Buckinghamshire College Group

Student Protection Plan 2026-28

Responsible Officer:	Chief Operating Officer
Date of issue:	September 2026
Next review date:	September 2028
Procedure available:	Intranet and Website
Policy Authorised by:	Executive

1. Purpose

The Student Protection Plan (the Plan) has been designed to provide assurance to current and future students that the College has appropriate arrangements in place to protect the quality and continuation of study for their students. It supports and complements other polices in place within the College that define and protect the experience that students have when studying at the College.

2. Scope

The Plan applies to all students currently studying on a programme led by the College, where directly through the College or via one of its partners as well as those applying for a future course.

3. Policy Statement

The following principles form the basis of the Plan.

- The College will seek to ensure that its study programmes as offered to students are completed as per the offer.
- The College aims to minimise any disruption to students as a result of changes to its provision that may be required.
- The College will consider how any planned changes will impact on its student populations, particularly with any perceived differences in the impact on different groups of students.
- The College will ensure it keeps students informed of changes that may be necessary as soon as possible and will continue to communicate with them to resolve any resulting issues.
- The College will inform any awarding or other regulatory body of circumstances that require the invocation of this plan (with the exception of changes to individual programmes).

4. Risk Assessment and Register

Risk assessment has been carried out with reference to the College's strategic risk assessment process that produces a register of strategic risks. This assesses identifiable risks, the inherent risk and how this risk is mitigated in order to give a residual risk assessment. The risk register reviews all risks across the College, however the ones most relevant to this Plan are:

- Partner arrangements – in relation to the partners who deliver tuition on behalf of the College;
- The quality of teaching which impacts upon student satisfaction and achievement;
- The recruitment, retention and development of the College's workforce;
- The continued financial viability of the College, including continued investment into infrastructure and facilities;
- The continued maintenance and availability of teaching facilities e.g. business continuity.

5. Principles that Minimise and Mitigate Risk

The mitigation that minimises the risks as referred to above is managed with reference to a number of key principles and ways of working within the College. These are as set out below.

a. *Effective leadership and management*
   The College has a published overall strategic plan in place (the current version is for the 6 year period 2023-2029) and monitors the delivery of that plan through the use of Key Performance Indictors (KPIs).

b. *Governance and monitoring*
The Risk Register is monitored and updated by the College's Executive and is also reviewed by the Audit & Risk Committee of the College's Governing Body on a termly basis. The Governing Body reviews the KPIs to assess progress through the year in meeting the annual targets. Targets may be adjusted and appropriate action taken as a result.

c. *The Quality Cycle*
High quality teaching is at the heart of student satisfaction and enhances student retention, attendance and ultimately achievement. The College has a comprehensive monitoring and improvement strategy for this Quality Cycle that includes:

- Practical monitoring of teaching quality via teaching observations;
- Development of teaching standards through overall and individual staff training;
- The appointment and use of Advanced Practitioners – who are "expert" teaching staff who are remitted time to work with other staff to improve the quality of teaching;
- Rigorous and regular monitoring of all quality data via quality reviews (structured meetings by faculty curriculum area);
- External, annual monitoring and verification reviews by all awarding bodies;
- Validation of high quality teaching by periodic inspections from Ofsted.

d. *People Strategies*
The College does not currently have an overarching People Strategy as such; however we do have a Recruitment, Retention and Reward Strategy that covers many of the same principles. This links these objectives into the overall College strategic plan and considers how the College may overcome recruitment difficulties and become an employer of choice within the Buckinghamshire area.

The strategy also considers the retention process for an employee, from the on-boarding point through to benefits, rewards and the opportunities for staff development.

e. *Feedback from Students*
The College listens to and takes seriously the feedback of students. This primarily happens through the student engagement team (SET) and student governors. Two student governors sit on the College's governing body ensuring that that the views of students are represented at the highest governance level within the College.

In addition, student surveys are carried out at least twice a year to gauge feedback at the widest level possible.

f. *The Annual Planning Process*
The College has a comprehensive annual planning process. In particular, this cycle sets out the course offering from the College and will respond to any required changes that may needed (as a result of recruitment levels or any other factor). On a day to day basis this feeds into the Quality Cycle as described earlier.

Any course closure or amendments are subject to a review process that is approved by the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality (a senior post holder position within the College). Should a course closure be proposed, the affected students (and any future applicants) will immediately be contacted to assess the impact upon them and look to minimise such. This may include transferring to the same College course at another of the College's campuses (see below), transferring to another College course or making arrangements with another provider to continue on the same or similar course. The decision taken will include reference to any perceived or unintended consequence for a particular student group or population. The College aims to ensure that students are given a minimum of 14 days' notice of any intended change to a course.

g. Business Continuity

The College has 3 campuses of its own based at Aylesbury, Amersham and Wycombe. The availability of these 3 campuses (along with our close links to Buckinghamshire New University) minimise the risk of not having appropriate facilities to carry out student learning. Should it be required, the College would arrange transport between campuses for any affected students. The College also maintains a business continuity policy to provide funding for potential events.

