

PETER SYMONDS COLLEGE

Protocol for Returning to College after a Traumatic Event

1. Context

In the event of a progressive or sudden traumatic experience it is often the wish of the young person and the parents to return to College as quickly as possible. This is at times supported by health professionals on the grounds that routine and stability are helpful for a young person's recovery.

These are all important factors but the College must be guided by the need to establish that the student is well enough to attend, to study and to manage their own safety as a full-time student of the College. The College must also determine the support that the student will need in order to do this and whether or not this support is in place.

2. Definition of a traumatic event

A traumatic event is an event that is or may be a cause of trauma.

We may see it in:

- Attempted suicide
- Significant self-harm
- Involvement in or witness to a traumatic event e.g. serious accident, personal assault, robbery, terrorist attack, natural or man-made disaster
- Sudden homelessness
- Sudden or unexpected significant bereavement
- Significant child protection or family events
- Involvement in a criminal event

The following link is for the Royal College of Psychiatrists which may be of use.
<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/healthadvice/problemsdisorders/copingaftertraumaticevent.aspx>

3. The process

In order to support a student who has experienced a traumatic event, the College must review the situation and gauge the best way to support the student. This will include a formal pre-return meeting convened by the Director of Curriculum & Support, the Deputy Principal (W&P) or another member of the safeguarding team. A member of the Study Support Team will also usually be present. The young person cannot return to College until this has taken place.

It is supportive to all concerned that the situation is understood and a clear agreement is in place with the approval of all concerned. This should then be communicated to all who need to know.

3.1. The meeting should ideally consist of the following people:

- Student
- Parent/carer
- Director of Curriculum & Support or Deputy Principal (W&P)
- Member of the Study Support Team
- Professional in support of the student where possible and desirable (e.g. social worker, mental health professional, counsellor)

- 3.2. The meeting should seek to establish the following:
- What happened
 - Whether there were any triggers to the event
 - What immediate and/or ongoing support has been made available
 - The current state of physical and mental health
 - Additional support that needs to be put in place in College or by external agencies.
 - The timescale for support being fully in place
 - Whether or not the student is well enough to return to College. This should include an assessment of whether or not the student can manage their own safety.
 - If it is judged that the student is well enough to return, the support plan with clear review dates that will be put in place to enable this to happen. The approval to return to College should be made explicit by the College staff in attendance.
 - If the student is not well enough to return, an agreement about what is to happen to support the student and enable them to return to College. A date should be set for a future meeting
 - An agreement about what information is to be shared with relevant staff including teachers. (The student should be made aware of what information has already been shared)
 - If the student is deemed well enough to return to study, a date for a review meeting should be agreed (usually after 3 weeks). This meeting should establish whether the support plan needs to continue or be adjusted as well any further support needed. If the student has made a positive return to College and the ongoing risks to their health and/or safety are low, this meeting may just involve one member of staff, the student and the parent/carer.
- 3.3. If there is a relapse the Deputy Principal (W&P) should be consulted and a meeting convened as appropriate.

Dates and attendees of all meetings, along with information gathered, decisions made, safety assessments and support plans agreed should be noted on the College's safeguarding records.

Information should be shared with those who have a need to know. This should include dates and attendees of meetings, support plans agreed, review dates, the name of the lead member of staff and any specific agreements made about involvement in class, attendance or completion of College work.

If a medical practitioner is supporting return to study, this should be documented in writing either in a letter or by email and stored on the student's file.

Return To Study After a Traumatic Event – Safety Assessment

Student Name:		Tutor Group:		Date of Meeting:	
Present at Meeting:					
Overview. Details of traumatic incident:					
Immediate or ongoing support that was / has been put in place:					
Current state of physical / mental health:					
Support still needed including timescale for this to be put in place:					
Is the student able to manage their own safety? What are the potential triggers, can the student recognise them and act to avoid a future crisis situation?					
Is the student deemed well enough to return to College?	Yes / No				

If 'No', what additional support needs to be put in place, by who and when?	
Information to be shared and with which relevant staff:	
Date of review meeting:	

If the student is deemed well enough to return to College a Support Plan should be put in place which must include the following:-

- The name of the member of staff leading on the student's case
- 'Safe' places in College for the student to access
- Named members of staff for the student to go to
- Strategies for managing crisis moments – actions the student will take
- Communication by parents about absence from College, arrangements for out of College support and medical updates
- Communication by College about student absence
- Dates of future absences needed for medical appointments
- A review date

The support plan might also include some or all of the following:-

- Regular check in with a named member of staff
- Subject or course modifications
- Quiet or appropriate work places for the student
- Expectations of attendance
- Expectations of work completed and involvement in lessons
- Support strategies agreed for the student e.g. exit cards, early departure from classes, use of Q code
- In-College referrals to support services – study skills, specialist study support, the Hub, counselling