

**STCG VALUES, OUR CODE OF CONDUCT AND THE ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOUR AND COMMITMENT TO STUDY (ABC) GUIDANCE**

This document presents our college values and sets out our code of conduct and ABC guidance. At STCG we hold a number of values that we believe are essential when creating a learning environment in which you, our students, can develop and achieve your goals. As you continue your education with us, we ask that you also hold these values in mind and use them to guide your learning, behaviour, and interactions with others.

It is important for all staff and students to understand our values because they strongly link to our code of conduct and some of the rules and expectations we have around attendance, behaviour and your commitment to study with us (otherwise known as the ABC guidance). These expectations are described in detail below.

**Our Values**

Our values that we should all **ASPIRE** and adhere to;

- We **Advance** together – striving to improve yourself and supporting the development of those around you. We value your growth as a whole person, supporting the development of other interests or skills that will contribute positively towards your future.
- We should be **Supportive** and act with Kindness and Compassion towards all those who make up the STCG community, including your fellow students, tutors, client care and all other staff. We know that in order to learn, it is important to feel safe and secure and we therefore expect those who work and study here to remain respectful, supportive and considerate of one another.
- We are **Passionate** about the College group as a Community of staff and students who will work together to create a safe, fun and supportive environment in which to teach, learn and develop. We believe that the quality of the relationships amongst those who spend time within our colleges, whether staff or student, is a key factor in positive educational and personal outcomes.
- We are all Tolerant and **Inclusive** – here at STCG acceptance of difference is extremely important and we welcome both staff and students from all walks of life. In fact, we actively seek a diverse and varied community because we believe that this results in a richer experience and contributes to the growth and development of us all.
- We are **Responsible** – you are accountable for and owning your future, the decisions you make and committing to achieving your goals. We encourage you to focus and learn.
- **Excellence**, we want you to reach your full potential and achieve.

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**Student Attendance, Behaviour and Commitment to Study Guidance and Procedures (ABC) (2023-2024)**

**‘Expectations for Success’**

The college values include aspirations for all students to achieve the learning outcomes that will help them in having an enriched quality of life.

**1 Introduction**

- i. The connection between attendance, behaviour and commitment to study and high achievement, progression and employability is clear.
- ii. This document sets out the values and procedures that the South Thames Colleges Group will apply to support all students into very good attendance, punctuality, learning behaviour and commitment habits and to completing work to the best of their ability (ABC).
- iii. The College records all relevant information on ProMonitor and expect all students to regularly update this through their view of the same tracking system; ProPortal.
- iv. The Student Code of Conduct is clear in our expectations; attendance should be 100% as should be the meeting of assessment deadlines, with consideration to agreed ‘reasonable adjustments’. The College expect the right learning behaviours, which embody the college values, in and out of the class; the College aim to support everyone to achieve their goals with us and the College are firm on the standards the College expect. The College measure attendance as physical presence, and included in this educational visits, work placements and work experience. The Student Code of Conduct is published on all college websites.
- v. As a part of our induction, all students on programmes are in a settling in period during the critical first six weeks of their programme (September – October). Provided attendance, punctuality and work-rate are good enough, the College will "sign-off" everyone who has been in the settling in period. This is a supportive procedure for all students to ensure they are on the right course and have the ability to sustain a successful studying experience.
- vi. The College will not allow students on study programmes to drop parts of their programme after the end of probation, for example a BTEC student dropping a GCSE or Functional Skills qualification or a GCE A Level student dropping one or more subjects. However, alternative academic pathways may be recommended or required when a student has not attended or produced work to an acceptable standard to provide sufficient assurance towards a successful outcome.
- vii. Following the settling in period and applicable to all our students, the College use a clear system described below for those few students who show poor performance in either attendance, punctuality, behaviour and/or their commitment to study, and sometimes a combination of all of them. If you are 16-18 on a Study Programme we will communicate with your Next of Kin/Parent / Guardian until the completion of your course, even if you turn 19 during that time. If students do not demonstrate the college values and this continues after agreed support has been put in place, disciplinary action may be taken which can lead to permanent exclusion.