6. Commitment to the Continuity of Study

Wherever possible the College will seek to preserve continuation of study for all students who may be affected by changes as described above. In particular:

- The College will make every reasonable effort to ensure that lack of resources (through staff or facilities) do not impact students' continuation of study. The College has access to a wide labour market via temporary providers that will enable the teaching of courses to be completed, and;

- The College will make every reasonable effort to make available potential options for the continuation of study via learning resources, at an alternative campus or at alternative providers if it cannot complete the course of study itself at the campus of student enrolment.

7. Refund and Compensation Policy

Where it is not possible to arrange a suitable alternative provision for the circumstances described above, where they have been paid, the College will refund relevant fees as described in the College's Fee Policy. At its discretion, the College will compensate students for reasonable and evidenced other costs incurred by these students impacted by such circumstances.

Based on historical trends the amount of refunds within the College are extremely low (between 0.1-0.2% of income). Nevertheless, should this change the College has the financial resources to make such compensation. The College will continue to monitor the levels of refund to ensure the low historical levels of historical refund and compensation remain that way or which may require funds to be set aside to specifically fund the Plan.

8. Complaints

Complaints about the impact of any change resulting from this Plan will be addressed through the College's Complaints Policy and procedure that is accessible on the College website.

Equality Impact Assessment

Section One	
College:	Buckinghamshire College Group
Departments Effected:	Whole College
Who is responsible for the Equality Impact Assessment?	Chief Operating Officer
Title (of the policy/practice/decision)	Student Protection Plan
Description (Provide a brief description of the policy/practice/decision)	The Student Protection Plan (the Plan) has been designed to provide assurance to current and future students that the College has appropriate arrangements in place to protect the quality and continuation of study for their students

Section Two – Stakeholder Consultation		
2	Who are the main stakeholders and what consultation exercise are you planning to undertake, if required (e.g. consultation with Employee Voice, Trades Unions, Staff groups, Student groups?	Students
3	Are there concerns that this could result in differential or adverse impact on any Equality Groups (Protected Characteristics as identified by the Equality Act 2010)	No

Section Three

Please identify how the policy may impact the following protected characteristics:

- Identify any positive impacts the policy/practice/decision may have on equality groups.
- Identify any negative impacts the policy/practice/decision may have on equality groups.
- Propose measures to mitigate or eliminate identified negative impacts.

Protected Characteristics	**Impact High/Medium/ Low/N/A**	**Action(s) you will take to mitigate or remove the negative or adverse impact if identified?** Propose measures to mitigate or eliminate identified negative impacts
1. Age *(e.g. are there ways older or younger people may find it difficult to engage?)*	Low - positive	The policy aims to ensure that all groups are considered and treated equally and have an overall positive impact.
2. Disability *(eg do you need to consider large print or easy read?)*	Medium - positive	As above
3. Gender identification *(eg is your language inclusive of LGBTQ+ groups?)*	Medium - positive	As above
4. Gender Re-assignment *(eg is your language inclusive of trans and non-binary people?)*	Medium - positive	As above
5. Marriage and civil partnership *(eg does it treat marriage and civil partnerships equally?)*	Low - positive	As above
6. Pregnancy & Maternity *(eg with this have an impact on pregnant or those on family leave; breastfeeding services?)*	Medium - positive	As above
7. Race / Ethnicity *(eg does it take into account the needs of people from different groups)*	Medium - positive	As above

8. Religion or Belief *(eg do people from faith groups experience any specific disadvantage)*	Medium - positive	As above
9. Sexual Orientation *(eg is your language inclusive of LGBTQ+ groups?)*	Medium - positive	As above

Section Four – Monitoring and Review	
Does your criteria and procedure promote fairness and equal opportunities? *Utilise relevant data sources, such as demographic information, student feedback, or staff surveys, to inform the analysis as necessary*	Yes
How will you monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of these measures to determine whether it has been effectively and fairly applied	Effectiveness will be monitored through all quality processes, including implementation of the quality cycle, awarding body reviews, self-assessment reviews and Student Voice.

Section Five – Outcome, Sign-off and Authorisation		
Equality Impact Assessment Outcome Select one of the four options below to indicate how the policy will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision		
Option 1:	No change required – the assessment is that the policy is robust.	X
Option 2:	Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.	
Option 3:	Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified	
Option 4:	Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.	
Name & job title of authorised person	John McGrath Chief Operating Officer	
Equality Impact Assessment was completed on:	18/09/26	
Date of next review, and by whom? This may include regular reviews, data analysis, and stakeholder feedback	Chief Operating Officer September 2028	