

<b>Document Name and Version</b>	<b>6.4 Policy and Procedure on Learner Welfare and Wellbeing</b>
<b>Policy Number</b>	6.4
<b>Policies that Interact with Policy 6.4</b>	Policy 3.10 Policy and Procedure on Moodle Copyright and Usage Policy 6.2 Learner's Code of Conduct Policy 6.4 Policy and Procedure on Learner Welfare and Wellbeing Policy 6.5 Learner Disciplinary Policy Policy 6.6 Policy and Procedures on Internet, Social Media and Email Use Policy 6.7 Dignity and Respect Policy 6.8 Complaints Procedure
<b>Approval Body</b>	Academic Council
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<b>Date of Review</b>	2025
<b>Revisions</b>	

## 1. Preamble.

- 1.1. The development of appropriate, effective strategies that respond to learner stress and promote their welfare and wellbeing is a central concern of IICP College. The College draws on national and international research and policy initiatives, as well as its own expertise in mental health areas, in devising appropriate and proportionate responses to learners who express or demonstrate distress, or a risk to their health or well-being, or a risk to the health or wellbeing of others.
- 1.2. Learner Welfare covers areas such as safety and the prevention of harm, as well as assisting learners to achieve their potential, both academically and professionally. Wellbeing relates to the development of resilience, emotional and social competence as well as the avoidance of harm.
- 1.3. IICP College recognises that the integration of learner welfare policies with its academic mission is crucial (IUQB, 2006<sup>1</sup>). Therefore, in devising its response the College gives particular attention to the additional stressors that can be associated with the practicum components of counselling and psychotherapy programmes.
- 1.4. This policy encourages a partnership approach, with shared responsibility between the College, staff and learners in dealing with concerns about health, safety, welfare and wellbeing.
- 1.5. *Computation of Time:* Where this procedure prescribes a number of days, this is taken to mean working days: that is, weekends and public holidays shall not be counted. Reference to a specific staff role in any policy is taken to mean that role or any other appropriate member of staff designated by the College to take the specified responsibility in the conduct of that policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Universities Quality Board (IUQB) *National Guidelines of Good Practice in the Organisation of Student Support Services* (2006). Available from: [http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/iuqbgood\\_practice\\_sss\[2\].pdf](http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/iuqbgood_practice_sss[2].pdf) (Accessed 2 October 2018).

## **2. Purpose.**

2.1. This policy fulfils the following purposes:

- 2.1.1. It provides support for learners who are experiencing difficulty in satisfying the required programme or professional requirements, or in adhering to the Learner Charter.
- 2.1.2. It provides a framework for a response to learners whose progress is unsatisfactory, or where concerns are identified about the welfare or wellbeing of any learner.
- 2.1.3. It promotes the wellbeing and welfare of individual learners, provides a safe and healthy work environment for all learners and staff, and promotes the use of timely, proportionate and appropriate intervention in cases of difficulty or distress.

## **3. Scope.**

3.1. This policy extends to all registered learners of IICP College.

## **4. Principles.**

4.1. The following principles apply:

- 4.1.1. The welfare and safety of learners, staff and other IICP College community members are of paramount concern in any response;
- 4.1.2. IICP College is aware of, and adheres to, legislation and regulation regarding the protection of children and vulnerable adults;
- 4.1.3. This policy is intended to be supportive of individual learners who experience distress or difficulty and also to recognise the right of all IICP College members to learn, work and live without unwarranted interference from others;
- 4.1.4. All learners are expected to take responsibility to monitor and protect their own health, welfare and wellbeing. Learners should note that this is a requirement of IACP Code of Ethics, and is required by the IICP College Learner charter.

## **5. Policy.**

- 5.1. IICP College is committed to developing a community that promotes the welfare and wellbeing of individuals and the community, welcomes diversity, and provides opportunities for learners to develop to their full potential. To this end welfare policies play vital roles in IICP College in enabling learners to succeed and flourish in higher education.
- 5.2. Learner Supports are provided to all learners, and are detailed in the Learner Support Policies. These include Library services, IT support, Learner Care procedures and academic support. A designated Student Care period is made available during two periods on any training day, so that learners can interact with a staff member that is appropriate to the issue they wish to address. In addition, learners are encouraged to approach their lecturers and tutors informally where they have any issues that they wish to address.
- 5.3. Learner Supports are intended to facilitate learners to achieve their full potential and successfully manage the challenges of Higher Education. The College recognises that individual circumstances may require additional support and intervention in order to promote individual wellbeing and ensure the safety and wellbeing of the College community.
- 5.4. For learners in IICP College who are at various points on their journey within the profession of Counselling and Psychotherapy, finding ways to manage personal and interpersonal challenges is an important learning experience. The ways in which a learner manages challenges and difficulties during their training has potential consequences for their health and professional performance following completion of their programme.
- 5.5. This policy is intended to be applicable to learners who are experiencing difficulties in any aspect of their learning, including interpersonal relationships within the College, satisfying the required programme or professional requirements or in adhering to the Learner Charter. The aim is to enable learners to progress safely and

productively through their programme. It is also intended as providing a means for addressing instances of unsatisfactory attitude and/or behaviour, which in isolation is not considered a disciplinary matter but is not deemed fitting for the IICP College community ethos and/or the profession for which they are studying.