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**2 The Values the College Expects**

**We ask students understand and follow the values of the college. If not, then the College has a process to support students, outlined below;**

- i. The following values apply to all students and are agreed not only with the Group's Leadership Team, but also the Student Representatives. These values relate specifically to ABC. Values relating to acts of gross misconduct are covered separately in the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

**3 The College Attendance and Punctuality values:**

- i. Excellent attendance is 95%+ Good standard is 90%+;
- ii. Satisfactory standard is 85%+;
- iii. Needs improvement attendance is 84% and trigger a Stage 1 support meeting;
- iv. Physical attendance below 75% will trigger Stage 2 or 3 support involving an enhanced action plan

**4 Consistent Lateness**

- i. Being late three or more times for the same class and applies particularly where this disrupts others' learning. Lateness after breaks is inexcusable and the College regards this as disruptive behaviour.

**5 Authorised Absence**

- i. Identified as job interviews (full-time), university interviews, hospital and GP appointments and treatments, orthodontic appointments, the funeral of a relative/close friend, recognised religious holidays, driving test (not theory), attendance at court/probation meetings, attendance at a College representatives' meeting and learners who are suspended (temporarily excluded). Infrequently, significant transport disruption may be authorised, but this would be a Cross-College decision allowed at the discretion of the Vice Principal.
- ii. To help clarify, the following would NOT be considered reasons for authorising absence; isolated sickness, "personal issues", baby-sitting younger siblings, relations or friends, waiting at home for arrival of a service/delivery, weddings and holidays. Where a student describes such circumstances, they must agree an action plan (SMART targets) in their ILP and have it signed-off by their Tutor.

**6 The College Learning Behaviour Values**

In addition to good or better attendance and punctuality the right learning behaviours include:

- i. Students showing respect for all and forming good working relationships with each other and all staff working with them;
- ii. Students consistently having the correct learning materials for the class;
- iii. Students following the instructions and activities set for them in each and every lesson;
- iv. Students taking increasing responsibility for their own learning, including showing commitment over the year and not giving up; engaging with additional activity and catching-up when required, for example, students always respecting the needs of other learners by avoiding behaviours that affect the learning of others.
- v. Students ask for help if they need support to understand, participate in the learning activity or implement a support strategy.

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**7 The Praise Strategy**

- i. The very large majority of our students enjoy and do well at college. The College believe it is important to celebrate progress and achievement and to that end the College records this on ProMonitor and from time-to-time in other ways including nominations for awards and prizes, this includes a commendation letter from the Vice Principal/College Principal.

**8 The College Stage Support Procedures**

The college has a set of values that everyone must agree to and implement. We feel it is important to follow these expectations to ensure a welcoming and safe environment for all students and staff.

The college understands that for some students, their journey through college may not be straightforward or that circumstances may arise in which a student requires more support. We want to work together with the student and their family/carers to support to the best of our ability.

If we feel that your behaviour is not in line with our college values we will act as per the guidance in our ABC policy. This will include the following stages of support:

Not chronological – can start at any stage

Stage 1 – Initial Support & concerns

Stage 2 – Enhanced action plan or Investigation

Stage 3 – Final outcome or Final Intervention

**9 Support and Intervention**

Heads of School and their Deputies as well as Heads of Section, or their delegates, will monitor the performance of students against the standards described above and they will support their colleagues in applying the values and procedures consistently and fairly.

**10 The Settling in Strategy encompassing two stages.**

These processes ensure students stay on track to succeed. There are 2 aspects to this process. This process may not start at Stage 1 depending on the concern that the college has:

Stage 2 – Enhanced action plan or Investigation

Stage 3 – Final outcome or Final Intervention

Heads of School will ensure that the following procedures happen and will invoke the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure where students do not meet our required standards.

- i. All students on new courses in the College are placed in the settling in period in their first six weeks, which is an opportunity to support students during their settling in process. The College expect that all students will complete this period successfully. However, for those few students who present attendance, behaviour and/or commitment to study problems in their first few weeks, the College will give students a Stage 2 enhanced action plan. This plan will identify clear improvement targets and further support to help students achieve their improvement targets.
- ii. A Stage 2 meeting will engage parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker of students below the age of eighteen will be arranged at this stage.

