

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Name of policy	Attendance and Punctuality Policy
Name of person responsible	Rebecca Foreman Vice Principal Student and Learning Support
Highest body approving the policy	Senior Leadership Team
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Attendance and Punctuality Policy

1.0 Introduction

Levels of attendance have a direct impact on the success of our students. Learners are more likely to complete and achieve their qualification if they attend classes regularly. Students who arrive late have an impact not just on their own learning but also on the progress of the rest of the class. High expectations of attendance and punctuality will also be required by future employers. We need our staff to set and enforce, and our learners to comply with, high expectations of attendance and punctuality.

2.0 Main Principles

- The expectation is for 100% 'present' at all scheduled classes. The focus is on 'presence' rather than absence. Students should be in class ready for the start of their lessons; late is late.
- Students should know their own attendance levels and the regular review and reporting of attendance will be part of the student monitoring process. The measure of attendance will be 'present'.
- In order to reduce the amount of time students are not in class, either from sickness or other reasons, there will be high expectations and consistent processes to monitor, follow up and report on attendance.
- Any student absence will be followed up by a member of college staff within 24 hours. Students will be expected to explain in person the reason for their absence and the authorisation of absences will be limited to specific situations.
- There will be clear consequences for students whose attendance falls below agreed levels. Conversely high attendance will be recognised and rewarded.
- Attendance monitoring is part of the college quality processes. Responsibility for achieving high levels of attendance lies with Team Leader areas and will be part of the CRE and SAR processes.

2.1 Students with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties or Other Support Needs

If a student has a disability or medical difficulty that directly affects their attendance or ability to arrive on time this should be identified with the student and with Learning Support. We will work with the student to ensure that reasonable adjustments and support is in place and levels of expectation set accordingly. Any reviews or disciplinary actions will take into account and be responsive to the needs of students with disabilities, learning difficulties or other emotional, social or behavioural needs. Support will be offered and provided where appropriate

3.0 Expectations of Teaching Staff

Quality improvement is the responsibility of lecturers and course tutors, as well as managers. In order to improve class attendance the actions required by staff and learners are specified below.

Teaching Staff are expected to:

- Communicate clearly the College's high expectations: learners are expected to be present in 100% of classes and to arrive before the start of class ready to learn.
- Consistently reinforce the message that poor attendance or punctuality is not acceptable and where it falls below an agreed level this will lead to action, including possible disciplinary action or even exclusion.
- Provide students with clear instructions and a contact number to call in person if they are going to be absent that day; they must call in to report each day of absence.
- Accurately and fully complete each class register by the end of the session.
- Follow up each absence by a telephone call to the student within 24 hours. This can be done by the teacher, tutor or administrator as agreed by the team leader area.
NB check consent to contact home on IILP.
- Ensure that when a student returns, they complete a Learner Absence Form to be signed by the teacher and sent to MIS for register amendment. Attendance should only be 'authorised' for absences agreed in advance or for exceptional personal circumstances (see 8.0). Sickness without a medical certificate is not authorised but must be marked as sickness on the Learner Absence Form.
- Challenge any student who arrives after the start of the class. There is no '10 minute' rule. Complete a late book or follow up after the class has finished.
- Lateness must be recorded in the register with an 'L'. Late students should not be excluded from the class unless it affects health and safety.
- Ensure that attendance and lateness is monitored weekly by a specific member of the teaching team and the consequences as given below are followed.
- Openly and regularly discuss the attendance and lateness levels of a group or of individual students in class and tutorial sessions.
- Directly address issues of attendance/ punctuality in Individual Progress Reviews with targets for improvement set and monitored.

- Regularly obtain attendance reports for each group and discuss with other teachers, team leaders and curriculum managers (see 5.0 below).

4.0 Consequences

The level for measuring attendance will be the 'present' level. Where attendance is affected by authorised absence it may still be necessary to talk directly to the student. There are 3 stages of follow up which are part of the Behaviour Management process.

Stage 1 Formal Warning

This can be issued by any member of staff where there are initial concerns over attendance. There should be no more than 3 formal warnings before moving to stage 2.