5.6. The application of the policy is varied in accordance with the identified difficulty, in order that the support provided is adequately tailored to individual circumstances.

5.7. Guidance: Recognising Welfare and Wellbeing Concerns:

5.7.1. This section outlines what might constitute a circumstance for concern by or about a learner. This is not an exhaustive list, but instead provides some indications of what could be considered circumstances of concern.

5.7.1.1. **Troubling Behaviours:** Concern can be grounded in signs of lack of self-care, or signs or statements of distress or troubling behaviour, including:

- Direct statements related to distress related to their experiences in IICP College. This includes but is not confined to allegations of interpersonal conflict or harassment;
- Potential self-harm: noticeable cuts, bruises or burns on a learner;
- Repeated absences from class, work, study, or normal activities;
- Learner seeking frequent extensions or exceptions for extenuating circumstances;
- Learner sending communication such as frequent, lengthy, or agitated emails;
- Significant changes in weight;
- Frequent state of alcohol intoxication;
- Frequent and/or intense emotional outbursts;
- Extreme personality changes such as appearing more withdrawn or more animated than usual;
- Expressed hopelessness, fear or worthlessness; themes of suicide, death and dying;
- Direct statements related to distress, family issues, or other difficulties.

5.7.1.2. **Disruptive Behaviours:** Concern can be grounded in the demonstration of an unacceptable or unsatisfactory attitude and/or behaviour, including:

- Interference with or disruption of the educational process and rights of other learners or the normal functions of the College;
- Demanding, verbally abusive, bullying or intimidating behaviours;
- Displays of extreme irritability;
- Displays of irrational or impulsive behaviours.

5.7.1.3. **Threatening Behaviours:** Concern can be grounded in behaviour or statements that constitute a threat to themselves or others, including:

- Physical/verbal confrontations;
- References to access or use of a weapon or threats of violence;
- Threatening communication, including through electronic means.

5.7.1.4. **Behaviours that may impact upon progression:** Concern can be grounded in behaviour that suggests that a learner may not progress to the next stage of their programme, despite being given appropriate opportunity to avail of academic supports. The concerns here may relate to academic or professional work of the learner, the professionalism of the learner in the conduct of IICP College related activities, or any related matter, including:

- Consistent failure to submit assessments;
- Failure to adhere to course requirements without appropriate explanation;
- Consistent failing to attend (with or without explanation) where this might impact on progression.

5.7.1.4.1. Where learners are facing possible difficulties with progression, then academic policies are usually most appropriate to this circumstance. However, where academic policies do not seem appropriate, or have not been effective, then this policy may be used. In this instance learners may be required to attend a meeting with the Learner Care Team (see section 6.7 below). In such circumstances, the implications of their unsatisfactory work will be highlighted, and the required standard clarified. Learner supports will be identified, and where appropriate a learning plan put in place.

## 6. Procedure.

6.1. Any learner experiencing difficulties is encouraged and expected to take action to protect their own health and welfare. This includes utilising medical, therapeutic, community and family supports that are available to them.

6.2. Learners should normally communicate their concerns to the College at the earliest opportunity.

6.3. Programme Board members have a responsibility to bring significant concerns about a learner to the attention of the Head of Academic Studies in a timely fashion.

6.4. A learner may express a concern for themselves or another learner in confidence, while also noting that confidentiality may be limited by welfare and wellbeing concerns. However, learners should be aware that their information is not shared beyond those who need to know. This may include IICP College staff who require this information to carry out their duties.

6.5. Attendance at and Records of meetings. It should be noted that staff members are required to keep a written note of attendance of any meeting, formal or informal, and that IICP's Data Protection Policies apply to such records.

### 6.6. IICP College Response:

6.6.1. IICP College responds to care and welfare concerns through a designated **Learner Care Team**, co-ordinated by Head of Academic Studies and constituted to fit with the identified learner needs.

6.6.2. The Care Team will respond to learners' individual circumstances and needs, but will be guided by this policy in designing their response.

