	POLICY TITLE	POLICY AREA:	VERSION:	DATE ADOPTED :
STNICHOLAS MONTESSORI	7.5 CAUSE FOR CONCERN	7) SUPPORT FOR LEARNERS	3.0	AUGUST 2020
STAKEHOLDE	Health Professionals		DEVELOP Study ski	MINOR ISSUE PROG TEAM TO RESOLVE INFORM REGISTRY
ACADEMIC PER (INC. ATTEND	Grades Attendance Work quality CAC DEFINITION Learning needs evaluation Verbal Email	C4C X Is in remit of LSO? X	> IMPROVEMENT Support), Subsistence
KEY END POINT INTERNAL EXTERNAL	Behaviour	1st or 2nd Revew?		PLEMENT PLAN
LEARNER FACULTY LEARNING SUPPORT OFFICER			×	Evidence Improvement C4C RESOLVED

Introduction and Context:

The purpose of this document is to outline SNMCI Cause for Concern process. It, also, states the means by which a Cause for Concern is identified and how the College will communicate about and respond to issues that are a Cause for Concern.

In certain instances, other SNMCI procedures may be happening in parallel with the Cause for Concern process or may be initiated as a result of the Cause for Concern process, for example, issues of concern that are related to fitness to study. If during the Cause for Concern procedures a learner is identified as experiencing circumstances that impact on their fitness to study the 'Policy to Support and Determine Student's Fitness to Continue in Study' is invoked.

This policy does not replace the College process related to more serious breaches of academic integrity. Issues of concern that relate to academic integrity are dealt with in line with SNMCI's 'Academic Integrity Policy'. (QA 7.8)

Issues of concern that relate to child protection are dealt with in line with the 'SNMCI Child Safeguarding Statement'.

Definition: Cause for Concern is when there are concerns about a learner's wellbeing that may impact on academic performance. These concerns may be academic, physical, emotional, spiritual, medical or behavioural.

Cause for Concern may include any of the following:

- medical: Illness: temporary or ongoing
- general health or welfare issues
- mental health concerns such as anxiety or depression
- dyslexia, dyscalculia or similar
- bereavement following death of close family member or friend
- financial concerns
- poor academic performance / or work quality
- poor attendance and /or punctuality
- failure to respond positively to informal advice and offers of support and first level warnings
- failure to complete or hand in work on time
- erratic or sudden change in behaviour
- lack of compliance with College regulations (filling in forms / bringing in medical certificates)

This list is not exhaustive or exclusive; situations of a similar nature will be dealt with in accordance with these guidelines.

Policy:

Many learners who present to College have prior or ongoing Cause for Concern. On enrolling in the College, learners are encouraged to disclose issues that are likely to affect their learning / academic performance and /or that have affected their learning / academic performance in the past. It is our experience that issues may resurface when a learner is coping with the normal stressors associated with College life and learning.

- On entering the College, each learner must attend a meeting with the Learner Support Officer (LSO). During this meeting they complete a Learner Wellbeing form.
- On entering the College, each learner must provide written consent for Learner Wellbeing information to be stored on the College server and to be shared with the relevant staff.

During their time in College, many learners experience circumstances that may result in Cause for Concern. They are encouraged to disclose issues that are likely to affect their learning / academic performance and to engage with staff to develop and agree an action plan.

It is important that both the learner and relevant staff are aware of any issue of concern at the earliest possible stage and that a supportive action plan can be agreed. It is better to report an issue of concern early. Waiting and hoping for an improvement may delay effective intervention.

Communication by Learners

- If an issue is common to many learners, learners are encouraged to communicate with the appropriate staff member through their Student Representative.
- Learners are advised to inform themselves of the names and of the roles of the various staff members from their earliest days in the College. They are encouraged to contact the **APPROPRIATE** College staff member with their query.
- Communications by learners with College staff may happen at the beginning or at the end of lectures, by email or in person by appointment.
- When a learner presents to a College staff member with an issue, the staff member will assess the nature of the issue with a view to resolving the issue.
- Depending on the nature of the issue the staff member may:
 - be in a position to answer the query immediately

- redirect the learner to the appropriate staff member
- inform the College staff member who can resolve the issue
- Many minor issues are dealt with quickly and effectively by following this procedure.

If a College staff member identifies a learner as experiencing circumstances that may impact on their learning / academic progress, this is dealt with as a Cause for Concern and the procedure outlined below is progressed.

