LEARNER BEHAVIOUR & SUPPORT POLICY

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About Us

Access Further Education Ltd ('The College') has subsidiary companies, trading names and trading partnerships through which it operates. The trading names and partnerships might have their own names or brands, but the legal entity for the purpose of this policy is Access Further Education Ltd. Trading subsidiaries, trading names and trading partnerships include Access Creative College ('ACC'), Access Industry ('AI') and Access Sport College ('ASC'). The dBs Institute (DBS Music UK Holdings and its subsidiaries), whilst a separate legal entity, shares common Directorships with the College.

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1. Purpose

At The College, we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment where every learner can succeed.

This policy outlines how we:

- Promote positive behaviour
- Support learners to overcome barriers
- Respond where expectations are not met
- Maintain safety for all learners and staff

Our approach is **support-first, restorative, and student-centred**. Formal disciplinary action is only used where support has not been effective or where safety is at risk.

2. Our Principles

We believe:

- Behaviour is a form of communication
- All learners can improve with the right support
- Early intervention prevents escalation
- Safety and dignity are non-negotiable

We prioritise:

- Support before sanction
- Understanding before judgement
- Restoration over punishment

3. Learner Expectations

Learners are expected to:

- Contribute to a safe and respectful environment
- Engage in learning and development
- Treat others with respect
- Take responsibility for attendance, behaviour, and progress

4. Areas Where Support May Be Required

- Behaviour and Conduct
    - Where behaviour impacts safety, wellbeing, or learning.
- Attendance and Engagement
    - Target: 90%+ attendance. Barriers are explored and supported.
- Progress and Performance
    - Learners will receive SMART targets and structured support. Formal processes are only used where engagement does not improve.

5. Behaviour Support Process

The College operates a staged support-first approach, which may escalate to formal disciplinary action where required.

A staged, supportive process:

- Stage 1 – Support Conversation
    - Early intervention meeting with learner
    - Barriers identified and SMART targets agreed
    - Recorded on central learner management system (Guru)
    - Review after 2–3 weeks
- Stage 2 – Structured Support Plan
    - Formal meeting with learner (and parent/carer where appropriate)
    - Clear expectations and support measures agreed
    - SMART targets recorded
    - Review after 2–3 weeks
- Stage 3 – Intensive Support Plan
    - Final stage of structured support
    - Increased monitoring and intervention
    - Clear improvement expectations
    - Review after 2–3 weeks
- Stage 4 – Programme Review
    - May result in suspension or withdrawal
    - Used where support has not resulted in sufficient improvement or where safety is at risk

Relationship to Formal Disciplinary Procedure

Where improvement is not achieved through support stages, learners may progress into the Formal Disciplinary Procedure. Stages broadly align as follows:

Support Stage	Disciplinary Stage
Stage 1	Verbal Warning
Stage 2	Written Warning
Stage 3	Final Written Warning
Stage 4	Withdrawal / Suspension

6. Formal Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary procedure is fair, transparent, and applied consistently. Formal action is normally progressive, unless serious misconduct requires escalation.

Disciplinary Report Form

6.1 General Principles

- Learners will be informed of concerns and given opportunity to respond
- Meetings will normally take place within 5 working days
- Learners may be accompanied by a parent/carer or support person
- All actions and outcomes are recorded on Guru
- SMART targets and improvement plans will be agreed

6.2 Stage 1 – Verbal Warning

Actions:

- Meeting held with learner
- Issues discussed and explained clearly
- SMART targets agreed and recorded
- Parent/carer informed in writing
- Review meeting scheduled (2–3 weeks)
- Parent/carer contacted (if appropriate)

Outcome:

- If improved → warning closed
- If not improved → escalation to Stage 2

6.3 Stage 2 – Written Warning

Actions:

- Formal meeting with learner (and parent/carer if appropriate)
- Written warning issued
- SMART action plan agreed and recorded
- Review scheduled (2–3 weeks)
- Parent/carer contacted (if appropriate)

Outcome:

- Improvement → warning monitored/closed
- No improvement → escalation to Stage 3

6.4 Stage 3 – Final Written Warning

Actions:

- Formal meeting with Centre Manager or delegate
- Final written warning issued
- Clear expectation that further failure may lead to withdrawal
- SMART targets agreed and recorded
- Review scheduled (2–3 weeks)
- Parent/carer contacted (if appropriate)

Outcome:

- Improvement → monitored
- No improvement → escalation to Stage 4

6.5 Stage 4 – Withdrawal or Suspension

Actions:

- Decision communicated formally
- Learner may be removed from site where necessary
- Parent/carer notified in writing
- Learner ID and college property may be withdrawn
- External reporting completed via MIS
- Parent/carer contacted (if appropriate)

Outcome:

- Withdrawal from programme or suspension pending further decision

6.6 Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional cases, managers may:

- Extend a review period
- Reissue targets without escalation

This will only occur once and must be clearly evidenced.

