Student Charter and Code of Conduct Policy

OWNED BY:		Vice Principal **Student Experience and External Relations**			
DATE OF LAST REVIEW		**May 2024**			
PLANNED NEXT REVIEW:		**May 2026**			
APPROVAL:		**Corporation**			
APPLIES TO:	Staff		Student	✓	Public	✓

STUDENT CHARTER

- We will put you, the student, first in everything we do in ensuring that Cirencester College offers the best experience for all students.

- We wish to help you fulfil your potential and to equip you with the skills and qualifications you need for the future.

- We are committed to ensuring the safeguarding and welfare of all students, and promoting British values of democracy, individual liberty, respect and tolerance and the rule of law.

- We are an inclusive community in which respect for all individuals, irrespective of race, class, belief, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability, is paramount and in which bullying, or discrimination is never acceptable.

- We expect all students to always act in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and recognise good attendance is essential in achieving success. Our expectation is a 100% attendance.

- We believe it is important to keep your parents/guardians informed and involved in your education and the decisions you make.

1.   Your Education

We will:

- Help you to succeed and achieve the grades you deserve

- Provide high quality teaching and learning opportunities

- Offer additional support if you have a learning difficulty or disability

- Offer support if you need to catch-up or help to manage your time

- Treat you as an adult and with professionalism

In return, we expect you to:

- Strive to do your best and motivate yourself fully at all times

- Contribute actively, complete all set work on time and attend fully

- Make the most of all opportunities and support offered

- Be punctual and professional in your attitude to your studies

- Strive for 100% attendance, not letting your attendance fall below 95%, across all elements of your timetable

2.   Your Experience

We will:

- Treat you with respect and in accordance with our Equality policy

- Offer high quality personal support and guidance, tailored to your needs

- Listen to your views and respond appropriately

In return, we expect you to:

- Treat your fellow students and all staff with respect and recognise that staff are in positions of authority

- Talk to us, in confidence, about issues which affect your experience or progress

- Tell us what you think and make an active contribution to college life

3.   Your College

We will:

- Provide a safe, healthy and supportive learning environment

- Provide appropriate resources and facilities to enable you to succeed

- Promote and work within shared values to foster a positive and supportive community

In return, we expect you to:

- Respect the College environment and report any concerns to staff

- Use resources and facilities carefully and safely

- Promote the good reputation of the College here and in the wider community

CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

1.   Introduction

This policy is an integral part of the College Student Charter and is linked to the   Safeguarding Policy and the Equality Policy. It is designed to bring together our policies on:

- Student attendance, behaviour and discipline
- E-safety and acceptable use of ICT

We expect the highest standards of behaviour at Cirencester College and students tell us that they think this is a safe, friendly and inclusive environment in which to learn. Instances of poor behaviour and bullying are rare. We have a number of students who may be more vulnerable due to health, mental health, disability, personal or social experience; we all have a duty to respect, protect and promote the welfare of all college individuals.

We are proud of the general conduct of our students at the College and we do not wish to create any rules or regulations which seem petty or unnecessary. The following Code is intended to ensure that everyone thrives at the College and that students are safe and protected from abuse, discrimination and harm; it is also based on respect for others, property and the law.

2.   The Student Code of Conduct applies

- to any activity on College sites, including classrooms, learning centres, Refectory, social spaces and outdoors
- to any College organised activity off site, including trips, residentials, work placements, sport, research and fieldwork etc
- to any communication off site which impacts negatively on College experience or activity, such as bullying (see Respect and Serious Misconduct below) or examination/coursework malpractice (see Serious Misconduct below)
- to travel and transport to and from College
- to any activity which might bring the College directly into disrepute

3.   Confidentiality

The College respects students' rights to confidentiality and will always seek to maintain this. If a student discloses personal information, this may lead to a conversation about the best ways to support the student and this might involve suggestions of sharing the information, in strict confidence, with other College staff with the consent of the student.

If a student makes a disclosure which indicates that he/she or others may be at risk of harm, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The member of staff should explain clearly to the student that there may be a need to pass on information to a colleague with safeguarding responsibility and possibly to other professionals, particularly if someone is in danger or has been subject to abuse.