Procedure Outline	Person/s Responsible	Records generated to ensure evidence of follow through
Cause for Concern procedures is a staged process. Occasionally, learners find themselves feeling overwhelmed by the demands of study or by the pressures of life. They experience difficulties, that are affecting or are likely to affect their learning / academic progress. In this instance, learners follow the Cause for Concern procedures as outlined below.		Correspondence
Procedures: Stage 1: may be activated in three ways.		Learner Wellbeing
a) Having identified themselves as experiencing circumstances that may impact on their learning / academic progress, learners email the LSO and request an appointment.	LSO/ Learner	Form/ Correspondence with staff /
b) The LSO emails the learner and offers them an appointment as a result of information received from other sources including information provided during completion of the Learner Wellbeing form or during application for Special Considerations.		Application for Spec Considerations
or		
c) Having identified a learner as experiencing circumstances that may impact on their learning / academic progress a College staff member emails the LSO, and alerts them:		
- that they have advised the Learner to seek an appointment with the LSO		
- that they wish the LSO to make an appointment with a learner (in this case the staff		
member has usually advised the learner that they are requesting the LSO to contact		Correspondence/

them) The staff member identifies the learner by their initials in this correspondence. Following receipt of the email, the LSO verbally communicates with the staff member as to the reason for referral and to verify that a meeting with the learner has been arranged.	LSO/Learner Staff member as appropriate	Minutes(LSO)
During a meeting with a learner experiencing circumstances that may impact on their learning / academic progress; when a Programme Director identifies that an extension for an assignment will be required as part of a proposed improvement plan the process for acquiring an extension is initiated, and the process as outlined at c) above is followed. (Note: a request for an extension for an assignment may happen outside of the Cause for Concern process.)		
 Stage 2: The LSO organises to meet with the learner. The circumstances that may impact on their learning / academic progress are discussed. Fitness to study is determined. If external support is not required or is already being accessed by the learner, a plan is devised. The LSO requests permission from the learner to share RELEVANT information with the appropriate staff members. 	Learner/ LSO/ PD/DPD	
The plan may be: (a) an improvement plan that includes strategies for the learner to implement. This plan may require discussions with / advice and input from other staff members; a joint meeting with the learner, LSO and the appropriate Programme Director. An individualised improvement plan may include: - individual or group sessions - devising an individual study plan	College/	Improvement Plan
 listing organisational / time management skills enlisting support from family, peers, staff members upgrading digital technology and / or study skills application for extension for an assignment application for deferral of modules 	College/ LSO/ Nominated Counsellor	

- application for deferral of placement		
This list is not exhaustive or exclusive		
(Note: a request for: an extension for an assignment, a deferral of modules or a deferral of		
placement may happen outside of the Cause for Concern process.)		
or /and		
 b) an intervention plan that includes external counselling support. 		
When external counselling is recommended / required, the College pays for four sessions		Intervention Plan
with a counselling psychologist who is accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI).	Learner/	
If necessary, additional sessions, paid for by the learner, may be organised with the	LSO/	
counselling psychologist. A date for review is decided	Staff as	
Stage 3:	appropriate	
 The learner implements the plan. The learner will engage with other staff members as necessary. 		
- Review meetings are held. If during the first or second review there is no improvement the		
plan will be revisited. If, upon the third review there is still no improvement fitness to study is		Updated plans/
determined.		Correspondence
- The LSO in consultation with the learner and other relevant staff members is satisfied that		
the Cause for Concern is resolved.	LSO	Final Report
- The learner is discharged by the LSO.		

Policy Control Sheet

Policy	QA 7.5: Cause for Concern
Version	3.0
Adopted/Effective	Aug 2020
Supersedes	2.0
Monitoring/ Next Review Date	Yearly/Aug 2021
Responsible Officer(s)	Learner Support Officer; DQAA; CEO
Designated Reviewer(s)	
Scope	College wide

References

SNMCI Policy area	7) Support for Learners Vol 2
Developed with reference to	QQI (2016) Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines
	QQI (2016) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed for Independent/Private Providers coming to
	QQI on a Voluntary Basis
	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), May 2015
	National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)
Related SNMCI Policies / Forms	QA 7.6: Fitness to Study

Revision

Revision Number	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
2.0/08/2020	General Review for Blended Learning	Office of DQAA	AB