Exceptional circumstances may include:

- Demonstrated significant improvement
- Mitigating personal circumstances
- Active engagement with support

6.7 Serious Misconduct

In cases of serious misconduct, the College reserves the right to:

- Bypass stages of this procedure
- Proceed directly to suspension or withdrawal

6.8 Right to Appeal

Learners may appeal any formal disciplinary decision.

- Appeals must be submitted within 5 working days
- Appeals will be reviewed within 10 working days

7. Suspension (Supportive Intervention)

Suspension may be used to:

- Protect safety
- Allow investigation
- Provide time for reflection and reset

Types include:

- Protective suspension
- Internal suspension
- Short-term external suspension

All suspensions include:

- Clear written reasons
- Defined duration
- Conditions for return
- Reintegration planning where appropriate

8. Restrictive Interventions and Safety

8.1 Our Approach

We aim to eliminate the need for restrictive interventions through:

- Early support
- De-escalation strategies
- Positive relationships

Restrictive interventions are only ever a last resort.

8.2 Definition

Restrictive intervention refers to any action that restricts movement.
Reasonable force is defined as:

- The minimum force necessary for the shortest time required to prevent harm.

These are not disciplinary actions.

8.3 When Reasonable Force May Be Used

Only where necessary to:

- Prevent harm to self or others
- Prevent serious damage to property
- Prevent a criminal offence
- Prevent serious disruption

All actions must be reasonable, proportionate, and necessary.

8.4 Prohibited Practices

The following are strictly prohibited:

- Use of force as punishment
- Any restriction of breathing or circulation
- Excessive or prolonged restraint
- Intimidation or threats

8.5 Seclusion

Seclusion may only be used:

- For safety purposes
- Where there is risk of harm
- Under continuous supervision
- For the shortest possible time

8.6 Recording and Reporting

All incidents involving restraint or seclusion must be recorded the same day where possible and include:

- Individuals involved
- Time, date, location, and duration
- Reason for intervention
- Actions taken
- Injuries or follow-up actions

Parents/carers must be informed promptly.

8.7 Post-Incident Support

Following any incident:

- A restorative debrief will take place
- Wellbeing support will be offered
- Plans will be reviewed to prevent recurrence

8.8 SEND and Individual Needs

We recognise that learners with SEND may require:

- Tailored approaches
- Adjusted expectations

- Additional support strategies

We will work collaboratively with learners, families, and professionals.

9. Monitoring and Review

Behaviour support and disciplinary outcomes are reviewed at least twice per term.

This ensures:

- Early identification of patterns
- Continuous improvement
- Reduced need for escalation

10. Appeals

Appeals is the first instance should be sent to directly to Head of Centre or Site Lead: Appeals will

- Be acknowledged within 5 working days
- Be reviewed within 10 working days
- Be conducted by a manager not previously involved in the case

If the outcome of the appeal is contested the appeal will need to be escalated formally through the complaints, concerns and complaints process, cc.admin@accesstomusic.ac.uk

11. Final Statement

At The College, our goal is always to:

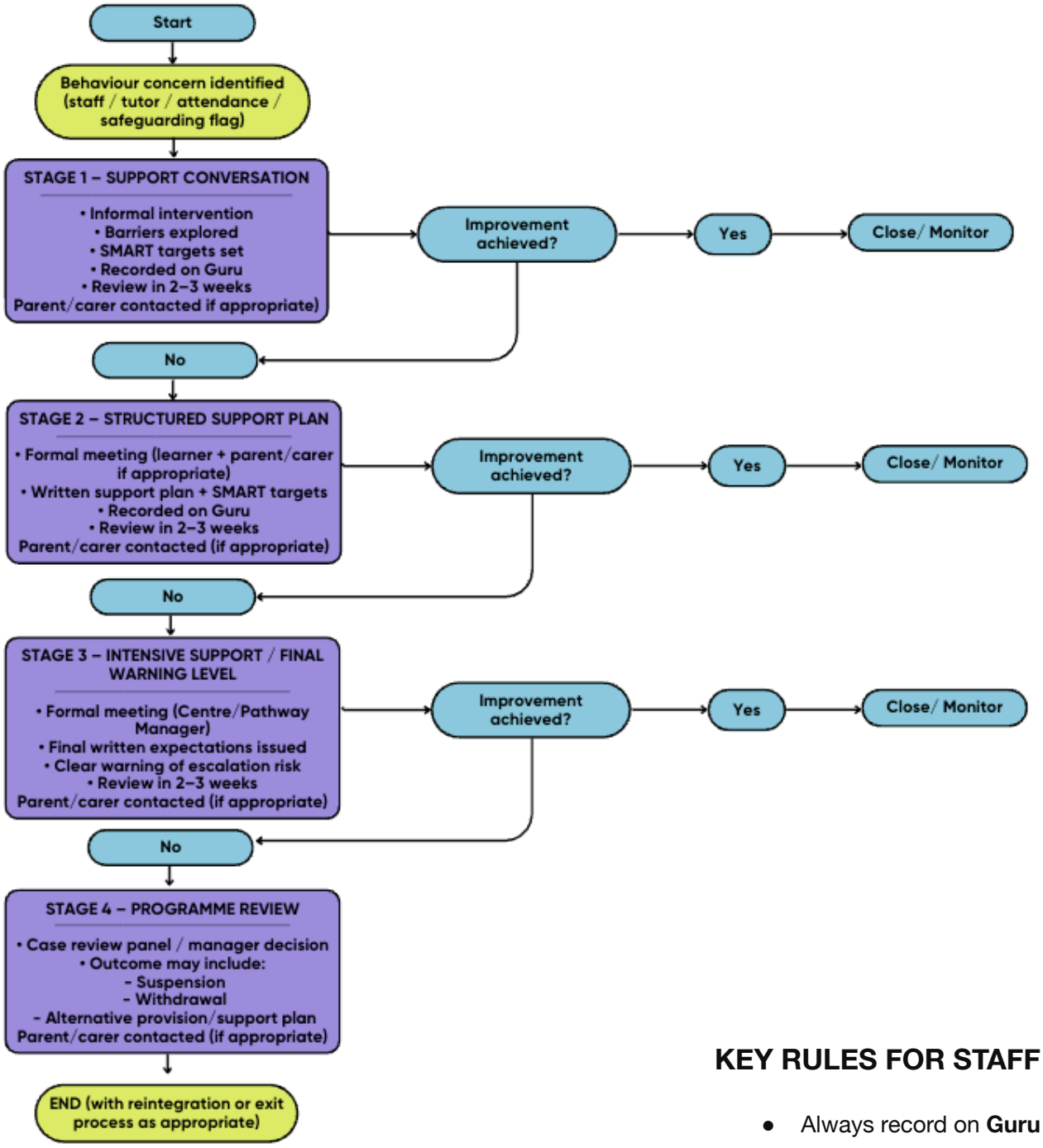
- Keep learners engaged in education
- Support personal and academic success
- Promote positive behaviour and growth

Formal disciplinary action is only used where:

- Support has not been effective, or
- Safety is at risk

12. Appendices

12.1 Flow chart



KEY RULES FOR STAFF

- Always record on **Guru**
- Always set **SMART targets**
- Always schedule **2–3 week review**
- Parents/carers involved where appropriate
- Serious misconduct may **bypass stages**

12.2 Student Facing Simplified Version

Our Behaviour and Support Process

At college, we want to help you succeed. If there are concerns about your behaviour, attendance, or progress, we will always try to support you first.

Step 1: Support Conversation

- We talk with you about what's going on.
- We agree on clear targets to help you improve.
- We will check in again in a few weeks.

Step 2: Structured Support Plan

- If things don't improve, we will meet with you formally.
- You may bring a parent/carer if you want.
- We agree on a written plan with clear expectations.

Step 3: Final Warning Support Plan

- If there is still no improvement, you will have a final formal meeting.
- This is your final chance to make changes with extra support in place.

Step 4: Programme Review

If there is still no improvement, we will review your place on the course. This may result in:

- Suspension
- Withdrawal from the course
- Or another outcome to support next steps

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

- We always try to support you first
- You will always be told what needs to improve
- You will always get a chance to improve
- Parents/carers may be involved
- Serious issues may move faster through the process