



Punctuality and Attendance Policy

Author	Deputy Principal
Date	November 2013
Person Responsible	Director, Teaching and Learning
Approval/ review body	SMT
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
October 2012	Vice Principal and Academic Group	This policy has required a complete review due to changes in the demographics of those attending courses and the funding requirements of central government.
November 2013	Deputy Principal	Changes to expectations of staff Title changes

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1. Introduction

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

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.

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.

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 chosen course of study, then ultimately they are at risk of achieving a positive outcome and may, as a consequence, leave the programme.

Our focus as a College is to resolve issues causing poor punctuality and attendance, rather than to judge students on the basis of assumption.

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 want to accept the support on offer, if they are to continue in the College.

2. Expectations of Staff

Working with the Curriculum Teams, Curriculum Administrators are pivotal in the daily identification and tracking of learners and all absence reporting for each department will go through their office.

Staff are expected to:

- 2.1. communicate clearly the College's expectation of students to attend **all** classes, in order to maximise their chances of achieving their qualification aim and desired grade;
- 2.2. follow up on all non-attendance which will put in jeopardy the student's place on the course. If unauthorised attendance falls below 85% in any one week, a letter will be generated by the Curriculum Administrator and

sent to the student and parent/guardian and employer*¹. Persistent lateness will be referred to the Curriculum Manager, generating a 'Cause for Concern Notice'. Any student who is issued with three notices should be referred to the Director;

- 2.3. challenge 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 may not tolerate poor-timekeeping but we should always be tolerant of students. We should always bear in mind that students may often have good reasons for being late but may not want to discuss this in class or with their lecturer;
- 2.4. ensure that issues related to punctuality/attendance are addressed in Personal Learning Plans and SMART targets for improvement set and monitored;
- 2.5. ensure that classes start promptly and finish as timetabled and that the required number of hours are taught;
- 2.6. ensure completion of electronic registers accurately on the day;
- 2.7. allow late arriving students into class 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;
- 2.8. involve, as appropriate, parents and employer to assist the Curriculum Supervisor in addressing issues of attendance and punctuality, identified through progress review tracking; and
- 2.9. ensure that Curriculum Administrator is advised by the tutor with regard to each day of non-attendance by an Apprentice. CA responds 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.

3. Expectations of Students

Students are expected to:

- 3.1. ensure that they attend all lessons on their course and do so punctually;
- 3.2. arrive for lessons properly equipped and prepared;
- 3.3. contact the College at least one hour before the commencement of class, if they have genuine reasons for lateness or absence; and
- 3.4. endeavour to keep routine health and other appointments out of College hours, where possible.

¹ For those students who are studying a work-based learning/apprenticeship route

4. Actions

- 4.1. Directors and the Senior Management Team will monitor the punctual start of lessons through spot checks;
- 4.2. All courses are monitored weekly by the Curriculum Administrator with reports sent to Directors for analysis;
- 4.3. Courses with persistent low attendance rates are reported monthly to the KPI/Audit Group by the MIS Manager;
- 4.4. Issues identified through the KPI/Audit group are discussed, actioned and followed up through 1-1 meetings between the Director and Deputy Principal;
- 4.5. Standard letters will be generated via information from electronic registers. (Please refer to appendices for four standard letters which can be adapted to suit the needs of the student);
- 4.6. Curriculum Administrators will run a report on Friday mornings and issue the relevant letters;
- 4.7. All Curriculum Supervisors are responsible for informing Curriculum Administrators if there is a valid reason for the letter not to be sent; and
- 4.8. After issuing letters expressing concern and offers of support, unexplained non-attendance will automatically result in withdrawal from the course after a four week period has elapsed.

APPENDIX 1

Letter 1

Dear

I see from our records that you have been absent from College for a week. We have tried to contact you, but without success. *(If appropriate, add: Your attendance had been excellent up to that point, and I would like to congratulate you on that.)*

I am concerned to know that you are alright and that you are still enjoying your course. We very much want you to continue with your programme and to achieve your qualifications. Attending College is obviously very important if you are to achieve success.

If you are not well 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, then I would like to talk with you about this and discuss your options.

As you know, the College has a range of support services available and it may be that we could put you in touch with these. Equally, if you are unavoidably away from College, it may be that we could make notes and work available through Moodle so that you can continue to work from home.

We 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 what is happening.

Many thanks

Yours etc

APPENDIX 2

Letter 2

Dear

This is just a reminder to say that you have now been away from College for two weeks without making contact. We have tried to telephone you and I wrote to you last week asking you to get in touch with me.

I am really very concerned to know what the problem may be and to be able to offer you help and support in dealing with whatever may be troubling you.

I would ask you therefore please to telephone or email me on *** as soon as possible

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours etc

APPENDIX 3

Letter 3

Dear

It is now three weeks since you were last in College and we continue to hear nothing from you, despite our telephone calls and letters.

You should know that if you are absent for a further week without any explanation, we shall have to withdraw you from your course. This is a requirement of our funding body. Consequently, if you do not make contact with us, I shall have no option but to withdraw you, reluctant as I am to do this.

I would therefore very strongly urge you to contact me as soon as you can on ***. It would be a great shame if you were to be withdrawn without us having the chance to talk things through with you. As I have said on earlier occasions, the College has a great many support mechanisms available to you. It also has a Student Services Department which would help you to perhaps find an alternative course. They could certainly discuss your career options with you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours etc

APPENDIX 4

Letter 4

Dear

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

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

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

Yours etc