

L A I N E

THEATRE ARTS

FITNESS TO STUDY

POLICY

2023-24

FITNESS TO STUDY POLICY

The following policy applies to the *Trinity National Diploma in Professional Musical Theatre* and the one-year *Foundation Diploma in Dance and Musical Theatre*.

This policy should be applied when a concern is raised over a student's ability to engage with their course of training due to ill health or personal circumstances.

It should not be applied as a means of justifying absence from, or inability to complete assessment work. In these circumstances students should refer to the **LTA Extenuating Circumstances Policy**.

FRAMEWORK

Laine Theatre Arts recognises the importance of transparency, promptness and consistency in its response to any student who is subject to the provisions of this policy. This policy is brought to the attention of all students and forms part of the student contract.

This policy is framed to ensure that all students are treated fairly and consistently should a question over fitness to study arise. It is hoped that most students who are subject to the provisions of this policy can be supported through stages 1 and 2 with no further action required.

Students seeking permission to intermit should refer to the Intermissions Policy and Procedures which can be found on the College's website. Where the circumstances of an intermission request fall within the scope of this policy and/or a student is already being supported through the implementation of this policy, the 'stages of action' outlined on pages 2-5 of this policy will be used as the main basis for arriving at an outcome.

STUDENT EXPECTATION

Students are expected to engage fully and positively with their training in order to fulfil the demands of their course and in order to meet industry standards of professional conduct, commitment, preparation and execution both during their training and on graduation.

A non-exhaustive list of student expectation:

Students of the college must

- Arrive punctually to all classes, rehearsals, performances, lectures, tutorials and work placements.
- Actively engage in all classes, rehearsals, performances, lectures, tutorials and work placements.
- Manage private practice, preparation and academic study without supervision.
- Participate in assessments, with or without reasonable adjustments.
- Adhere to the College's health and safety requirements in supervised and unsupervised settings.
- Adhere to the College's Student Charter

WHEN TO USE THIS POLICY

A student's fitness to study may be a cause for concern due to a wide range of circumstances including (but not restricted to) the following

- A student declares difficulties related to physical or mental health, disability, alcohol or drug problems, or other personal circumstances.
- A student's behaviour and/or disposition and/or physical appearance indicates there may be a need to address an underlying health issue which may relate to one or more of the above.
- Concerns about a student's ability to engage with their studies are raised by a third party i.e. a friend, housemate, colleague, faculty member or medical professional.
- A student has told a member of staff that they have concerns about their own fitness to study.
- Behaviour which would normally be dealt with in a disciplinary manner (i.e. serious and continuous breach of the lateness and attendance policy) may be known/suspected to be the result of an underlying physical or mental health difficulty which could provide mitigating factors.
- The student's academic performance or personal conduct is not acceptable and thought to be the result of an underlying mental or physical health problem.
- A student's health difficulties are adversely affecting the health, safety or wellbeing of others.
- Multiple complaints are received about a student from other students and/or staff.

Non-exhaustive checklist of behaviours which may raise concern over a student's fitness to study:

- Obvious changes in behaviour (becoming unusually aggressive, withdrawn or anxious).
- Continuous absence or lack of engagement/interest in studies.
- A sudden deterioration in academic performance or motivation.
- Obvious signs of ill health and/or self-harm.
- Ongoing lack of personal hygiene and care.
- Challenging or inappropriate behaviour.
- Signs of sleep deprivation or lethargy.
- Social withdrawal.
- Obvious signs of substance abuse.

RISK ASSESSMENT

An initial risk assessment should be undertaken to identify the level of risk to the student and/or to others and to consider whether the student's presence at Laine Theatre Arts puts the student and/or others at an unacceptable risk or exacerbates the student's difficulties. The risk assessment will consider

- Whether the student is a danger to themselves or other people
- Whether the physical or mental health of the student would benefit or suffer from further study or withdrawal of any duration from the course
- Whether the student was receiving support appropriate to their need and if not, any additional support the college could provide.

- Whether a student has already completed any of the recommendations outlined at stage 4: short-term exclusion, suspension with conditions, intermission or repeating a period of study

Students under the age of 18 will also be subject to the *Policy for the Admission and Support of Students under the age of 18*.

STAGES OF ACTION

An appropriate timescale for managing each stage of the process will be agreed on by a case-by-case basis between the College and the student.

Stage 1 - Initial Support and Guidance

A student with a mental or physical health difficulty should be encouraged to seek the support of the Head of Student Services, a member of the Student Services team or one of the college's professional counsellors. At all times, the College will act sensitively in addressing the student's situation.

