



**Cheshire College  
South & West**

## Learner Attendance Management Policy

Key Information	
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ELT Post Responsible for Update and Monitoring	Vice Principal – Innovation, Curriculum and Quality
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## **1 Aim/Scope**

- 1.1. The College is committed to achieving a high level of learner attendance and engagement because it is vitally important for the attainment, life chances and employment prospects of our young people.
- 1.2. Attendance at all lessons and activities, as directed by the College, is critical in helping learners achieve their full potential. The College expects all its learners to recognise that good attendance and punctuality will maximise achievement and enhance not only the learning experience but develop learners' employability skills and prepare them for the world of work.
- 1.3. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and Fitness to Study policy which all provide supportive mechanisms for success. This policy will not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, against any individual on grounds of sex, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, disability, or any other personal characteristic.
- 1.4. All staff are responsible for the task of monitoring, challenging, and tackling poor attendance. All staff are responsible for their individual learners i.e., the lecturer, the Personal Development Tutor (PDT), the Inclusive Learning Adviser (ILA) for learners with EHC plans.
- 1.5. The term learner is used throughout this policy and any applying appendices, the term incorporates FE learners, adult learners, A level learners, apprentices and Higher Education (HE) learners.

## **2 Expectations and Responsibilities**

- 2.1 All learners are expected to attend all lessons within their Study Programme, course or apprenticeship including college organised events and learning activities, work experience placements, tutorials, English and Maths lessons.
- 2.2 It is the responsibility of the learner to inform the College of any known reasons for absence in advance. Failure to do so can result in the absence being permanently unauthorised.
- 2.3 It is the responsibility of the learner to inform the College on each day of absence. All absences ~~due to illness~~ should be reported before 9:00 a.m. via the College Absence App.
- 2.4 It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the College of any extended period of absence using the College absence telephone line.
- 2.5 Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the PDT/ILA if they are aware of any factors that may impact on their child's ability to attend college. The College will provide appropriate help and support, in conjunction with the parent/carer, to minimise any disruption to learning.
- 2.6 To enable rigorous attendance monitoring, it is the responsibility of the teacher or assessor to ensure all registers are completed within the first fifteen minutes of a lesson. This is a requirement for safeguarding and allows the College to send communication texts and emails to the learner and to the parent or carer of any absent learners.
- 2.7 It is a legal requirement for all College staff to accurately record learner attendance and absence. All staff are responsible for promptly communicating any attendance concerns to the learner and parent or carer in a timely manner.

## **3 Registers**

- 3.1 To enable accurate and timely attendance monitoring, all registers should be marked promptly and accurately. All registers must be marked at the start of the timetabled lesson to capture information. Learners new to the class must be added as provisional learners.
- 3.2 Any exceptions to register marking must be authorised by MIS or ELT. Examples of exceptions are; specific requirements for the use of paper registers, exam days or where registers are marked outside the timetabled lesson for a trip or visit.

- 3.3 Staff have a responsibility to immediately report issues with taking registers to their Assistant Director.
- 3.4 Register marks should be reviewed at the end of the session to ensure accurate recording of any late register marks. Non-compliance and recording of false information may result in disciplinary action.

#### 4 Attendance Reporting

- 4.1 All learners are expected to maintain excellent levels of attendance. In cases where an absence is unavoidable, the learner must notify the College using the College Absence App. Providing the absence is due to a valid reason, the absence will be authorised with supporting evidence where required.
- 4.2 Absence authorisation is anticipated to be by exception for individual learners. Where a learner reports an absence on the College Absence App, the Attendance Officer will evaluate the learners' circumstances with the PDT/ILA and Assistant Director and/or Personal Development Manager.
- 4.3 Parents and carers wishing to report an absence are advised to call the College absence line. Providing the absence is due to a valid reason, authorisation can take place without any further need for evidence.
- 4.4 Within the Apprenticeship offer it is possible that the employer may request an adjustment to planned on and off the job training which results in absences needing to be authorised. All such instances must be approved by the Assistant Principal with responsibility for Apprenticeships.

#### 5 Reason for Absence

- 5.1 Any learner who is taking part in a College residential, educational visit organised by the College, attending a College examination will be marked on the register accordingly. The learner is not required to submit a request for authorised absence.
- 5.2 Where the correct reporting procedure has been followed the following reasons for absence will be recorded as authorised.

