Vulnerable Students and At Risk Policy

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The Sheffield College
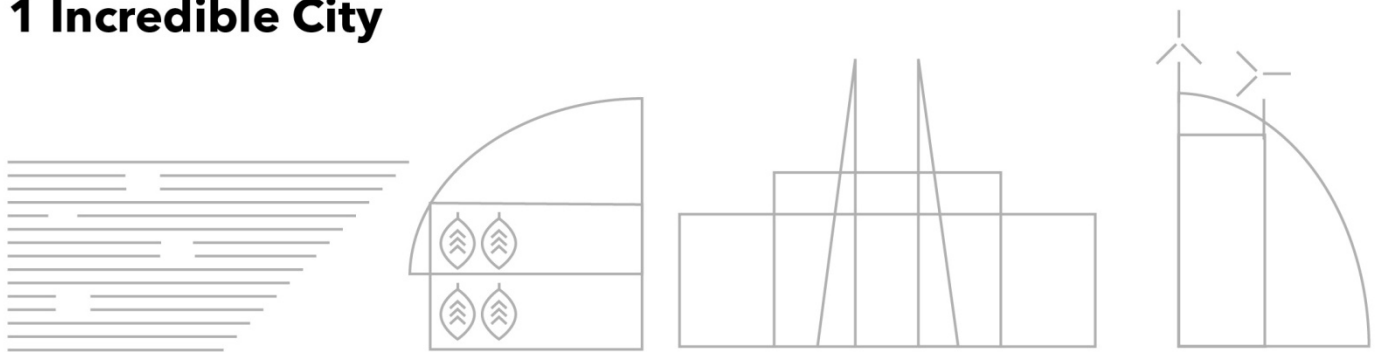
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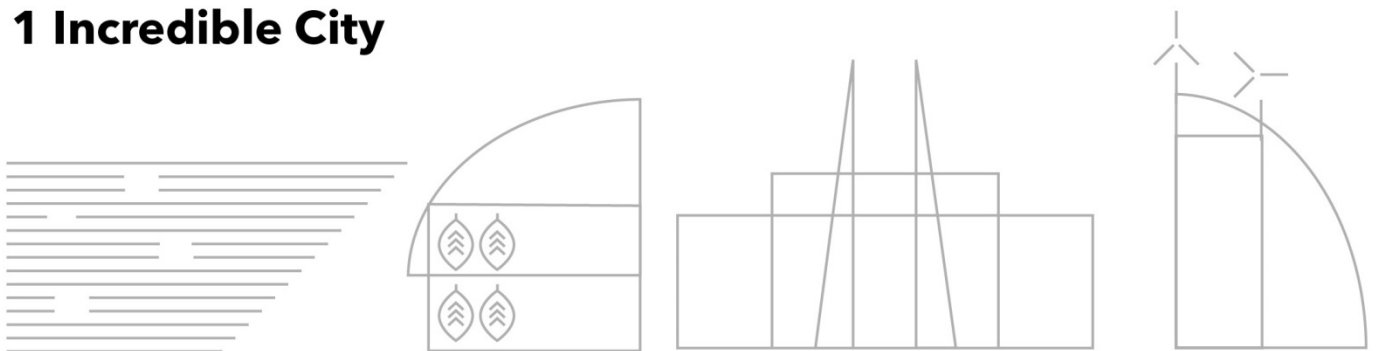**Author:** Caroline Morrison

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Vulnerable Students and At Risk Policy

The Sheffield College Vulnerable Students and At Risk Policy

1   Introduction

This Policy outlines the steps the College will take to systematically identify vulnerable students and the measures that will then be implemented to maximise the success of these students over and above those that apply to all students. It applies predominantly to full time students, but many of the stages and processes can be applied to part time students as appropriate.

The College defines risk for the purpose of this policy as 'at risk of underachievement or of disengagement'. It is recognised the indicators of risk described in Section 2 below are neither inherently vulnerable characteristics nor do they present a risk in themselves. However, the additional barriers experienced by those defined in Section 2 means they are more likely to under-achieve.

The College therefore will ensure all its policies, procedures and practices are assessed against equality impact measures and they minimise the risk of underachievement or disengagement to any individual student. The College will also ensure appropriate support is provided to remove barriers to achievement.

2   At Risk indicators

Initial indicators of students being at risk of underachievement or of disengagement

The College has identified that students from certain groups tend to perform less well on average than other groups. However, there are many ways a student might be identified as vulnerable and / or at risk of underachievement or disengagement. The College will define vulnerability for the purposes of this policy, recognising the criteria used may not include all vulnerable students or all the ways in which they might be considered vulnerable. Furthermore, whether a student is considered vulnerable may depend on the level and type of course or study programme.

