

Carey Wellbeing and Student Fitness to Study Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Carey Baptist College is committed to providing a welcoming, safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. This includes the learning environment, human resource management and safety and security. Carey is committed to supporting students and recognises the importance of a student's health and wellbeing in relation to their, and other students, academic progression and wider study experience.

APPLICATION

All Carey enrolled students, part-time or full-time.

PURPOSE

There may be occasions where the health or wellbeing of a student deteriorates, or their behaviour causes concern to the point where it raises questions about their suitability to continue their studies; their capacity to participate fully and interact with staff and other Carey students or their ability to use Carey premises appropriately (collectively referred to as "Fitness to Study"). These guidelines are a supportive procedure to be used when a student appears unable or unwilling to manage their health and wellbeing, or their behaviour is of such concern that Carey has good cause to intervene.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the steps that Carey will follow when concerns are raised about the Fitness to Study of one of its students.

INDICATORS

There are many circumstances that may give rise to concerns about a student's Fitness to Study. Circumstances may include, but is not limited to:

- a) Deterioration in a student's physical or mental health;
- b) Changes in a student's appearance or behaviour which suggests a deterioration in their mental or physical health;
- c) A pattern of behaviour or communication which appears irrational or extremely inconsistent;
- d) A pattern of unreasonable demands which appear irrational, inappropriate or inconsistent;
- e) Inability to attend lectures, meet deadlines, succeed academically or use Carey premises appropriately.

PROCESS

These guidelines identifies three levels of intervention depending on the perceived level of risk to the health and wellbeing of the student or others. It is possible for a matter to begin at any level, progress through some or all of the levels, return to lower-level intervention, or be resolved.

Concerns should be acted on promptly, as early intervention and support is likely to be in a student's best interest and reduce the potential for an issue to become more complex.

Where there are concerns about serious or immediate risk to a student or others, the procedure for imposing an immediate suspension should be considered in the first instance.

LEVEL 1: EMERGING OR LOW LEVEL CONCERN WITH NO IMMEDIATE OR SERIOUS RISK TO THE STUDENT OR OTHERS

Where an initial concern about a student's Fitness to Study is raised, an appropriate member of staff, (for this purpose referred to as "the Primary Person") will be identified by the Academic Director to meet with the student as soon as possible. (A member of the Management Team may also identify the Primary Person in the absence of the Academic Director). The Primary Person is likely to be the Academic Director, the Director of the Graduate School, a member of the student support team, or the Programme Lead.

The Primary Person will attempt to resolve the concerns in discussions with the student. The student will be informed that they can bring a support person (or whānau support) to this meeting. It may be appropriate for the Primary Person to advise the student to engage with support services provided by Carey.

The Primary Person may speak with other relevant members of staff (for example a member of the student support team) as appropriate in order to deal with the matter.

The Primary Person will hold a review meeting with the student after they have been given sufficient time to access any support and/or address the concern. If concerns are not managed to the Primary Person's satisfaction after this review meeting the Primary Person will refer the student to level 2.

LEVEL 2: CONTINUED OR SIGNIFICANT CONCERN

Level 2 should be considered if there is continued concern following Level 1, or where there is significant concern about a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour, safety, or ability to study, meriting direct referral to Level 2.

Once a level 2 concern is raised, the Academic Director will provide a notice of level 2 referral which will be sent to a Support Team made up of the Academic Director, Executive Director, Primary Person and/or other relevant Carey staff members. Subject to privacy law and professional codes of confidentiality, the student will also receive a copy of the notice.

The notice of level 2 referral will include:

- a) Identification of the concern(s) raised (including specific information),
- b) Collation of any relevant information about the student (e.g. non-attendance, missed deadlines),
- c) Actions taken so far and their efficacy, and
- d) Notes on discussions had with other Carey staff.

The Academic Director will chair a Formal Meeting with the Support Team and the student. The student will be provided with the following information regarding the formal meeting:

- a) The list of people attending the formal meeting
- b) The nature of the concerns,
- c) The purpose of the meeting; to explore the concern regarding the student's Fitness to Study
- d) The procedures for the meeting (including the recommendation that the student bring a support person and that they will be invited to respond) and
- e) The possible outcome of the meeting.