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- iii. Students who do not make sufficient improvement within two weeks (or before the review week) will be identified as at Stage 3 Final Outcome or Final intervention. A Stage 3 meeting will be arranged at with the Head of Section, or their delegated representative, they will present their evidence to the Head of School and the student will have their opportunity to present any mitigating circumstances or new information.
- iv. Students on a 16-18 study programme will have their parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker invited to this meeting. The Head of School will make the decision on the outcome of this meeting according to the Stage 3 factors described in the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. Where students at Stage 3 Final Outcome/ intervention have not made sufficient improvement, the final outcome/ intervention will be communicated in writing to the student and parent/guardian.
- v. In the case of exclusion, the right to an appeal exists. A student excluded through the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures may appeal to the principal. Such an appeal must be received, in writing, by the principal within ten working days from the receipt by the student of the written notification of the exclusion. The appeal should set out the grounds on which the appeal is to be heard as identified in the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.
- vi. If a student is excluded from the College, then this fact would be considered in any future application they might make to the College Group.
- vii. After the first six weeks of a new course has passed, the College uses a similar process of three stages:

## **11 Stage 1 - Initial Support & concerns**

- i. Students who do not follow the college values outlined regarding attendance, behaviour and/or commitment to study are invited to meet with course tutors and coproduce a support plan and targets to help the student understand and follow the college values. Key people e.g. parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker of students are informed of Stage 1 support: problem solving and planning.
- ii. The student will be given a written plan and partnership normally lasts for a minimum of two weeks and is reviewed weekly to measure the impact of support. Students may be kept at Stage 1 for periods greater than two weeks. Students who achieve the targets/outcomes set are formally "signed off". However, any student who completes Stage 1 successfully, but then does not follow college values later in the academic year move to Stage 2 support: Enhanced action plan.

## **12 Stage 2 – Enhanced action plan/ investigation**

- i. If the targets set have not met the desired outcome in Stage 1, then students will be invited to a Stage 2 support meeting to coproduce an Enhance action plan. This Stage includes a formal warning and new targets with support. A period of two to three weeks is normally set for this Stage. Key people e.g. parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker of students on a 16-18 study programme are informed of Stage 2 support and invited in to attend the Stage 2 meeting.
- ii. At this stage of the ABC process, students may not be allowed to take part in educational visits, residential field trips or to represent the College in either individual and/or team sports. In some circumstances the College may also put into place an internal exclusion which will help ensure a student does not go to any part of the Group where good learning or behaviour could be compromised.

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**13 Stage 3 – Final outcome or Final Intervention**

- i. If the targets set have not met the desired outcome in Stage 2, then students will be invited to a Stage 3 Final outcome or final intervention meeting with Head of department or a representative to discuss the evidence from the coproduced action plans. The student will have their opportunity to present any further information. Parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker of students on a 16-18 study programme are invited.
- ii. Students who are unable to respond to the support offered in Stage 2 Enhance action plan meeting are moved to Stage 3 Final outcome or final intervention. The Head of School will arrange a meeting at which the Head of Section, or their delegated representative, will present the evidence and the student will have their opportunity to present any mitigating.
- iii. The Head/Deputy Head of School will determine the recommended outcome which could include a final warning or a decision to exclude the student permanently from the College.

**14 Exclusion for ABC**

- i. Our aim is that very few students will be excluded through the disciplinary policy and process as a consequence of ABC, nevertheless, the College will see this process through where required and in the event of a permanent exclusion, this means a student may not be able to return to the South Thames College Group in the following year or years.
- ii. In the case of a final warning or permanent exclusion, the right to an appeal exists. A student excluded may appeal to the principal. Such an appeal must be received, in writing, by the principal within ten working days from the receipt by the student of the written notification of the permanent exclusion. The appeal should set out the grounds on which the appeal is to be heard as identified in the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.
- iii. Where it has been found that the targets and outcomes have not been met in the agreed action plan that align with the college values this will lead to exclusion. The exclusion may also apply restrictions to future enrolment in subsequent years and/or enrolment to all or specific colleges within the South Thames Colleges Group. Students not subject to any formal disciplinary warnings which has led to an exclusion will be entitled to enrol on a course in the subsequent year provided they meet the required entry criteria.