With respect to personal information of a health or medical nature, we would adopt the same position as medical professionals and not share this information with parents or others (unless the risk of harm above applies). We may encourage the student to share that information if we believe

that it would in his or her interest to do so or, with the student's consent, be prepared to do this on their behalf.

If a student is discussing the behaviour of other students with us, as part of an investigation into bullying or other misconduct, we will always seek to ensure confidentiality about that information. The student may be asked to give consent to disclosing their involvement in the investigation. If the student is directly involved in any incident or issue, it may not always be possible to prevent others from recognising this involvement, although the College would always seek to prevent further repercussions in any disciplinary action taken and to protect innocent parties as far as it is within its power to do so.

4.   Freedom of Expression

Cirencester College values freedom of speech and self-expression. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech that is designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others, goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

At Cirencester College, there is no place for the expression of views that are designed to manipulate the vulnerable and potentially lead to harm, particularly in the context of the threat of 'radicalisation' and/or inciting hatred.
It is imperative our college is a place where you can discuss and explore controversial issues safely and where staff encourage and facilitate this.

If the views being expressed by other students raise concerns or make you feel uncomfortable, it is your responsibility to bring this to the attention of a member of staff.

5.   Respect

We all have the right to be treated with respect, and bullying in any form is wrong. Bullying involves the intentional harm of another person and causes pain and distress.
Bullying takes many forms, including:

- emotional
- physical
- verbal
- using technology - 'cyber-bullying' (e.g. phone call or messaging, texting, e-mail, chat/meeting rooms and social media facilitated communication)
- inappropriate or unacceptable language use, such as derogatory terms used in relation to an individual's nominated gender, sexuality, background, religion or any other personal attribute.

The nature of bullying can also take many forms, including but not exclusively racist, homophobic, sexist, sexually abusive, based on disability or learning difficulty, based on class or social experience, based on belief or religion.

If you feel you are being bullied or think that another student is being bullied, please report this to your Personal Tutor, a member of the Pastoral Team or another member of staff immediately. All

reports will be treated confidentially (within the guidelines above) and with sensitivity. Senior members of staff and Designated Safeguarding Officers can be contacted via Reception and the Progression Hub.

Cirencester College has a zero tolerance approach to bullying. We will treat instances of bullying that occur outside College (via the internet or text messaging for instance) and which impact on student experience within College in the same way that we would treat instances on site. In less serious cases, we will seek to help resolve the issues positively with those involved; in more serious cases, we will follow the Student Disciplinary Procedure below. In the most serious cases, we may involve the police.

6.   E-Safety and Acceptable use of ICT

The College recognises that technologies are an integral part of our lives, are constantly evolving and offer exciting opportunities for learning and personal use. The following code is designed to help students protect themselves and others and avoid misuse of College and personal information technology. This code corresponds to the Safeguarding Policy, E-Safety Policy, IT Acceptable Use Policy, and is in accordance with the South West Grid for Learning guidelines.

7.   We expect all students to:
- use technology and access the internet responsibly, avoid risks to safety and security and never access unauthorised or illegal material, including pornography, on-line gambling and gaming or any material which might cause distress to others.
- recognise that the College will monitor the use of IT systems and that using any software to bypass filtering or security systems or altering computer settings is strictly prohibited
- protect usernames, passwords and other personal information and never share these with others
- be aware of dangers and personal identity issues when communicating on-line
- be aware of risks and not arrange to meet people off-line unless a person over 18 is present or, if you are over 18, you have told a responsible adult where you are going and who you are meeting, and always arrange any such meeting in a public place
- report any unpleasant or inappropriate on-line material or messages, or anything that makes you feel uncomfortable, to a parent or member of staff
- use College IT equipment for educational purposes only
- recognise that other students also need access to College IT equipment for educational purposes
- avoid downloads or uploads or streaming which take up system capacity unnecessarily or excessively
- respect the work of others and not access, copy or alter other user's files without the owner's permission or fabricate material under a different identity
- respect others when using on-line, text and other communication and to avoid any language or behaviour which causes offence, constitutes bullying (see above), including posting content about others without their permission or contravenes the College Equality Policy
- report any faults or damage involving equipment or software to a member of staff