If the outcome of the formal meeting determines that the student's Fitness to Study is impaired or may become impaired, the following actions may be taken:

- a) Draw up a support action plan to be monitored by the Primary Person, setting out how the matter is to be dealt with and any conditions to be placed on the student (for example, in relation to their behaviour or in relation to support they should seek). The Support Team will set a review date and will notify the student that if any conditions set out in the action plan are not complied with, or if there is a continuation of the same or any additional concern, these issues may result in the student's Fitness to Study being referred for further assessment under Level 3.
- b) Recommend that the student undertake a specific medical assessment of his or her Fitness to Study.

- c) Recommend that the student take a voluntary leave of absence. The student will be advised that when the agreed period of absence comes to an end and they wish to return to study, they will be asked to provide satisfactory evidence that they have overcome the original difficulties and are well enough to return to study.
- d) Referral of the case to Level 3: Serious or Persistent Concern.

The outcome of the Formal Meeting and associated reasons will be sent to the student no more than five working days after the meeting.

If the student does not proceed with the recommended action, the matter may be treated as a Level 3: Serious or Persistent Concern.

LEVEL 3: SERIOUS OR PERSISTENT CONCERN

Level 3 should be used where there is ongoing concern following Level 1 or 2. Where there are serious concerns regarding risk to the health and safety of the student or where there is a perceived threat or serious risk to the student or others, cases may be referred directly to Level 3, without going through Level 1 or 2.

A concern will be treated as serious or persistent if:

- a) Earlier intervention at Level 2 has not resolved the concern;
- b) It has become apparent that the concern is significantly more severe than originally anticipated (e.g. if an emerging concern needs to be treated as a serious concern);
- c) The concern is so serious that treating it as a Level 1 or Level 2 concern would not be appropriate;
- d) A student's health or wellbeing is significantly affecting their ability to engage with their studies, placement, or other aspects of College life; or
- e) A student's health or wellbeing is adversely affecting, or is a possible danger to, the health or wellbeing of themselves or others.

Serious or persistent concerns will be referred to the Academic Director who will convene and chair a meeting of the Fitness to Study panel ("the Panel"). The purpose of the Panel meeting is to discuss the circumstances of the concern regarding the student in order to make a recommendation to the Principal. The Principal will then decide what, if any, action should be taken.

The panel will include a combination of:

- a) The Academic Director
- b) The Executive Director
- c) The Carey Board Chair
- d) Any relevant members of Carey Staff
- e) Additional members who may be required to offer professional opinions.

Prior to the panel meeting the student may be asked to attend a specific assessment of his or her Fitness to Study with an agreed medical practitioner of his or her choice. The student will be informed that they can bring a support person (or whānau support) to this meeting. If a student refuses to attend an assessment, the Panel will be limited to reviewing the information available.

The Panel will receive the following information:

- a) Identification of the continuing and ongoing concern(s) raised (including specific information),
- b) Collation of any relevant information about the student (e.g. non-attendance, missed deadlines isolation, mental or physical health),
- c) Actions taken so far and their efficacy, and
- d) Notes on discussions had with other Carey staff,
- e) Subject to privacy law and/or professional codes of confidentiality, any medical reports or other relevant reports on the student.

The student will be informed of the Panel and its purpose in a clear, written statement in advance of the meeting and, subject to privacy law or professional codes of confidentiality, receive the same information made available to the Panel, as well as information on:

- a) The list of attendees of the Panel;
- b) The nature of the concern(s) raised and that the matter is being dealt with under Level 3 of this Code of Practice;
- c) The purpose of the meeting to explore the concern regarding the student's Fitness to Study and whether it can continue to be managed at Level 3;
- d) An explanation that the meeting will be confidential and that personal information relating to the health of the student will only be shared with those who have a direct involvement in the meeting;
- e) Possible outcomes of the Panel.

The student will be given a copy of all documents seen by the Panel and will be able to submit documents for the Panel to consider and will be given the opportunity to give their perspective of current issues and (where appropriate) history of events, past experiences, and helpful strategies or support for managing these.

Where the student has not provided or is not able to provide medical or other evidence as requested, the Panel meeting will proceed on the basis of the information available at the time.