For College, students will be considered to be vulnerable and / or at risk of underachievement or disengagement if they:

- have an identified disability or learning difficulty;
- are from the Education Funding Agency (EFA) defined eligible groups – students who are in care or a care leaver; receiving income support, employment support allowance, disability living allowance or personal independence payments;
- are in receipt of financial support from the College, including those in the College's defined vulnerable categories, i.e. teenage parent, unaccompanied asylum seeker, young carer, youth offender or those whose family income is low;
- have an unspent criminal conviction or a record of re-offending;
- have an ongoing safeguarding issue;
- have English as a second or other language;
- have been previously identified as being vulnerable or at risk by their school or local authority, including those with multi-agency support, poor attendance, special educational needs (SEN) support or recipients of free school meals;
- have been previously identified as vulnerable or at risk by the College, including those withdrawn from programme;
- have an initial assessment profile at entry 2 or below;
- have not met the course entry requirements and a waiver has been applied;
- are late starters to their programme, including those who enrol at clearing events.

3   How risk will be determined

Initial risk will be determined at the start of the student journey. The College will work in partnership with the Local Authority, schools and other agencies to ensure the early identification of vulnerability. Confidentiality is paramount and care will be taken to ensure information is only shared where it can be shown it is for the purpose of providing appropriate support to minimise the barriers faced by those defined in Section 2 as vulnerable and / or at risk of underachievement or disengagement.

The risk status of a student is likely to change as the student progresses through his/her programme. Students not previously at risk may become so, either because they develop one of the characteristics in Section 2, or due to engagement issues such as poor attendance, punctuality, behaviour or incomplete work. The risk status of those who have been identified as having an initial risk indicator (Section 2) will be determined in the same way as those without an initial indicator, i.e. by engagement and progress on their programme. A grid of how risk / vulnerability is determined and how it is communicated to staff is contained in Appendix 1. Risk categories (high, medium, low etc.) are described in Appendix 2.

4   How information about vulnerable students will be communicated and monitored

Information about a student's support needs and vulnerability are confidential and may be of a sensitive nature. Care will be taken to keep all information secure and confidential. Information is recorded on the electronic Individual Learning Record (ILR) of each student and on the electronic tracking system, Pro Monitor, for full time students, as detailed in Appendix 1.

Information can be safely stored on Pro Monitor, and this is the preferred location for recording information identified in Section 2 (and any other relevant information that may help students succeed). Information will be added to Pro Monitor throughout the student journey.

Other highly sensitive information, e.g. information relating to a safeguarding issue; may also be held in paper form or in an electronic form which is accessed only by a small number of relevant staff. Details of this arrangement will be available from safeguarding staff or the deputy heads of service.

Confidential Comments in Pro Monitor is being used to allow sensitive information to be stored against a student; access to view this information is on a strictly restricted basis. There are two levels, Level 2 - Medium and Level 3 – High.

Other members of staff are able to see that a Confidential Comment is stored and who has made that comment, however they will not be able to view the content.

If any member of staff has a safeguarding concern with a student, they log the concern by adding a Confidential Comment. This will be picked up by the Safeguarding team in the first instance.   In order to ensure such comments are picked up, there will be an ALERT email system to safeguarding@sheffcol.ac.uk which again will be picked up by the Safeguarding team.

Confidential paper-based safeguarding files will continue to be managed in a secure manner by safeguarding officers.

Information will be updated as and when it becomes available. The grid in Appendix 1 defines how this information is updated.

All students defined as at risk will be monitored closely and the College will ensure interventions are timely and effective. In summary, the Tutorial Mentors and Pro Tutors are responsible for monitoring attendance and performance of their tutees; course leaders and tutors will monitor the performance on the course; Learner Success Managers at cohort level and Heads / Deputy Heads of Learning at department level. The Senior Leadership and Directors will also be responsible for monitoring at the whole College level.

Heads of Learning (HoLs) and Learner Success Managers are responsible for ensuring interventions are effective and parents are involved where appropriate. HoLs will also seek to ensure effective teaching and learning strategies are in place and the curriculum addresses issues that may increase students' vulnerability.

5 Monitoring progress

As part of the ongoing monitoring of students' progress, tutors will be asked throughout the year to rate the learners current performance based on a number of key factors including, timely completion of work, target grade achievement and progress. This information will be entered by the curriculum staff to give an indication of the student's current performance and will be monitored on a regular basis.

This process is to identify students that are below target so action and interventions can be put into place. This tool will also be used to raise student's aspirations and recognise achievement. Via Pro-Monitor, the tutor will be able to access reports which will indicate the whole status of a group or course to aid planning.

