

Attendance Policy 2020-21

Policy Type: Local
Approved by: AQC (Matt Smith, Assistant Principal – Pastoral)
Effective From: 1 October 2020
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Policy statement

The College expects students to maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality because both have a significant impact on the eventual grades achieved. In addition poor attendance and a lack of punctuality has an adverse effect on classroom dynamics and the ability for the teacher to implement their planned learning activities; in short the College does not tolerate poor punctuality or attendance.

This policy applies to all students and will be implemented by all teachers and Personal Tutors.

Policy aims

This policy aims to assist all students to take full responsibility for their attendance at College to enhance their learning, develop personal skills and promote high achievement, retention and successful progression into continued study or employment.

Specifically, the College aims to:

- Promote excellent student attendance;
- Support students who are experiencing genuine difficulties in attending College;
- Implement strategies to raise overall attendance and punctuality which are understood by all students, staff and parents/carers; and
- Implement attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures which are understood by all students, staff and parents/carers.

The College will do this by:

- Monitoring student attendance and punctuality for all scheduled commitments;
- Discouraging students from taking unauthorised absence at any time, and making clear to students and parents/carers the implications of doing so;
- Ensuring that there are effective procedures in place to deal with unauthorised or prolonged absence and poor punctuality;
- Identifying 'at risk' students quickly and taking appropriate action; and
- Emphasising to students that good attendance and punctuality is an important part of the College Charter.

Policy details

Our expectation is that students have 100% attendance and are punctual to all their scheduled commitments.

Punctuality

- If a student is late to a lesson or tutorial, the teacher must mark the student late in the register
- The student will be asked to explain why they were late
- Persistent lateness will be dealt with by the Personal Tutor as a disciplinary matter and may lead to the student's place at the College being withdrawn

Absence

- Students should not miss a scheduled commitment unless they have informed the member of staff before hand
- It is the student's responsibility to communicate effectively with the College in respect of all absences and to arrange to catch up with any work they have missed
- Failure to do so without a valid reason may result in a student being asked to pay a contribution towards the costs of their examinations or other forms of assessment, and/or may result in them being asked to leave the College

16-19 Bursary

Awards of bursaries will be dependent upon students maintaining attendance above 90% and displaying satisfactory behaviour at College.

For those students in receipt of the Guaranteed Bursary:

If a student's attendance is below 90%, the student will be informed that payments directly into a bank account will be stopped and the student will need to meet with the Health and Wellbeing Coordinator weekly in order to receive living expenses. This meeting will be supportive rather than punitive and will give the student an opportunity to discuss why their attendance is poor and work on ways in which it can be improved. If attendance continues to drop, living expenses may be reduced accordingly, paid only for sessions attended or stopped. This would always be discussed with the student first.

For students in receipt of the Discretionary Bursary:

Bursary Payments may be withdrawn if attendance drops below 90%. A meeting between the student and the Health and Wellbeing Coordinator would take place first to discuss.

Unavoidable absences for reasons such as a close family bereavement, religious festivals, College trips, university visits or a prolonged absence caused, for example, by long term ill-health or other extenuating circumstances would always be taken into account before bursary assistance is removed.

Dealing with poor attendance and punctuality

- The College will contact the parents/carers of all students whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern. The College will, if necessary, allow parents/carers to see their child's attendance via the parent portal
- Students whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern will be set clear and appropriate targets for improvement, and will be supported to achieve these targets. This is likely to be via an intervention from their teachers and/or Personal Tutor
- Students whose attendance or punctuality falls below 85% at the end of every half term will be sent an email copied into parents. This may also trigger the register to be turned on in the parent portal
- No compulsory enrolment, registration or examination fees can be charged to students aged 16 to 18 in full time or part-time education, other than in the following circumstances:
 - i. institutions can apply reasonable conditions of attendance in order to qualify for free examination entry.
 - ii. institutions **can charge** for examinations and resits as follows:
 - where the required attendance or completion of work has not been achieved;
 - where the student fails without good reason to sit the examination for which the institution has paid;
 - where a student resits an examination resulting from an initial examination failure;
 - where a student resits an exam with the aim of achieving marginal improvements in grades.
 - iii. institutions must ensure that requirements for attendance and coursework are applied reasonably. Absences or non-completion of coursework because of illness or other acceptable reasons should not be grounds for charging.
 - Normally, students whose attendance falls below 90% by the time examination or assessment entries are made may be required to pay a contribution towards the cost of assessment.
 - The College will continue to be sympathetic in the case of unavoidable absence and in these cases, is committed to offering support to address problems via The Fitness to Study Policy if this is appropriate.

Related Documents

Equality and Diversity Policy
College Charter
Code of Conduct
Fitness to Study Policy

Annex 1 - Covid 19 implications

Bigger Picture

Fundamentally we are not a distance learning provider and we do not currently have the expertise or resources to offer this provision adequately.

During lockdown we did our best with one year group. Things are very different now and, whilst we have learnt a lot from recent experiences, we still do not have the IT resources to offer distance learning as a universal option.

The DfE guidelines suggest:

"If vulnerable young people cannot attend education settings, for example, because they are self-isolating, you should maintain regular communication with them to ensure they are safe and accessing remote provision"

*"Remote education may need to be an essential component of delivery for some pupils, alongside classroom teaching, or in the case of a local lockdown. You are therefore expected to plan to ensure anyone who **needs to stay at home for some of the time** is given the support they need to make good progress"*

"Your strategies for remote and blended learning should be informed by the needs of teachers and learners and their respective home teaching and learning environments."

What is available

The College feels that the following should be available to students who are self-isolating. This will be shared with teaching staff in due course and you will note that there is limited impact on classroom teaching in the basic form.

- Access to class and curriculum resources via Google-drive and the College Study Directory.
- Students will have access to work via Google Classroom.
- Students will receive feedback via Google Classroom, College Gmail account and review data.
- Short 1-to-1 meetings with class teachers should be available three times per fortnight within the current timetabled lessons to check progress.
- Students will have access to class-only chat rooms via the Google Chat app.
- Some live streaming may be available for a limited number of classes. Expansion of this limited provision may be possible but would require a programme of staff training and hardware purchases, as well as increased wifi availability, together with correct procedures regarding what is streamed to meet data protection and student safeguarding obligations.
- Some recorded delivery may be available in some curriculum areas.

Other circumstances

The Health and Wellbeing Coordinator and the Tutor Team are aware that there are a number of students who are not self-isolating, but who would like to remain at home for various reasons, many of which are understandable and potentially valid. This number is small but may grow. At the moment guidance is as follows:

- A logged phone call from Tutor to discuss the situation to provide clarity about the reasons for the student not coming in. Are the reasons medical/mental health related? Is there a valid shielding reason?
- Conversation around the fact that we maintain that the best place for students is at College because:
 - Our alternatives are not as good as attending class, from a pedagogic perspective
 - We think that it is as safe as possible for students at College
 - The social implications of isolation are recognised
- Is there anything that we can do to make coming into College possible for this student?
 - If so - we can put a support plan in place
 - If not - and there is a valid reason (ideally supported by medical advice or similar) - agree a period of time (suggested Maximum of ½ term) whereby the student can access resources from home. Notify teachers and add the absence period on the register as shielding. Review the situation after this period.