If the Panel determines that there is a significant concern about a student's health, wellbeing, behaviour, safety, or ability to study, or where there is a perceived threat or serious risk to the student or others, the following actions may be taken:

- a) Recommend that the student undertake a specific medical assessment of his or her Fitness to Study;
- b) Draw up a support action plan to be monitored by the Academic Director, setting out how the matter is to be dealt with and any conditions to be placed on the student (for example, in relation to their behaviour or in relation to support they should seek). The Panel will set a review date and will notify the student that if any conditions set out in the action plan are not complied with, or if there is a continuation of the same or any additional concern, these issues may result in suspension.
- c) Recommend that the student take a voluntary leave of absence. The student will be advised that when the agreed period of absence comes to an end and they wish to return to study, they will be asked to provide satisfactory evidence that they have overcome the original difficulties and are well enough to return to study.
- d) Where the option is available (with the student's consent), transfer them to an alternative mode of study, for example part-time, distance learning, or to a different course of study.
- e) Exclude the student from some or all of Carey's facilities for a specified or unspecified period subject to regular review.
- f) Suspend the student temporarily from Carey for a specified or unspecified period subject to regular review;
- g) Suspend the student temporarily from attending a placement, a field trip, for a specified or unspecified period subject to regular review;
- h) Withdraw the student from Carey. This decision must only be made where it has been concluded that there is no reasonable prospect of the student re-engaging with their studies.

The outcome of the Panel meeting and associated reasons will be sent to the student no more than 5 working days after the Panel meeting has taken place.

If the student does not agree to take a leave of absence or does not proceed with the recommended action, the matter will be referred to the Principal.

IMMEDIATE SUSPENSION: IMMEDIATE OR SERIOUS RISK TO THE STUDENT OR OTHERS

The Academic Director may suspend a student for a defined period of time with immediate effect where they have the reasonable suspicion that the student is an immediate danger to themselves or other persons. In order to make this decision the Academic Director will consult with the Executive Director and where necessary, appropriate members of staff.

If a student is suspended with immediate effect the Academic Director will as soon as practicable, convene a meeting of the Panel to consider the matter and make recommendations to the Principal in accordance with Level 3. The immediate suspension will be subject to review by the Panel and the student will have a right to respond.

RETURN TO STUDY

In order to return to Carey following a suspension, a student will be required to submit appropriate evidence of their Fitness to Study. This may include specified medical evidence which must be submitted as soon as practicable.

The Panel will decide whether the student can return to Carey or whether the suspension will continue for either a specified or unspecified period. The student's Programme Lead (if applicable) will be consulted in relation to any programme-related factors that need to be considered for the student's return to Carey. If the student has missed a significant amount of the programme or the programme has changed during the period of suspension, it may be appropriate for the student to return to an earlier stage of the programme.

The student will be informed of the Panel's decision in writing as soon as possible. The student will also be informed of the right to appeal against that decision.

A student suspended under these Fitness to Study Guidelines will be invited to attend a meeting with appropriate members of staff before they return to study. This meeting is to give the student the opportunity to discuss management of their health and wellbeing on their return. The student will be informed that they can bring a support person (or whānau support) to this meeting.

APPEAL

A student who has had their enrolment suspended or who has been withdrawn from Carey may, within (14) days of the decision of the Panel appeal the decision by giving notice to the Academic Director in writing, on the condition that:

- a) The student will only be able to appeal the appropriateness or reasonableness of the penalty;
- b) The student may only appeal on the grounds that:
 - i. The penalty was inappropriate or unreasonable; or
 - ii. The Panel failed to meet the principles of natural justice; or
 - iii. New evidence has arisen that was not reasonably available at the time of the hearing and that if taken into account, is likely to alter the decision of the Academic Director or the Panel.

The Principal and a member of the Carey Board will review the appeal within 10 working days and make any changes they believe appropriate. The decision of the appeal process will be in writing and will set out the reasons for the decision/s and will be sent to all relevant parties.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply to this policy:

Staff means Carey staff

Student means Carey student

Carey means Carey Baptist College

KEY RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Carey Student Disciplinary Procedure

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL

Content manager: Academic Director

Owned by: Academic Director

Approved by: Management Team/ Academic Board

Date approved: 7 May 2026

Review Date: June 2029