The following will be used to categorise student progress:
- Blue – exceeding target grade with outstanding achievement.
- Green – exceeding target grade
- Amber – on target grade
- Red – below target grade
- White – will not pass (if current performance persists)

At Risk Identification at Each Stage of the Learner Journey

Stages in the 'Learner Journey'	How / when is risk identified	By whom	How risk is communicated
Admissions and Pre Entry	By application e.g. a student may declare a support need on the application form	Applicant / Learner Recruitment Team	▪ EBS logs all SEN needs and medical conditions declared on application. Referral made to SEND team for further assessment. ▪ Criminal Conviction indicator is logged on a local spread-sheet and referred to Deputy Head of Service: Student Services and SEND Support for further assessment. ▪ Report on CIS identifies all students with a declared need so that Heads of Learning (HoLs) can be alerted and follow up as appropriate (e.g. with SEND team or health and safety risk assessment for those with medical needs). ▪ Self-declaration as a young carer or LAC is forwarded to Hannah Dulieu. ▪ Information re risk on EBS or LRT spreadsheet is transferred to Pro Monitor as Initial Risk ready for students start date.
	Through Special Needs Assessment – Educational Health Care (EHC)		▪ All SNAs sent to LRT who log receipt on LRT spread-sheet. Referral made by LRT to SEND team (if new). SNA is used in interview (if it has been sent at this stage) and by SEND team to inform the support plan. ▪ Once enrolled LRT check course and local centre and send SNA directly to DHoS. ▪ At enrolment the existence of the SNA is logged on ILR SRIS
	At interview	Interviewer/ ALS staff	▪ Need is recorded on Admissions Interview Record and then logged by LRT as above.
	At information event	Curriculum staff/ LSM. DHoS staff available to pick up on specific issues	▪ Any need risk indicator not previously recorded is logged and transferred as above.
	At transition event	Curriculum staff/ LSM. DHoS staff available to pick up on specific issues.	▪ Results of BKSB Initial Assessment completed at transition events are recorded on BKSB database and downloaded to Pro Monitor after registration/ enrolment.

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Stages in the 'Learner Journey'	How / when is risk identified	By whom	How risk is communicated
	Information from Local Authority / Schools	LA / SRIS	▪ LA transfer information about vulnerability in August for new starters in Sept. SRIS download as Initial Risk onto Pro Monitor (grey outline)
	At any stage of the admissions and recruitment process the Support Services and the LRT could be alerted to a potential risk indicator	External agencies including Sheffield Futures, YOT Social Services.	▪ LRT team log any indicator as above. Hannah Dulieu keeps spread-sheet of all LAC, teenage parents, which is then sent to SRIS for downloading onto Pro Monitor as Initial Risk.
	Via exchange of safeguarding information between school and the College	Safeguarding Officers	▪ Safeguarding Team log on local spreadsheet then passes information and files to local ASM. ▪ Alert in Integrated Support on Pro Monitor.
Registration and Induction	Waivers given to qualifications on entry.	LSMs, HoLs	▪ All waivers approved during the recruitment process are recorded by LRT who inform SRIS, HoLs and LSMs. ▪ Further waivers could be granted by the curriculum area at Registration. ▪ HoLs / LSMs change risk indicator to grey if not already at risk or add an additional risk indicator if already grey.
	At registration all students are checked at Support Desk	DHoSs, Staff on Support Desk.	▪ Any emerging risk indicator checked against local spread-sheets and logged if not already recorded. ▪ DHoS to check against Pro Monitor record during week following registration.
	During Induction risk indicators may emerge e.g. attendance issues, vulnerable indicators not picked up through admissions, etc.	Any staff in contact with student	▪ Any indication of risk will be sent as a learner comment to the TM/ PT who will adjust the risk category accordingly and note the reason why they are at risk (status reason field). ▪ Student Support Services will also log interventions or information held in the Integrated Student Support section of Pro Monitor and upload any letters about performance and engagement issues sent. ▪ Safeguarding Team will update Confidential Comments section as appropriate. ▪ SEND staff upload all support plans to Pro Monitor and send alert to TM/ Pro Tutor.

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Stages in the 'Learner Journey'	How / when is risk identified	By whom	How risk is communicated
Late starters (or those who enrolled at clearing)	Students enrolled at clearing events or enrolled after the start date of the course	LSMs, HoLs, Student Services	▪ LSMs note learner is high risk due to late start. ▪ LSM ensures learner agrees and evidences a robust induction. ▪ LSM monitors learners' progress, attendance and achievements, adjusting risk factor accordingly.
On programme	Emerging vulnerability either because one of vulnerable characteristics is identified or because attendance or engagement is poor .	Any staff in contact with student	▪ Any indication of risk will be sent as a learner comment to the TM/ PT who will adjust the risk category and status accordingly. ▪ Similar ones will be highlighted on a Confidential Comment in Pro Monitor.

Procedure for Managing Latecomers

This procedure for managing latecomers is designed to ensure students who start late on a course are properly supported. There are many reasons why students start their course late or enrol at 'clearing'. Whatever the reason, students are immediately considered 'at risk' because of their late start and will therefore need more support.

