 to 4 – corresponding to those in the Learner Disciplinary (Misconduct) Procedure. In exceptional circumstances, and where it is beyond reasonable doubt that they are not going to achieve their qualification, the decision may be taken to exclude a learner (this is stage 4 of the process). In such cases, the final decision rests with the Director (Head at The Bedford Sixth Form), but this would normally be taken on the recommendation from appropriate staff.

The Director of Student Services (or his/her representative – normally the Personal Achievement Tutor / Subject Personal Tutor / Training Coordinator) should be present at the disciplinary meeting. His/her role will be to advise on the procedure, to ensure fairness of treatment and to offer advice to aid decision-making.

Details of all warnings will remain on the learner's file for the duration of their time at the College.

The stages of the academic performance procedure and levels of responsibility are as follows. Action should start at stage 1 before working through the levels.

Stage 1

Where performance has not improved following support and target setting, three occurrences of not meeting standards e.g. lateness, non-attendance, miss a deadline etc in **a four week period** will lead to stage 1. In such instances the relevant staff member will issue the learner with a Stage 1 warning.

The issuing of a Stage 1 warning will trigger communication to parents / guardian (unless parental consent has previously been withdrawn) / employer on behalf of the College stating the warning has been issued and the standard of performance expected by the learner.

The person issuing the Stage 1 warning must record this on ProMonitor / OneFile, including the nature of the concern and the standard of performance expected from the learner.

The learner must be advised that their performance will be reviewed for the following 30 college days and reviewed weekly by the Course Manager and Personal Achievement Tutor / Subject Personal Tutor / Training Coordinator. The learner must be reminded that if their performance does not improve, further action will be taken at any point where there are further causes for concern.

Stage 2 and Stage 3

If their performance does not improve, the learner may proceed to Stage 2 and then Stage 3. In such instances the relevant staff member should:

- Arrange a date and a time to hold an Academic Performance Meeting with the learner **giving at least 5 working days' notice**
- Confirm with the learner:
 - the date and the time of the meeting
 - the reasons for the meeting
 - the learner's right to be accompanied by a supporter (parent, person with parental responsibility or friend)
- Explain that failure to attend this meeting or make contact to rearrange it, will result in a decision being made in their absence
- Confirm the date and time of the meeting in writing to the learner, with a copy to the parent / guardian if the learner is under 19 at the start of their course, unless they have

previously withdrawn consent to contact. A copy of this letter should also be sent to the employer, if the learner is on an apprenticeship programme

- Conduct the meeting in line with this procedure
- Confirm the outcome (Annex C), in writing, to the learner within 5 working days of the meeting, sending a copy, with a covering letter, to the parent / guardian if the learner is under 19 at the start of the course, unless they have previously withdrawn consent to contact (and employer, if appropriate)
- The letter must include:
 - a clear statement of the reasons for such action
 - the standards of performance expected of the learner
 - an explanation that the letter will be held on the learner's file
 - the action that will be taken in the event of continued unsatisfactory performance
 - the learner's right of appeal. This must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the written warning letter.
- Record the action taken on ProMonitor / OneFile. Put a copy of all other documentation relating to the action, in the learner file.

Stage 4 (Exclusion)

If their performance still does not improve the learner may need to be excluded. Only a Director or above (Head at The Bedford Sixth Form) has the authority to exclude a learner from College. In exceptional circumstances, the Chief Executive may exercise the right to exclude.

The learner should normally be allowed to return in the academic year following that in which the learner was excluded (unless the exclusion occurs in the final term, in which case the exclusion period may be extended).

In exceptional circumstances, any conditions may be waived at the discretion of the Vice Principal with responsibility for Quality.

Suspension

In cases where the alleged academic performance is serious and/or it may be detrimental to the smooth running of the course and/or college for the learner to remain on site, suspension may need to be considered while the case is being investigated.

Only a Director or a Vice Principal (Head at The Bedford Sixth Form) has the authority to suspend a learner from college.

In such cases the learner should be informed of the reason for the suspension. This must be confirmed in writing, with a copy to the parent / guardian (if the learner is under 19 at the start of their course, unless they have previously withdrawn consent to contact) and Employer, if they are on an Apprenticeship programme.

If two or more learners are implicated in the alleged offence and if suspension is considered, then normally all parties should be suspended.

The period of suspension should be kept to no longer than 5 working days.

