



# **COVID-19 college closure - arrangements for the positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures**

## **1. Context**

From 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 parents/carers were asked to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and for schools/colleges to remain open only for those children of workers critical to the COVID-19 response - who were not safe to work from home.

Schools, colleges and all childcare providers were asked to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the COVID-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

The college opened for these young people between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020, however, the college then closed fully at 3pm on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 as no students felt they needed to attend. The college continues regular contact with vulnerable students to ensure they continue to be able to learn safely at home. This situation remains under constant review to ensure we meet vulnerable students' needs.

Throughout this college closure, and all consequent online learning, Blackpool Sixth continues to promote the high expectations of student behaviour described in the full policy.

This addendum of the positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures contains details of necessary changes to the college's procedures to address any disciplinary concerns.

## **2. General Principles**

- a. For all concerns, the first focus for all staff will be to ascertain if there are any underlying issues or mitigating factors so we can provide the right support. Staff will take into consideration a student's home situation. For example, disciplinary action will not be taken for non-engagement in learning or failure to submit work until we have explored the reasons and provided appropriate support to overcome any barriers.
- b. Initial follow-up to any concerns will usually be by subject teachers who can also refer to the pastoral team for further support. In the first instance, follow-up communication will usually be to the student themselves. However, staff may choose to communicate with parents/carers as appropriate.
- c. For instances where the communication and interventions above do not resolve the concern, this can be passed on to a relevant Head of Department or Pastoral Lead for further intervention.
- d. If concern remains following the interventions described above, and no improvement has been observed, then it may be deemed necessary by the Head of Department or Pastoral Lead to refer to the safeguarding and behaviour team, or senior leadership, for further guidance and intervention.

## **3. Online learning**

- a. As explained in section 3 of the full policy, a key part of promoting positive behaviour is based on clear expectations. As a result, Blackpool Sixth will encourage

students to maintain an awareness of employability skills in how they conduct themselves in online sessions by providing clear guidelines and expectations (see appendix A).

- b. In instances where a student significantly, or consistently, fails to follow online learning expectations, this may be deemed gross misconduct and dealt with via the procedures detailed in section 4 of this addendum.

#### **4. Dealing with allegations of gross misconduct during college closure**

- a. The non-exhaustive examples of gross misconduct described in the full policy will still apply throughout the college closure. However, Blackpool Sixth recognises that the current college closure and online learning environment may impact this.
- b. For an allegation of gross misconduct a student will progress directly to a formal disciplinary hearing.
- c. A member of the college leadership team or the Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Behaviour will be appointed as the investigating officer and chair of the formal disciplinary hearing. Another member of the leadership team will also be appointed to complete the disciplinary panel.
- d. An investigation will be conducted remotely by the investigating officer. This will include contacting student(s), parent(s)/carer(s) and relevant staff via email/phone to gather the necessary statements and evidence. When contacting a student regarding the investigation their parent/carer will be approached first so they can choose to be "there" when the student is contacted.
- e. Upon completion of the investigation, the disciplinary panel will consider the evidence that has been securely shared with them using college email/Google Drive. Following this, the disciplinary panel will meet online to discuss the evidence that they have already considered and agree an appropriate disciplinary outcome.
- f. Possible outcomes of a formal disciplinary hearing remain as described in section 4.4 of the full policy.
- g. The outcome of the formal disciplinary hearing will be recorded on EMRIS. The student and parent(s)/carer(s) will be informed of the outcome in writing.
- h. A student has the right to appeal against the outcome of the formal disciplinary hearing. Appeals must be made in writing to the Deputy Principal within 5 working days of notification of the outcome of the disciplinary hearing. See section 8 of full policy for further details.

## **Appendix A**

### **Blackpool Sixth: Student "video call" expectations**

#### **Introduction**

As we adapt to a new way of working amid the Coronavirus pandemic, we are presented with greater reliance on online learning. This document gives guidance on how video calling can be used safely whilst students are learning from home.

#### **General principles**

- 1) Video calling can only take place on Google Meet via Google Classroom using your college account.
- 2) All participants will be made aware that video calls will be recorded by the college for both safeguarding and learning purposes.
- 3) It is not permitted for students to make any recording of a video call themselves, share a recording or use a recording for purposes other than for their own learning.
- 4) Access links for a video call must not be shared.
- 5) Make sure you feel confident and competent in using the technology. Ask your teacher for help if you are unsure or need support.

#### **Session management**

- 1) Engage with video calls from a quiet, private and appropriate location free from distractions.
- 2) Mute your microphone unless you are given further instruction by the teacher.
- 3) There is no requirement to use your camera. However, if you are asked to by the teacher, and are comfortable doing so, use as plain a background as possible.
- 4) Use the chat facility if you want to ask questions or make an appropriate comment.
- 5) Do not leave multiple applications open during the call as this may affect the quality of the lesson.

#### **Behaviour Expectations**

All participants are expected to behave in line with existing college policies and expectations. This includes the college core values, the Blackpool Sixth Expects document and the Positive Behaviour policy and addendum. The points below highlight key behaviour expectations:

- 1) Follow the same behaviour expectations of a face-to-face classroom session.
- 2) Be punctual and courteous.
- 3) Dress in an appropriate manner as you would for a face-to-face classroom session.
- 4) Turn your phone to silent.
- 5) Language must be professional and appropriate. This is applicable to both verbal language and written language in the chat facility.
- 6) Do not eat or drink, other than water/tea/coffee
- 7) Do not share any personal information during the call (either your own or anyone else's).

#### **Reporting and managing concerns**

- 1) Participants are encouraged to report any concerns regarding a video call. This can be done by reporting to their Pastoral Mentor or any member of staff.

- 2) If inappropriate behaviour takes place, participants involved may be removed by staff, the session may be terminated and the concern reported to their Head of Department or a member of the Safeguarding & Behaviour team
- 3) Inappropriate online behaviour will be responded to in line with the existing Positive Behaviour policy and addendum. (See website for addendum)
- 4) Any safeguarding concerns will be reported in line with college's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and addendum. (See website for addendum)