### 6.7. Learner Care Team:

6.7.1. Learner Care Teams are usually composed of one or more of the following: Head of Academic Studies, Programme Leader, Programme Co-ordinator, lecturer, tutor, manager, and faculty member. Usually the Head of Academic

Studies will decide on the particular composition of Learner Care Teams in any individual case.

6.7.2. Other relevant people may be included at the discretion of the Head of Academic Studies, such as support or specialised staff.

6.7.3. The Head of Academic Studies or his or her nominee co-ordinates meetings, record keeping, and responses to learners, and liaises with IICP College management and staff where useful or required.

#### 6.8. Possible Responses:

6.8.1. Any valid concern for a learner brought to the attention of the faculty should be communicated to the Head of Academic Studies, who shall ensure that the Registrar is kept apprised of any concerns regarding learners, as appropriate.

6.8.2. Where there is reasonable cause to believe that concerns about a learner are warranted, then a Learner Care Team will be constituted for that learner.

6.8.3. Communication with the learner, where possible, occurs through the Learner Care Team.

6.8.4. The learner is invited to attend a meeting with the Learner Care Team. A member of administration staff may also attend to provide a written record of the meeting.

6.8.5. At this meeting the Learner Care Team will outline the purpose of the meeting and the reasons for concern, and provide the learner with an opportunity to respond. Where appropriate, the meeting will work towards an agreed support plan together with agreed targets.

6.8.6. Where appropriate the support team will assist the learner to identify and access appropriate professional source of help.

6.8.7. While the main focus of these conversations is on supporting the learners involved, the matter may also require further action by IICP College in order to ensure that they are satisfying their duty of care to all learners. Therefore, it is important that learners are aware that this process is not confidential where it raises issues that may impact on the welfare or wellbeing of any person.

6.8.8. Other possible outcomes include the following:



6.8.8.1. Where concerns relate to personal or interpersonal difficulties, including allegations of bullying or harassment:

6.8.8.1.1. In this case the Care Team will, if appropriate, assist the learner to deal with and raise the issue informally and constructively with the other person or persons concerned.

6.8.8.1.2. If this approach does not lead to a resolution, or where the learner does not wish to approach the person(s) involved, then the Learner Care Team may, with the consent of the learner, approach the person(s) involved on the learner's behalf with a view to seeking assistance from them in resolving the matter locally.

6.8.8.2. Where concerns relate to matters impacting on progression:

6.8.8.2.1. Learners are reminded of the minimum standards required, any deadline applicable, and the implications of failing to satisfy these requirements.

6.8.8.2.2. Learning needs may be identified and a learning plan may be put in place with the learner. While the main focus of these conversations is on supporting the learner meet progression requirements, the matter may also be recorded on the learner file in order that this can be considered by examination boards.

6.8.8.3. Where concerns relate to disruptive or threatening behaviour:

6.8.8.3.1. In this case the Care Team will outline the minimum required standards of behaviour and the concerns relating to these in respect of the particular learner.

6.8.8.3.2. A behavioural improvement plan will be developed, if appropriate, and a review date set, as deemed applicable and appropriate, taking into consideration upcoming programme requirements.

6.8.8.4. Where concerns indicate a possible threat to the safety or health of another person, then Temporary Suspension on specified grounds of concern may be considered.

6.8.8.4.1. The behaviour and actions of a learner may raise concerns for the safety of the learner and/or the safety of others, prompting consideration of the need to exclude the learner from the programme of study temporarily, until safety and welfare concerns can be appropriately managed.

6.8.8.4.2. This decision can only be made by the Registrar and College President, in consultation with the Academic Council, unless the timescale involved could increase the risk to the health or welfare of any person.

6.8.8.4.3. Such a decision should be based on advice and guidance as deemed appropriate, and should be placed before the Academic Council as soon as is feasible.

6.8.8.4.4. The grounds for such suspension are that the Registrar and Director are of a view that the duty of care owed to others is overriding in the particular circumstances. The suspension shall not be regarded as an indication as to whether the grounds for concern is proven.

6.8.8.4.5. The suspension can only last temporarily, until appropriate time has been given to investigate and manage any potential threat.

6.8.8.4.6. The suspension will be reviewed regularly by the College.

6.8.9. Where a learner fails to comply with an agreement then the Learner Care Team may issue a warning in writing to the learner.

6.8.10. A copy of all correspondences is kept on the learner files. This may be used in demonstrating a pattern of behaviour in disciplinary proceeding, or in any official documentation regarding the learner.

6.8.11. A copy of the agreed plan and deadlines, and the implications of failing to satisfy this, must be communicated to the learner in writing where reasonably possible not more than five working days after the date of the meeting.

**Figure 1. Learner Welfare and Wellbeing Procedure**