- only use personal devices, including mobile phones, in permitted areas in your free time; it is rude and unprofessional and therefore not acceptable to use your phone/device in class, unless authorised by the lecturer to do so.
- only access social networking sites or other unauthorised sites on College equipment when given specific authorisation by a member of staff
- comply with all copyright and piracy regulations and with College and exam board regulations on plagiarism
- utilise Artificial Intelligence (AI) to aid with studies if you wish but ensure that in so doing, you are able to answer questions and assignments fully without the aid of AI; exams and assessments are subject to plagiarism rules and submissions will be validated accordingly.
- recognise that information obtained via the internet for educational purposes may not always be accurate or reliable
- recognise that staff will only communicate with students through standard College channels and will not give students access to personal contact details or accept them as 'friends' on personal social media networks
- treat the College environment, resources and facilities safely, with care and respect
- dress, behave and use language appropriately and to avoid any behaviour which may cause offence to others including any public displays of intimacy
- follow the Smoke Free Policy - no smoking or vaping on site or immediately outside the College boundaries, except in the designated smoking area, and avoid openly displaying unlit cigarettes or vaping products on site
- respect the absolute ban on alcohol and illegal substances (see Serious Misconduct below) on or near campuses, work experience or on college facilitated trips
- drive safely with due care and attention, within site speed limits and with consideration for others; park only in student designated parking spaces (driving/parking is at owners' risk, not covered by College insurance)
- respect the needs of the local community and avoid any disrespectful or anti-social behaviour; respect our neighbours by refraining from parking vehicles in the neighbouring area in ways which cause them access problems or prevent access for service vehicles (such as ambulances or bin lorries) or contravene the law
- pay any fees or charges owed to the College, including for transport, parking, materials, trips and exam re-sits
- follow all College procedures in respect of Health & Safety, Exams and Exam Board rules (including those relating to Plagiarism), use of IT and other equipment (see below) and Emergencies
- behave within the law and not to condone behaviour which could lead to any form of criminal prosecution
- report any instance of bullying, concern about the welfare of another student or a health and safety hazard on site to Reception, Site Security, Personal Tutor or any staff member

8.   Course Performance Concern

The following are examples of concerns about course performance which would lead to action under the Student Disciplinary Procedure (see below):

- concern due to level of entry requirement or previous performance concerns at College
- low attendance
- persistent lateness for lessons
- failure to complete set work
- missing deadlines
- poor motivation in class
- disruptive behaviour which affects the learning of others
- plagiarism (see Serious Misconduct below)