Stage 2 Formal Absence Review Meeting with teacher or team leader (plus disciplinary warning if appropriate):

- Attendance: Below 85% 'present', or absent two or more sessions in a week or 5 or more absences in any 4 week period
- Lateness: late twice in a week or more than 5 times in any 4 week period or patterns of lateness
- Patterns of absence (eg every Monday, Key Skills lessons) or concerns about sickness occurring on a regular basis
- 3 authorised absences (this could lead to EMA (where applicable) being stopped for the rest of the term.

The review meeting should discuss reasons for absence, support where required and methods to catch up on missed work. The review meeting should be result in an action plan which is agreed to by the student.

Stage 3 Formal Hearing with Curriculum Head

- Attendance: Continued 'present' rate of less than 85%, persistent lateness or failure to improve since warnings or absence reviews
- If a second Disciplinary Hearing for poor attendance or punctuality is held, this can lead to final red warning or exclusion

5.0 Reporting

Attendance reports can be obtained from MIS reports on the intranet or for individual students via the e-ilp. Students can see their attendance on their course Moodle page or on their e-ilp

- Personal tutors will discuss attendance with individual students at their individual progress reviews. Any comments or concerns will be recorded on the e-ilp with actions to improve
- Personal tutors will report each week on the weekly and 4 weekly attendance of their group/course and discuss on a weekly basis with their team leader. They must also set up Absence Reviews as required
- Team leaders will report and discuss bi-weekly, on the weekly and 4 weekly attendance rates for their courses with their curriculum manager
- Curriculum Heads will report and discuss every 4 weeks on the 4 weekly attendance rates for their courses with their Vice Principal

6.0 Learners are expected to:

- Ensure that they attend all lessons on their course and arrive before the start of the lesson properly equipped and prepared.
- Inform their tutor in person, before the lesson by an agreed contact route, if they have genuine reasons for lateness or absence.
- Know how to find out and regularly look up their own levels of attendance on Moodle or their e-ilp
- Understand the expectations of attendance, the levels at which follow up action will happen and what the consequences will be.
- Always try to keep health and other appointments out of College hours where possible.
- Not take on work commitments that clash with time at college; any absence for work will be counted as unauthorised absence.
- Commit to complete outstanding work as homework from missed classes due to poor punctuality or attendance, with support as appropriate.

7.0 General Actions for Teaching Staff

- Ensure that learners who are behind with their course work and require extra help are given individual attention during ILPs or referred to Learning Support.

- Where appropriate parents/employers/schools should be involved to address issues of attendance and punctuality and for them to receive information on attendance and punctuality in the termly Reports to Parents.
- Ensure that classes start promptly and finish as timetabled; teachers should be in the room before the start of class ready to start at the scheduled time. Classes should start on time even if there are learners who may arrive late.
- Learners should not be excluded from classes due to lateness unless there is a very good reason, for example health and safety or the level of disruption.
- Ensure that class attendance is enhanced by good practice in teaching and learning. This may include a variety of activities that engage learners in challenging and interesting tasks, use of a variety of teaching styles and formative assessment feedback.
- Emphasise motivational factors such as career progression routes, expectations of employers, the value of the final qualification in the job market or progression to Higher Education, in order to maintain the learners' interest and determination to achieve.

8.0 Authorised Absence

An absence can only be authorised where:

- It is agreed in advance with a college teacher
- Every attempt has been made to schedule external appointments at non-college time

Authorised absences may include:

- Sickness supported by a medical certificate or doctor's letter
- Medical appointments
- Court appearances
- Work or HE interviews
- Appointments with government or voluntary organisations
- Funerals
- Religious holidays
- Driving Tests
- Curriculum agreed external events or work placements

An absence can be authorised by a college teacher for exceptional and unavoidable personal circumstances or by agreement with an appropriate college manager.

9.0 EMA Payments

EMA payments will be made on 100% attendance (including authorised absence and sickness) and no lateness in a one week period. If days or periods of sickness are occurring regularly, are affecting progress on course or if teachers suspect that sickness without a medical certificate may not be genuine, then a tutor can call the student for an Absence Review meeting and if appropriate refuse EMA authorisation.

Any absence including authorised absence which lasts longer than one week will be subject to review of payments.