Appeals

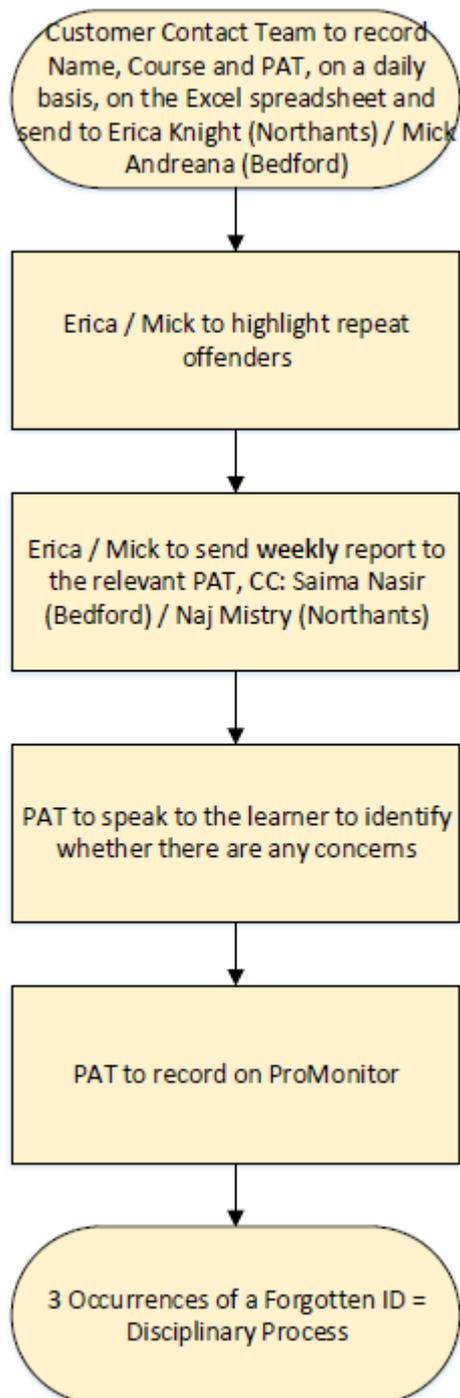
Under the disciplinary framework, appeals are permitted at all stages except Stage 1. The appeal must be submitted by the learner, in writing, to the level of manager immediately above the member of staff who conducted the disciplinary interview and issued the warning. For exclusions, the appeal would normally be to the Vice Principal with responsibility for Quality. Appeals must be made within 10 working days of receipt of the warning/exclusion letter.

The manager conducting the appeal will collect written evidence from the investigation and from the person who issued the warning/exclusion. S/he will then conduct an appeal interview with the learner.

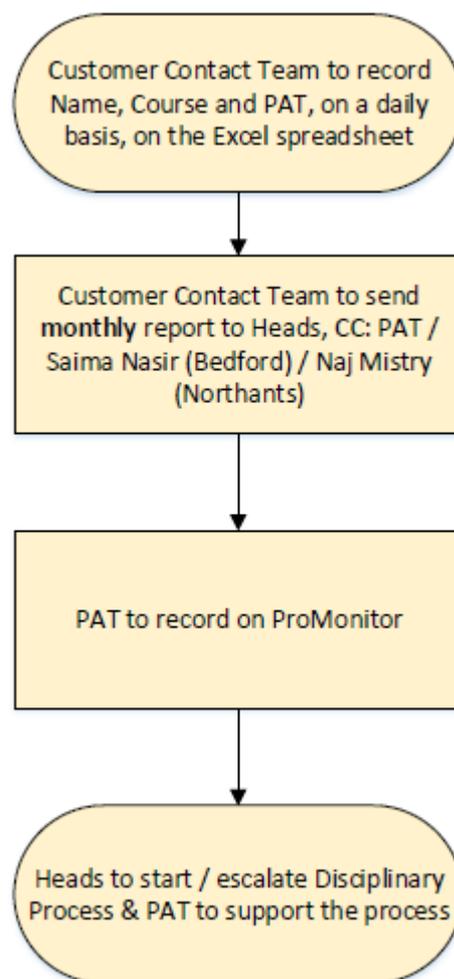
The decision will be notified in writing within 5 working days.

Discipline Process for Learners who forget their ID Card

Pre-42 Day



Post-42 Day



Annex A: Code of Conduct for Learners

This Code of Conduct is designed to encourage all learners to meet the standards of behaviour, attendance and work performance expected by The Bedford College Group. The highlighted points below relate specifically to areas of academic performance, which should be dealt with through this procedure.