9. Misconduct

The following are examples of misconduct which would lead to action under the Student Disciplinary Procedure:
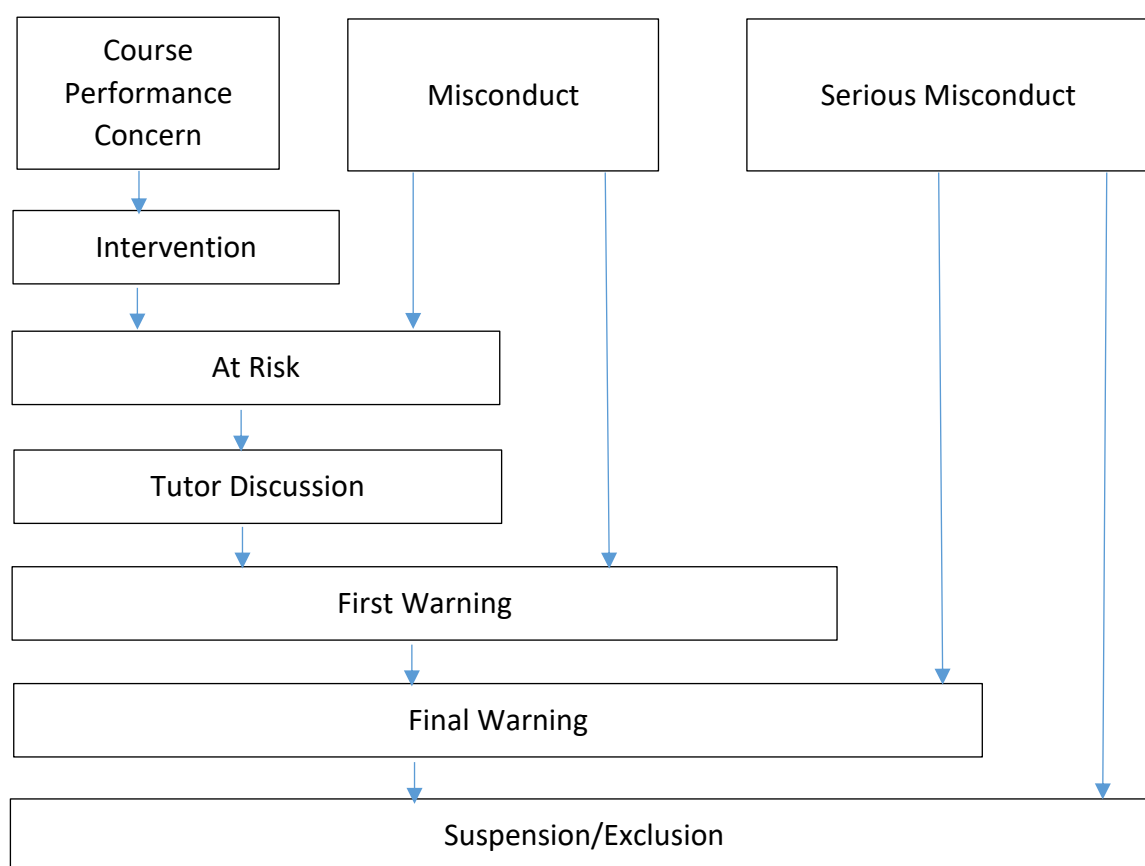
- contravention of rules governing ICT/internet use.
- smoking on site or immediately outside the College boundaries, except in the designated area.
- inappropriate or disruptive behaviour
- refusal to co-operate with Site Security or other staff or failure to produce Student ID card when requested.
- overall attendance below 75%, or a continuous 2 week run of absences without extenuating circumstances.

10. Serious Misconduct

The following are examples of serious misconduct which would lead immediately to action under the more serious stages of the Student Disciplinary Procedure, including the risk of exclusion:

- bullying, including cyber-bullying (stalking and posting any message or content which causes concern, offence or harm) and issues outside College which impact on student experience within College as outlined above
- any behaviour which is offensive and contravenes Equality policy or law, or incites hate, including racism, sexism and any discrimination based on gender, sexuality, disability or learning difficulty
- harassment, aggressive or violent behaviour
- inflicting any form of abuse on others
- persistent misconduct following earlier warnings
- consumption, or to be under the influence, of alcohol*
- possession of, consumption of or to be under the influence of illegal substances; possession of related equipment drugs paraphernalia; suspicion of intent to supply drugs to others; this includes products with a CBD (cannabidoil) content unless where a medical letter is provided*
- use of any reputed performance enhancing substance for exams or any other purpose
- possession of weapons*
- damage to College property or vandalism
- theft or any other criminal activity
- any behaviour which is dangerous or likely to cause injury, including any driving offences on site
- plagiarism, fraud, falsifying documents, examination or coursework malpractice and illegal use of ICT, including network hacking or causing disruption to network services

College staff will conduct a search if there is any suspicion that a student is in possession of an illegal substance or a weapon. In any case where we believe that a criminal offence has been committed, the College will contact the police.

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│ Course          │   │                 │       │                 │
│ Performance     │   │   Misconduct    │       │ Serious Misconduct │
│ Concern         │   │                 │       │                 │
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│  Intervention   │           │                         │
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│       At Risk         │◄────┘                         │
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│   Tutor Discussion    │                               │
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│           First Warning                │              │
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│                Final Warning                         │◄┘
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│               Suspension/Exclusion                             │◄┘
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11. **Decision to exclude**
    - Reason for exclusion made clear to student
    - Student asked to leave site (or under supervision until collected by parent)
    - Police involvement if a criminal offence is believed to have been committed
    - Parent contacted (unless parental responsibility has been removed)
    - Letter to parent or student setting out reasons for exclusion and appeal process
    - Student not to visit any College site following exclusion