The following must be adhered to for any latecomer:
▪ Ensure that the latecomer receives a full and comprehensive Induction process.
▪ Latecomers have the same entitlement to a full and comprehensive Induction process as a student who started the course at the beginning of the term.
▪ If your area has numerous latecomers in a week, it should be worth considering group sessions to cover Induction, which will make the students feel welcome and benefit from a shared experience.

This should include:
▪ A full and up to date timetable for the whole course and one for their own specific sessions
▪ Full tour of facilities and introduction to staff and students, including student services
▪ A one to one with each subject teacher to include subject and work missed to date.
▪ An outline of the student journey and assessment schedule
▪ Introduction to Pro Monitor and Moodle, explain at risk factors (Red Status)
▪ An introduction to tutorials and the tutorial framework
▪ A meeting with the Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) team where appropriate or request made.
▪ A Right Course Review, one to one meeting with TM to complete profile

Further Guidance

Ensure that the student is correctly enrolled, set up on the ILR and is up to date with any owed fees - Late students need to be formally enrolled as soon as they apply and are interviewed. Where relevant, fees must be discussed with students. The student's 42-day period will start as soon as the student is enrolled and they become 'live' on the ILR.

Allow for extra time outside of formal lessons for the latecomer to access facilities, computers etc - Latecomers will need time scheduled outside their course timetable, giving them the opportunity to catch up. Course leaders will need to provide a timetable of rooms and resources outside of the student's regular timetable. This might include rooms that are in use but have available resources such as computers.

Course Leaders, TMS/Pro Tutors are the main point of contact for late students and are expected to provide the necessary support - *Course Leaders, TMS/Pro Tutors* are primarily responsible for supporting latecomers and should be the first point of contact. Deputy HoLs / TMs / Pro Tutors will be responsible in deciding whether latecomer is on the right course and at the right level prior to the 42 day period elapsing, through the Right Course Review process.

Latecomers should be partnered with a suitable peer mentor - Latecomers should be partnered with a responsible, more experienced student who can support, mentor and help them get up to speed with their course requirements and activities.

Latecomers should automatically be set to 'RED at risk' status on Pro Monitor by TM / Pro Tutor and a reason for this status entered on the system. The Tutor Mentor will closely monitor the student's attendance, attainment and progress and adjust the status of the student accordingly.

Encourage students to attend extra sessions outside of their normal timetable to complete the induction process and catch up on missed work.

Ensure all tutors are completely aware of the new student so there is no room for complications or uncertainties - Course Managers should take the time to introduce a latecomer to the subject tutors and Learning Support Tutor who will be involved the student's course.

Ensure that the student is aware of his or her own probationary period and when that point is this will finish - Just because students have started late it does not mean they are not on a probationary period. As such, they are subject to the same conditions as a student who started at the beginning of the induction period

Pro Monitor At Risk Categories and Colour Codes

No Risk Assigned – White Box
- New students, with no previous indications of risk or vulnerability.
- Students progressing within College will have had NO RISK as their end of year status from the previous year

Initial Risk – Local Authority: Multi-Agency
- Local Authority has indicated that the student has previously received Multi-Agency support

Initial Risk – Local Authority: Prior Additional Support
- Local Authority has indicated that the student has previously received Additional Learning Support

Initial Risk – Local Authority: Prior Poor Attendance
- Local Authority has indicated that the student has previously struggled with poor attendance

Initial Risk – College: Vulnerable/ At Risk Or Withdrawn
- Previously identified by the College as being Vulnerable or At Risk (High, Medium or Low Risk from previous year) including those previously withdrawn from their course/programme

High Risk
- High Risk students will be experiencing serious difficulties and in danger of becoming NEET.
- Attendance is likely to be below 70%.
- Under performance and behavioural issues are likely to be recorded within the Formal Stages of the Positive Engagement/Disciplinary Process.
- Evidence will be gained from Learner Comments, PEP's and Disciplinaries, ALS Reports, Attendance Reports.
- Students who enrol at clearing and after the start date of the course, LSM to update the risk status based on the students' progress.

Medium Risk
- Medium Risk students will be experiencing difficulties and in danger of not meeting their Target Grade.
- It is likely they will have one of the defining characteristics of vulnerability.
- Attendance is likely to be below 80%.
- Under performance and behavioural issues are likely to be recorded in Positive Engagement Plans.

Low Risk
- Low Risk students will be attending well and be on track for meeting target grades. However, they will have one of the initial defining characteristics of vulnerability which means there will always be a risk indicator in place.

No Risk
- No Risk students will be progressing well academically, on track to meet or exceed expectations with good attendance and punctuality and no causes for concern.

Withdrawn
- Use this colour/status to indicate that a student has withdrawn from College