Learners of The Bedford College Group are required to:

- treat everyone with respect, and make sure that their behaviour does not discriminate against anyone or make any other person feel uncomfortable
- respect the rights and interests of other College learners, staff and visitors
- attend all required activities regularly and punctually
- explain to their tutor or lecturer any reason for non-attendance
- take personal responsibility for their own learning and make active use of the learning resources and support services provided
- work hard and complete all work within specified deadlines
- take an active part in reviewing their progress with their tutor
- seek help from their tutor or Learner Services if they need it
- act safely so that they do not put themselves or others at risk and observe all health and safety rules of the College
- wear their ID card at all times on College premises and show it, on request, to any member of the College staff – Failure to produce an ID card on three occasions will result in disciplinary action
- act with consideration for the College environment and other College users, e.g. by not spitting or dropping chewing gum and litter
- pay all fees and other costs for which they are liable, or seek advice from us if in financial difficulty
- abide by all College policies and procedures.

Learners of The Bedford College Group must not:

- behave in a disruptive, aggressive, intimidating, bullying, indecent or unruly manner
- disrupt or interfere with the education or learning of fellow learners
- display or circulate any material which is designed to cause offence or distress to others
- misuse College property and equipment, including IT or health and safety equipment
- be intoxicated while on College premises or be incapable of undertaking their course work because of excessive drinking or use of controlled substances
- smoke anywhere other than in designated smoking areas, in accordance with the College's smoke-free policy
- consume, possess or supply toxic, dangerous or controlled substances
- make or send annoying, obscene, malicious or indecent telephone calls, letters, SMS messages, text messages or emails, or place malicious, offensive or extremist materials on any electronic or social media
- cause malicious damage to, or theft of, the property of other learners, staff or visitors of the College
- use foul or abusive language
- gain unauthorised access to, or make modifications to, College files or computer material
- enter any part of the College which the learner is not entitled to access
- carry any weapon or any other object with the intention or purpose of use in a threatening way
- falsify College documents
- submit materials or work for assessment which have not been made or authorised by the individual, or which have been copied from other learners or sources without acknowledging or referencing those sources (plagiarism), or allow one's work to be knowingly plagiarised
- take part in any illegal activity
- behave in any way which adversely affects the reputation of the College.

Annex B: Examples of Causes for Concern

Study / Work Performance

Causes for concern include:

- persistent non-completion or late submission of course work
- work consistently below the standard which the learner is capable of achieving

Plagiarism and disruptive behaviour in class are regarded as misconduct and should be dealt with through the Learner Disciplinary (Misconduct) Procedure.

Attendance & Punctuality

No unexplained lateness or absence from any part of the learning programme is acceptable and the tutor or teacher should seek an explanation at the first opportunity.

Explained absence is only acceptable if:

- the tutor or teacher has evidence of, or confidence in, the explanation and
- the frequency of the absence does not discredit the explanation.
- Non-attendance to planned OTJ sessions

Late learners must always be challenged. The teacher should, at the earliest opportunity or at the end of the lesson, **obtain from the learner the reason for their lateness and draw attention to any work which has been missed.** The teacher must make a judgement as to whether this is a 'one-off' unavoidable occurrence (eg transport or childcare problem) or part of an on-going pattern of poor punctuality. The teacher must note the minutes the learner is late on the register.

Unexplained absence of 4 consecutive weeks leads to the presumption that the learner has withdrawn and the appropriate procedures should be followed.

Where a tutor is aware of on-going health or personal issues which necessitate a learner being absent for more than 4 consecutive weeks, the learner may remain active on the register, providing there is written evidence of active learning taking place (e.g. e-mail communications, record of contacts, work being completed at home) and the appropriate mark is used on the register.

Causes for concern include 3 occurrences in any half term:

- absence for unacceptable reasons exceeding 5% in any half term
- absence for 3 consecutive working days without explanation
- a significantly declining pattern of attendance
- a significant pattern of absence, eg missing the last session on Friday afternoon on three consecutive Fridays.

Annex C: Sample Academic Performance Letters

Notification of Stage 1 Warning

Parents/Guardian/Employer of
FORENAME SURNAME
ADDRESS1
ADDRESS2
TOWN
COUNTY
POSTCODE

DATE

Dear Parent/Guardian/Employer

Stage 1 of the Academic Performance Procedure

Your son/daughter/employee has recently received a Stage 1 warning of the Academic Performance Procedure. The reason(s) for this warning is/are:

-

Receiving a Stage 1 warning is serious and indicates that despite tutorial intervention, the expected standards of performance are not being achieved and remain a concern to the College. We would ask for your support in helping us resolve the issues and meet the following expected standards:

-

Their performance against the standards expected will now be monitored for the next 30 days. If there is no improvement in their performance, the College will take further action. A copy of this letter will be kept on their records for this academic year. If you any questions regarding the warning or their progress at College, please contact their Personal Achievement Tutor (**Name**) on (**Contact Number**) or their Course Manager (**Name**) on (**Contact Number**).