**15 Progression related to ABC**

- i. Where it has been found that a student has committed behaviour which possess high risk to self/others or behaviour which repeatedly does not demonstrate the college values and in breach of the student code of conduct this will lead to exclusion. The exclusion may also apply restrictions to future enrolment in subsequent years and/or enrolment to all or specific colleges within the South Thames Colleges Group. Students not subject to any formal disciplinary warnings which has led to an exclusion will be entitled to enrol on a course in the subsequent year provided they meet the required entry criteria.
- ii. The Group aims to support students back into good attendance and learning behaviour patterns and in the majority of cases that is the outcome. Individualized information, advice and guidance is available throughout the academic year cycle to ensure all learners are supported to progress to the right course for them at any given stage in their learning journey.

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**16 Suspension**

In some cases, students may be suspended from the college to allow an investigation to occur. All parties involved in the investigation may be suspended to ensure a thorough investigation can be conducted. If a student is suspended then they will have access to all relevant VLE and will be communicated with by their course tutor so they do not fall behind in their studies. Once an investigation has concluded the students involved will have access to the findings of the investigation.

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**Student Code of Conduct 2023-2024**

**Introduction**

**At STCG we strive to ensure all students achieve their potential. We hope to accomplish this through the values and working practices of every member of the college including teachers, pastoral staff, senior management, and the students.**

**This document aims to outline the values of the college group, which includes the expectations of both staff and students. We feel it is important to follow these expectations/rules to ensure a welcoming and safe environment for all students and staff.**

**1.1 What students can expect at the South Thames Colleges Group**

The Student Code of Conduct is agreed with student representatives, and we expect all students to know what is in the Student Code of Conduct, to follow it and generally to behave in a respectful, reasonable and acceptable manner and be courteous to other students, members of staff and visitors.

**1.2 As staff we will:**

- i. Value people equally respecting our democratic values of freedom of speech, appreciation of different beliefs, the rule of law and individual liberty and be kind, hard-working, respectful and polite at all times;
- ii. Give you clear, accurate and fair information, advice, guidance and support to help you choose a programme of study and include clear information about fees and financial support including bursaries;
- iii. Enable good progress and high achievement by delivering high standard of teaching and learning, considering our students’ neurodiversity.
- iv. Give you a good start to your studies with us through an induction programme and then support you by giving clear targets that help you progress;
- v. Provide learning resources and identify support which meet your needs; This includes differentiated learning resources that considers and validates the student's learning style and differences.
- vi. Ensure that assessments and progress reviews with you are fair, clear, regular and positive;
- vii. Give you regular and punctual feedback on your learning, verbally and in writing on your work and in your ILP/Moodle course site to include progress review reports for parents of students up to the age of eighteen via parents’ induction and progress review events;
- viii. Provide you with access to a range of enrichment and careers advice and university admissions advice services during your programme of study.
- ix. The College understands that for some students, their journey through college may not be straightforward or that circumstances may arise in which the student requires more support. We want to work together with the student and their family/carers to support the student to the best of our ability.

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**2 South Thames Colleges Group Values to follow**

2.1 As students you are expected to:

**2.2 Behaviour**

- i. Value people equally respecting our democratic values of freedom of speech, appreciation of different beliefs, the rule of law and individual liberty and be kind, hard-working, respectful and polite at all times;
- ii. Build resilience and understand that sticking at it and maintaining good learning habits are essential to your success, which includes good attendance, learning behaviour and commitment to study as set out in the ABC procedures and the willingness to act on the feedback the College gives you and the targets we set together;
- iii. Observe the Group’s Equal Opportunities Policy and value all members of the Group and visitors regardless of race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender or age;
- iv. Comply with any rules or reasonable requests which may be set by Group staff in specific areas e.g. the Learning Centre, any practical workshops, in/or during work placements;
- v. Meet the acceptable standards of conduct or performance as set out in any written information issued under the student disciplinary procedures;
- vi. Students reaching the age of eighteen during the College academic year (September- August) give us their consent to contact a parent/guardian and send them information about their progress and/or behaviour and any other relevant course specific information for the duration of their course. When a student reaches eighteen mid-way through a course they may remove their consent by writing to the College.