Stage 2 - Emerging Concerns

Once concerns have been raised about a student, the HoSS or the member of the Student Services team will arrange a meeting with the student about the problems they may be experiencing. They should explain how or why the student is not meeting their obligations and propose strategies for resolving the situation.

An attempt will be made to resolve the matter by informal discussions with the student who should be encouraged to discuss the situation. The member of staff should consider any specific arrangements or other types of support that could be applied to help the student train more effectively. Any plans agreed between the member of staff and the student should be set out in writing to the student and saved in the student's record so it is clear what has been agreed.

Possible Outcomes of Stage 2:

- a) The matter is considered resolved and no further action is needed
- b) A plan is drawn up between the member of staff and student which may include referral to additional student support services. This should include the establishment of a review period by agreement between the student and member of staff, culminating in a review meeting where steps taken to address the concerns should be discussed. In the review meeting, further meetings may be suggested to monitor the situation and the progress made.
- c) The matter is referred to the next stage when either the student or staff member believes concerns have not been fully addressed and/or progress has not been made.

Stage 3 - Continuing or Significant concerns

If action taken under stage 2 has not been successful or complied with, or if the concerns raised are too serious to be dealt with informally, a meeting of the Case Review Team (CRT) will be arranged by the Head of Student Services. The CRT will comprise the Head of Student Services and at least three other members drawn, according to need, from:

- The Vice Principals

- The member of staff identified at Stage 1 (if not, the Head of Student Services)
- Specialist support e.g. Learning support, Injury management.

Before the CRT meeting and with the student's consent, medical assessment may be requested from the student's GP or medical specialist and shared with the Team. The Team will decide whether it is helpful or reasonable for the student to attend the meeting. Should they wish to do so, the student will have the right to be accompanied by a friend or representative.

Following the meeting, the Head of Student Services will send a letter to the student within five working days, setting out any decisions that have been taken and the reasons for them.

Possible outcomes of Stage 3:

- a) No further action required.
- b) Formal monitoring of the student for a specific period of time. A formal plan is agreed with the student detailing any steps the student will need to take and the support available. Regular review meetings will be arranged with the student and a nominated member of staff.
- c) The recommendation of a specific study arrangement which may include a suspension of studies agreed by the Vice Principal and the student.
- d) The case is referred to the Principal (stage 4) in the event that suspension, temporary or permanent exclusion or withdrawal may be thought to be the appropriate course of action.

If the student breaches any conditions agreed in the formal plan or fails to agree with decisions made over specific study arrangements, the case will move to Stage 4.

Stage 4 - Serious or Persistent Concerns

This stage will be invoked following a referral from the HoSS or a member of the Student Services Team. It may also be invoked in cases where it is believed an immediate referral to Stage 4 is warranted without consideration of stages 1,2 and 3.

Students who are returning to College having already completed one of the recommended courses of action outlined below, but for whom a concern for fitness to study arises again, will be automatically referred back to this stage.

Under these circumstances, the Principal will convene a Fitness to Study (FtS) panel. A FtS panel will comprise the HoSS and no fewer than two additional members most usually drawn from

- Director of Studies
- Deputy Director of Studies
- Vice-principals
- A member of the CRT with knowledge of the case.

The student will have the opportunity to submit documents for the panel to consider and will be sent a copy of any documents seen by the Panel.

The student may attend the panel or ask for a representative to attend on their behalf. The panel may call witnesses if required and may also request further medical advice from a qualified medical professional.

The panel will make a recommendation to the Principal or the Executive Director, which may include

- Short term exclusion to allow the student to be assessed by a medical professional, access support services or to obtain further information.
- Suspension with conditions for a period of up to twelve months. The student may be prohibited from entering the college premises or have restricted right to enter. The decision to suspend will be communicated to the student in writing, depending on the circumstances of the case, and will be reviewed as necessary by the panel.
- Repeating a period of study
- Intermission - may be recommended by the College or requested by the student.
- Exclusion or requirement to withdraw by the college. If the panel concludes there is no reasonable prospect of the student re-engaging with their training in the short to medium term, a recommendation will be made for the student to be permanently excluded or permanently withdraw from training. This recommendation will only be made in the most serious of cases.

THE RIGHT TO APPEAL

If you are dissatisfied with the recommendation reached by the FtS Panel at Stage 4, you have the right to appeal to the Principal. Your appeal should be submitted to mattcole@laine-theatre-arts.co.uk within 10 days of receiving the recommendation and may include additional/alternative supporting evidence. The Principal will investigate your appeal and you will be sent a letter notifying you of the decision within 30 days of the receipt of your appeal. The Principal's decision is final, and this will complete the College's Fitness to Study Procedures.

Policy reviewed by Academic Board. Date for review: September 2027