

## Punctuality and Attendance Policy

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Person Responsible	Deputy Executive Principal – Teaching, Learning & Improvement
Approval/ review body	SLT
Frequency of Review*	36 months

*\* Policies will be reviewed more frequently if legal changes or good practice require*

Review History:		
Date of review	Reviewed by	Reason for review
November 2013	Deputy Principal	Changes to expectations of staff Title changes
June 2017	Assistant Principal, Teaching & Learning	Title changes, minor amendments
June 2021	Deputy Executive Principal – Teaching, Learning & Improvement	Minor revisions as part of the NKC harmonisation process.
October 2022	Deputy Executive Principal – Teaching, Learning & Improvement	Minor Revisions

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## **1. Scope**

- 1.1. This policy applies to the entirety of North Kent College (henceforth referred to as “the College”) and includes all campuses, satellite sites and Hadlow College.
- 1.2. This policy applies to all learners in all areas of the College, including all College accommodation as well as College transport, trips/visits, online educational environments, College related work placements or work experience.
- 1.3. The College’s aim is to provide an environment free from barriers to success and progression and to safeguard all.
- 1.4. This Policy applies to all learners on all programmes. This policy should be read in conjunction with the other policies of the College, including but not limited to, The Behaviour Policy.

## **2. Introduction**

Punctuality and attendance are important for many reasons. If a student fails to attend many of their classes, they are unable to gain the full value of their education programme and this could increase their risk of not achieving their qualification(s). Poor punctuality and attendance can be an indicator that something is wrong. Issues facing students include personal, social and economic factors.

- 2.1 Personal are defined as those which hinder their ability to arrive on time and commit to attending each session. It may be that they have members of the family to care for, have moved further away from the College or experience a new or continuing health problem.
- 2.2 Social are defined as those which are created by any other domestic issue and may be associated to them being placed in a vulnerable situation through harm by others or the misuse of substances.
- 2.3 Economic can be those covered by financial aspects, such as issues with costs related to travel to College, paying for lodgings or rent, or the responsibilities of providing for a family.

If one, or a multiple of these factors identified above, is affecting a student’s ability to fully take part in their course of study, then ultimately, they are at risk of not achieving a positive outcome and, may, as a consequence, withdraw or be withdrawn from their education programme.

Our focus as a College is to resolve issues causing poor punctuality and attendance, to improve engagement and to support in extenuating circumstances where a learner is unable to attend on time or regularly due to certain factors.

The College offers a range of support to students which can assist or advise with most of the personal, social and economic factors, although ultimately the student has to accept the support on offer, if they are to continue in the College.

It is important that all students know the expectations for attendance at the start of their education programme and the consequences for poor attendance or non-engagement. Parents will need to be informed where a student repeatedly has poor attendance/punctuality so that all involved are aware that they may be withdrawn or not be authorised for progression if attendance is low. The College will have annual targets for attendance, and these will be no lower than 90%.

### **3. Expectations of Staff**

Working with the Curriculum Teams, Curriculum Administrators are pivotal in the daily identification and tracking of learners as they alter absence marks to 's' (sickness) marks. It is also an expectation that tutors will monitor their own learners and identify if there is a pattern of absence emerging.

All Staff are expected to:

- 3.1. communicate clearly the College's expectation that students attend **all** classes, in order to maximise their chances of achieving their qualification aim(s) and desired grade;
- 3.2. follow up on all non-attendance which will put in jeopardy the student's place on the education programme. If attendance falls below 90%, the tutor/Head of Curriculum ("HoC") or Assistant Principal ("AP") will follow this up and where no satisfactory explanation is given, a letter will be generated by the Curriculum Administrator and sent to the student and parent/guardian and employer if the student is on a work-based programme. A phone call may be made, and a note added on eTrackr with the outline of the call for a record. Causes for concern should be generated by tutors for persistent absence without satisfactory explanation.

Where attendance is not at least 90% maintain, and where there is little reason offered for absences, a tutor should issue a Level 1 Disciplinary and inform the student, their tutors and the HoC to commence the disciplinary process. Subsequent attendance concerns will result in a Level 2 Disciplinary hearing held by the HoC at which a written warning and behavioural and attendance targets are put in place.

Persistent failure to comply with expectations may result in a recommendation for withdrawal being made by the HoC to their Assistant Principal, who may either sanction withdrawal at this stage (if the breach is clear without any mitigating circumstances) or convene a Level 3 Disciplinary, where parents are brought into a meeting, which will likely result in a final written warning (please refer to The Behaviour Policy for more details).