12. **Appeal by student by letter to the Chair of the Appeals Panel, within 7 working days from exclusion decision**
    - Letter or a letter attached to an email (not phone call) should set out reasons for appeal, including perceived unfairness or remorse as appropriate and sent to Quality.Officer@cirencester.ac.uk
    - Following receipt of the letter a full review will take place directed by senior staff not connected with the original case, into the situation and circumstances thereof.
    - Following the review, a final response will be sent summarising the findings of the review.
    - If grounds have been found to warrant further questioning an Appeal Hearing will be scheduled which will extend the original seven days to give time for investigation.
    - If an Appeal Hearing is required, contact will be made to confirm the time of an Appeal Panel.

- Contact will be made to confirm time of Exclusion Appeal Panel
- Student should not visit any College site during this period without prior permission of the relevant Head of Faculty
- Student should not have contact with College staff during this period, except where contact over work completion has been agreed
- Staff involved in the exclusion are not permitted to comment on the likely outcome of the Appeal
- If the student fails to attend the Exclusion Appeal Panel, the exclusion decision is automatically upheld

13. Exclusion Appeal Panel
- Panel will consist of a Chair of Appeals (a member of the management team) and other staff as required.
- Members of staff who issued or were directly involved in the exclusion will not sit on the Panel but may be called to present the case for exclusion
- The student will be invited to present a case for the Appeal, offer new information, reflect upon the reasons for the exclusion and any subsequent feelings and discuss ways forward
- The student will be advised to bring a supportive person (or both parents) to the Panel; the role of the supportive person should only be that of advocate where the student has a learning disability
- All evidence presented to the Panel will be heard in the presence of the whole Panel and the student and any papers will be circulated in advance; notes of the Panel will be kept
- The Panel will take account of: the severity of the reasons for the exclusion; the impact on others; the attitude of the student towards what has led to the exclusion; the academic and attendance record of the student and the student's professed commitment towards being re-admitted to the College

14. Exclusion Appeal Decision

The Panel will adjourn to make its decision and, in most cases, the Panel will then call the student (and supportive person) back after a short timescale to announce decision; in exceptional cases, there may be period of adjournment to investigate new evidence

The Panel will reach one of the following decisions:

- Reinstatement to all or part of the student's programme or a revised programme, with conditions
- Exclusion for the remainder of the academic year, with the option of re-applying to re-start at the College in the following year
- Exclusion from the College upheld (and will apply for at least one complete academic year, during which time the student should not visit any College site, and any later re-application will be subject to availability)

This decision will be confirmed in writing to the parents or student within 7 working days of that panel meeting.

If Exclusion has been upheld and the student has evidence either that the way the process has been conducted was unfair, or that new evidence has emerged since the appeal, he/she can write to the Chair of Governors, at the College address, within 7 working days of the Appeal decision. No other grounds for appeal are allowable. The letter should contain reasons for the appeal and supporting

evidence.

The Chair of Governors, or a designated substitute, not including the Principal, will put together a panel of up to three Governors, to review the case within 14 working days of the Chair receiving the appeal; this panel will either uphold or reject the Appeal; if the Appeal is upheld on process or new evidence, it will be referred back to the College for a second Exclusion Appeal Panel (with different senior staff); the decision of this second Exclusion Appeal Panel will be final.

For any further recourse outside the College, contact details of relevant government departments and funding agencies can be obtained from the College.

Related policies and procedures: Safeguarding policy; Student Complaints Procedure; Equality Policy; IT Acceptable Use Policy, E-Safety Policy, Exams Policy

Data Protection

When managing a student's personal data information, it will be collected in accordance with the College's data protection policy. Data collected is held securely and accessed by, and disclosed to, individuals, only for the purposes of information relating to this policy. Inappropriate access or disclosure of student data constitutes a data breach and should be reported in accordance with the organisation's data protection policy immediately. It may also constitute a disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the College's disciplinary procedure.

Equality

As with all College Policies and Procedures, due care has been taken to ensure that this policy is appropriate to all students regardless of sex, age, race, ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation, or religion/faith. The policy will be applied fairly and consistently whilst upholding the College's commitment to providing equality to all.