A successful learner results from a combination of high attendance, meeting deadlines, embracing their study programme and trying hard to achieve their best. We at the College have great staff, great learners and great programmes to support your **son/daughter/employee**. Thank you for your support at this time.

Yours sincerely

Ian Pryce CBE
Principal & Chief Executive
The Bedford College Group

Notification of Written Warning (Stage 2 or Stage 3)

Date

Name

Address

Dear **(Name)**

Following the Academic Performance meeting which you attended with **(name of staff member)** on **(day) (date)**, this letter serves as a **(Stage 2/Stage 3)** Warning. The College has taken this action because **(state reasons for decision)**.

The College expects **(state standards of academic performance expected)**.

Your performance against the standards expected will now be monitored for the next 30 days. If there is no improvement in your performance, the College will taking further action. A copy of this letter will be kept on your records for this academic year.

If you wish to appeal against this decision you should do so in writing to **(name of staff member to whom appeal whould be made)**. This should be received no later than 10 working days from receipt of this letter and should state the reasons for your appeal.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

(Designation)

Copy to: Parent / Guardian (If appropriate)
Employer (If appropriate)

THIS LETTER MUST BE SIGNED BY A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT OR DIRECTOR. IF THE NAMED MEMBER OF STAFF IS NOT AVAILABLE IT MAY BE SIGNED BY ANOTHER MEMBER OF STAFF AT THE SAME LEVEL

Notification of Exclusion

Date

Name
Address

Dear **(Name)**

I regret having to inform you that, following the Academic Performance meeting which you attended with **(name of staff member)** on **(day) (date)**, you have been excluded from College. The College has taken this decision because **(state reasons)**.

You may reapply to The Bedford College Group in **(state timescale – there may be other conditions such as evidence of commitment to course/study)**.

If you wish to appeal against this decision you should do so in writing to Emma Lowe, Vice Principal. This should be received no later than 10 working days from receipt of this letter and should state the reasons for your appeal.

Yours sincerely

(Name)
(Designation)

Copy to: Parent / Guardian (If appropriate)
Employer (If appropriate)

THIS LETTER MUST BE SIGNED BY THE DIRECTOR OR VICE PRINCIPAL. IF THE NAMED MEMBER OF STAFF IS NOT AVAILABLE IT MAY BE SIGNED BY ANOTHER MEMBER OF STAFF AT THE SAME LEVEL.

Annex D: Fast Track Procedure – First Six Weeks

It is important to identify quickly if a learner is on the wrong course, either in terms of level or subject. It may be too easy/difficult, not what the learner expected, not match their career aspirations. The learner may also show lack of commitment to the course, for whatever reason, and this may manifest itself through poor attendance, punctuality or academic performance.

In such cases, where it is deemed that the learner is unlikely to succeed on the course, action must be taken swiftly, during the first six weeks, so that the learner can be considered for transfer to an alternative, more suitable programme.

Transfer of learners must be allowed in all programme areas during the first six weeks. Transfer must be completed and the learner enrolled on the new course before October half term for learners starting in September. (For 'A' level learners at the Bedford Sixth Form the permitted transfer period onto another 'A' level course is 3 weeks, 6 weeks for vocational programmes.)

The following fast track procedure can be used during the first six weeks of a learner's programme **only**.

1. Course Manager to discuss with HoD where a learner's performance gives cause for concern.
2. If it is felt that the learner should be withdrawn from the course, this must be justified to, and approval obtained from the Director (Deputy Head at BSF).
3. Course Manager or Head of Department, together with the Personal Achievement Tutor / Subject Personal Tutor, meets with learner and agrees next steps. Parents/guardian should be invited if the learner is under 19 at the start of the course **unless the learner has previously withdrawn consent to contact**.
Employer should be invited if the learner is enrolled on an apprenticeship programme.
4. Transfer of learner – Personal Achievement Tutor / Subject Personal Tutor with support from Careers Team, where appropriate. The Course Manager to support the transfer of the learner to the new department. Learner information transferred to the new programme area.