- 3.3. Discuss punctuality with all late comers. Lateness, in minutes, must be recorded in the register. In dealing with issues surrounding punctuality, it is important to be non-judgmental. We must not tolerate poor timekeeping but we should always be tolerant of students. We should always bear in mind that students may have good reasons for being late but may not want to discuss this in class so should be dealt with away

from lessons in a sensitive way to ascertain the reasons. We are however, making our learners 'work ready' so we need to instil good habits for both attendance and punctuality as they would in a work environment;

- 3.4. ensure that issues related to punctuality/attendance are addressed in tutorials and SMART targets for improvement are set and monitored using eTrackr;
- 3.5. ensure that classes start promptly and finish as timetabled and that the required number of hours are taught;
- 3.6. ensure completion of electronic registers accurately on the day by 4.45pm, and at the early part of a lessons where possible, particularly in English and maths when other staff will be reviewing registers to help with the follow-up of those non-attenders;
- 3.7. You can allow late arriving students into the session at an appropriate point, unless there is a very good reason, for example health and safety concerns in a practical session, whilst challenging and recording this lateness. Where 25% or more of a lesson has been missed due to lateness, it should carefully be considered whether to admit to the session), and tutors should direct learners to study privately to avoid disruption to the class; no attendance mark will be given and the learner will be expected to return to the lesson at the end to discuss with the tutor the work they have completed away from the lesson during their timetabled time. This is one of the College Expectations made clear to all;
- 3.8. involve, as appropriate, parents (and employer if appropriate) to assist the curriculum lead in addressing issues of attendance and punctuality, identified through progress review tracking; and
- 3.9. ensure that the Curriculum Administrator ("CA") is advised by the tutor with regard to each day of non-attendance by an Apprentice. The CA will respond according to the record of reporting agreement with the employer, (e.g. phone call to employer, letter if attendance drops, termly or half termly detailed attendance report).

#### **4. Expectations of Students**

Students are expected to:

- 4.1. ensure that they attend all lessons on their education programme and do so punctually;
- 4.2. arrive for lessons properly equipped and prepared whether online or face to face;
- 4.3. contact the College at least one hour before the commencement of class, if they have genuine reasons for lateness or absence;

- 4.4. endeavour to keep routine health and other appointments out of College hours, where possible or provide written evidence if appointments do conflict with lessons;
- 4.5. contact the College using the e-notify system where it is in use by the curriculum department; and
- 4.6. all students attend all elements of their education programme, which may include English and/or maths and that the same high expectations and levels of attendance are expected at these subjects too and failure for consistently high attendance/punctuality in any of these components can result in escalating our concerns through a more formal disciplinary process as per The Behaviour Policy.

## **5. Actions**

- 5.1. Heads of Curriculum and the Senior Leadership Team will monitor the punctual start of lessons through spot checks;
- 5.2. All courses are monitored for attendance weekly by the HoC and their AP;
- 5.3. Standard letters can be generated (please refer to appendices for standard letters which can be adapted to suit the needs of the student);
- 5.4. The curriculum leads will review the weekly reports and PowerBi dashboards and every curriculum tutor will review their own attendance logs to determine which learners should receive phone calls and/or letters regarding attendance;
- 5.5. All HoCs are responsible for informing Curriculum Administrators if there is a valid reason for the letter not to be sent; and
- 5.6. After issuing letters expressing concern, and the use of the Disciplinary process, where appropriate, and offers of support, unexplained non-attendance can automatically result in withdrawal from the education programme after a four-week period of non-attendance has elapsed according to the funding rules.

## **6. Safeguarding - Missing Persons**

- 6.1. We have a duty to safeguard our students. For a 16–18-year-old, we will report that a student has not attended at College within 48 hours. We will phone or send a text to students who do not attend to the emergency contact. It is then the responsibility of that contact and the student to come back to us.

## Appendix 1

**Letter 1 – whilst a letter is written to the student a copy should go to the parent, and parents should have been contacted by phone if possible.**

Dear

The College takes the welfare of all its students very seriously and I see from our records that you have been absent for .... week(s). I have tried to contact you but unfortunately without success. *[If appropriate, add: Your attendance had been excellent up to this point and I would like to congratulate you on that.]*

I am concerned and would like to know if you are well and that you are still enjoying your education programme. I very much want you to continue with your programme and to achieve your qualifications. Your attendance at College is obviously very important if you are to achieve success.

If you are unwell or away from College for some other reason, I would be grateful if you could let me know. It may be that you are not happy on the course and, if this is the case, I would like to talk with you about this and discuss your options.

As you know, the College has support services available and it may be that I could put you in touch with these if that would help. (optional addition: Equally, if you are unavoidably away from College, it may be that I could make notes and work available to you through Moodle, so that you can continue to work from home.)

Your lecturers have missed seeing you at College, and I would be very grateful if you could phone or email me as soon as possible on \*\*\* to let me know how you are.

Many thanks

Yours etc

## **Appendix 2**

**Letter 2 – writing to the student with this, should also have a letter written to parents to inform them that their child has been withdrawn.**

Dear

Further to my letter of \*\*\*\*, I write now to confirm that, as I have not heard from you for a period of four weeks, I have no option but to withdraw you from your education programme.

Please feel free to contact the College at any time if you would like any careers advice or support in the future.

I regret this outcome and would like to wish you well for the future.

Yours etc