**2.3 We want our environment to feel welcoming and safe for all staff and students and therefore ask that you do not engage in;**

- i. Exhibit antisocial, aggressive and /or loud behaviour at any time including when travelling to and from College, and on any of our sites that either disrupts the learning of others or could give the Colleges Group a bad reputation. This includes the use of social media through posting either text, including sexting, or images, including video of such behaviour;
- ii. Verbally abuse people which is either bullying or harassment, including inappropriate and/or unwelcome comments, requests and messages on grounds of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, pregnancy, marital status, disability/learning difficulty or socio-economic status of another student, member of staff, visitor to the College or a member of the public. This includes use of social media through posting either text or images, including video;
- iii. Persist in failing to meet the acceptable standards of conduct or performance set down in any written information issued under the student disciplinary pro policy and procedures.
- iv. Exhibit physical, violent, dangerous, threatening, bullying, and intimidating conduct. This includes, for example the carrying/storing of offensive weaponry, including fireworks and knives, any conduct involving acts of indecency and vandalism.
- v. Dress in a way which is unacceptable or unsafe in a Group environment.
- vi. Steal or have unauthorised possession (with intent to steal) of any property belonging to another student, the Colleges Group, any employee of the Colleges Group or third parties connected to the Colleges Group (included in this is the non-payment of fees);
- vii. Gamble in any way.

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- viii. Behave in a way or commit an offence that brings the Group into disrepute wherever and whenever the offence occurs, including behaviour outside Group premises e.g. in the local area, on transport to and from any Group premises and at work placements;
- ix. Receive criminal penalties, for example: serious acts of violence, sexual assault or rape and/or failure to disclose a criminal conviction or caution, unless it is spent.

If we feel that your behaviour does not demonstrate our college values and rules, we will take action as per the guidance in our ABC document.

## 2.4 Working and Learning

**To achieve the values of the Group we ask you to:**

- i. Be completely familiar with the admissions guidance so that you complete your enrolment on time and pay all fees promptly when due;
- ii. Provide us with accurate and up to date contact details such as full name, address, contact telephone number/s, etc. at enrolment and ensure you keep these up to date by informing us of any changes;
- iii. Complete all parts of your programme of study including work experience and placements; iv. Physically attend 100% of classes and tutorials punctually explaining the reason for any absences and provide supporting evidence for such absence or lateness as required;
- iv. Follow college rules at all times, anywhere in the college. Mobile phones to be used with the knowledge and consent of teacher, or librarian, for example, for spell check, reminder for the day, self-instructions, calming app, or other resources necessities to help the students to succeed;
- v. Complete 100% of class-work, homework and assignments as directed by members of staff and to submit the work to the set deadlines and to the very best of your ability every time - aim high and set out to always meet and then beat your target grades;
- vi. Seek help and support from a Tutor or Student Support Services if necessary;
- vii. Take responsibility for your own learning by ensuring you communicate often with your teaching and tutorial staff, for example, by taking full part in our system of induction and progress review events;
- viii. Make learning successful for yourself and others by being a reflective, cooperative and collaborative learner;
- ix. Use ProPortal to record your progress, achievements and future plans regularly setting and reviewing SMART learning targets within ProPortal;
- x. Accept that the receipts of any allowances, grants, sponsorship funds or support funds are dependent on regular and actual attendance, satisfactory completion of class and homework. For many students this means compulsory Mathematics and English, which you must complete to the very best of your ability.
- xi. College recognises that students have differences in their learning style and neurodiversity. This means that students will work with college staff to identify and agree on strategies to help access learning e.g.
  - a. use of assistive technology/phones/devices for learning purposes e.g. communication, reminders, strategies, spelling, calming apps
  - b. use of strategies to support access to the physical environment in agreement with college e.g. hats/hoodies to support sensory processing needs, anxiety
  - c. To maintain good attendance and not physically attend below 85%

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- xii. To ensure we achieve the values of the Group we ask you not to:
  - d. not having ID cards visible and shown when requested
  - e. Use of mobile devices during lessons without permission from staff to enhance learning in college
  - f. Use of hats/hoodies without official permission
  - g. Antisocial behaviours that cause risk or harm to the person, others of learning environment
  - h. Not following the rules on off-site activities
  - i. Cheating, plagiarism on exams or assignments

## 2.5 Health Safety and Security

The safety of all students and staff is really important and at our college we want to create an environment, where those who study and work here feel safe and secure. For this reason, we ask you to...

- i. Wear your up-to-date group identify card or pass visibility, for example on your lanyard or pinned on your clothes. Present your identify card as required on entry to college and to show your card if requested by a member of staff;
- ii. Familiarise yourselves with the Health and Safety rules and emergency evacuation procedures and act at all times with due regard for your own safety and that of others
- iii. Follow specific health and safety rules and regulations applicable to use of specialist areas and/or equipment of the Group;
- iv. Be responsible for the security of personal items of equipment and clothing;
- v. Use any Group car parking facilities in accordance with Group rules and not park in reserved spaces.

We ask you not to...

- vi. Wear hats or hoodies whilst at college without formal permission
- vii. allow another person to use your College ID and/or disrespect the Group premises, facilities, equipment and environment;
- viii. Bring or encourage intruders into the Group;
- ix. Possess (other than those prescribed for medical conditions), supply or distribute alcohol or drugs or other illegal substances on the premises.
- x. Be under the influence of intoxication as a result of alcohol or illegal drugs (including prescription drugs used in an unauthorised manner).
- xi. Fail to comply with the general and specific Health & Safety Regulations which include failure to misusing fire equipment, smoking which includes 'vaping', except in designated areas and the more detailed Health & Safety Regulations in specialist areas such as engineering.

## 2.6 Looking after the Environment

It's important to look after the college facilities and learning equipment so everyone can access these to the best of their ability. To ensure this, we ask you to:

- i. Treat the Group buildings, facilities and equipment with care.
- ii. Seek approval before displaying any notices or posters around the Group premises.
- iii. Consume food and drink in designated areas only.
- iv. Report any damage to Group property or equipment to a member of staff.

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we ask you not to:

- v. Cause damage to any Group buildings, equipment, books or furnishings, or any property of others (including the dropping of litter or chewing gum or putting graffiti on Group property).
- vi. Carry out any acts of vandalism against the property of the Group, its staff, students, or visitors.

### **2.7 Use of Information Technology (IT)**

The use of technology is an important part of learning when at college. So you get the best out of your college experience we ask you to:

- i. Check your college email account regularly and at least once a week in term time so that the College can pass on key information to you.
- ii. Access the internet for educational purposes only.
- iii. Download information that is relevant to your course only.
- iv. The Group has rules to ensure the safe use of information technology.

We ask you not to;

- v. Use internet chat lines.
- vi. Access information on pornographic sites or to display obscene pages.
- vii. Access any other offensive or illegal online material such as extremist or violent content.
- viii. Abuse e-mail facilities and not to send others offensive material; iv. Photocopy more than one copy of any material, unless authorised by a member of staff.
- ix. Interfere with computer software or data belonging to, or used by, the Group.
- x. Change the Windows settings on any computer or load software or 'spam' e-mails or 'broadcast' messages or attempt any form of 'computer-hacking'.

The Group reserve the right to include any other issues not defined in this list as serious or gross misconduct should that occasion arise.

### **2.8 Generative AI (ChatGPT)**

- i. Students are responsible for ensuring that their assessments are written in their own words and properly attributed to sources, including any use of generative AI technology.
- ii. Inappropriate use of generative AI, such as copying and pasting answers without proper referencing, is strictly prohibited and considered academic misconduct.

**2.9 All these expectations can be summarised as being kind, hard-working, respectful, responsible and polite at all times.**