Reason	Evidence Required	Person
Family bereavement / Close family funeral	Yes	Learner/Parent/Carer
Caring responsibility	Yes	Parent/Carer
Disability related illness	Yes / Disclosed Need	Learner/Parent/carers
Jury Service	Yes	Learner
Probation / Court Appearance	Yes	Learner
Religious Holiday	Yes	Learner
Medical appointment	Yes	Learner/Parent/Carer
University Interview – Pre-agreed	Yes	Learner
Meeting with External Agency - pre agreed	Yes	Learner/Parent/Carer / External
Visit to Open Day	Yes	Learner
Driving test	Yes	Learner

(Table 1: Reasons for authorised absence)

- 5.3 Any absence because of disability will be reviewed by the PDT and/or the ILA to ensure appropriate mitigations and support are in place.
- 5.4 In exceptional circumstances, an absence not listed in *table 1* may be authorised by the Assistant Principal **Learner Services** or ELT (e.g., significant weather disruption, suspensions or safeguarding), details must be recorded on ProMonitor and the PDT/ILA informed.
- 5.5 The following reasons **are not considered** valid for the purposes of attendance monitoring. This list is not an exhaustive list:

- Holidays during term time
- Sickness
- Covid
- Job commitments / working
- Leisure activities
- Family and other celebrations
- Babysitting
- No money for travel
- Shopping
- Caring for others (not caring responsibility)
- Driving lessons
- Employer's busy period
- Working from home / self-study
- Worker visiting home
- Any appointments that can be made outside college time e.g., dentist or opticians

## 6 Recording and Monitoring Lateness

- 6.1 Learners are expected to arrive promptly for all classes. Learners who arrive more than five minutes after the start of a lesson must be marked as late. Persistent lateness must be challenged in the first instance by the teacher, and if necessary, dealt with through the attendance escalation procedure.
- 6.2 It is the responsibility of all learners to plan a suitable amount of travelling time. For example, if travelling by bus they should ensure that they are at the identified pick-up point at least 5 minutes before the service is due.
- 6.3 If the College bus does not arrive on time the learner should initially contact the transport company to confirm if the service is running or late (*contact details on bus pass*) preferably before leaving the pick-up point.
- 6.4 Learners should attend lessons promptly. Learners must arrive to the lesson ahead of the start time to ensure they are marked as present, arriving after the start time will result in the learner receiving a 'late' mark on the register.
- 6.5 Learners who arrive after the register has been completed must ensure the lecturer changes the register mark from absent to a late mark before leaving the classroom.
- 6.6 Attendance texts will be sent to learners and parents where a learner is absent from lessons when the register is taken.

## 7 Absence Reporting and Management

- 7.1 Please refer to *table 1* for the classification of authorised absence. Any reason other than those listed in the table will not be a valid reason for absence, they will not be authorised but instead recorded as notified.
- 7.2 The Attendance Officer will closely monitor notified absences and liaise with the PDT Team Leader and the Be Safe team to ensure all absences are genuine and to confirm there is no known safeguarding risk.
- 7.3 To maintain the integrity of the Study Programme and ensure learners have fair access to qualification success, learners who miss elements of their study programme, particularly for avoidable or unauthorised absence, such as holidays during term time, will be required to "pay back" missed learning hours.
- 7.4 For all hours missed the College will calculate the total number of learning hours lost. Learners will then be expected to make up these hours by participating in additional learning activities arranged by the curriculum team and recorded on ProMonitor as wider learning hours.
- 7.5 All hours completed through the "pay back" system will be formally recorded and tracked on ProMonitor under wider learning hours. These hours will then be categorised as engagement hours.
- 7.6 When monitoring learners' attendance and progress, consideration will then be given to the learners authorised attendance rate and their engagement hours ~~to form a total engagement rate.~~ This measure will provide a more accurate reflection of a student's commitment, effort and progress.
- 7.7 For those learners who are accessing funding through Advanced Learner Loans or the Student Loans Company, the College is required to report actual attendance to timetabled sessions only, "pay back" hours

cannot be included in reported attendance for funding purposes, this is a compliance requirement set by external funding bodies and the College must ensure accurate and auditable attendance records for all loan-funded learners.

- 7.8 Learners who do not report or notify the College of an absence will receive a text message reminding them to attend their next lesson. A copy will also be sent to the parent or carer.
- 7.9 The Attendance Officer and PDT Team Leaders will closely monitor all notified and authorised absences and contact learners or parents/carers if appropriate. PDTs/ILAs will also be alerted to learner absences.
- 7.10 Any learner who regularly does not contact the College to report an absence will be contacted at home and their parents or carer advised of the absence concerns. All Safeguarded or Vulnerable learners will be contacted each day of absence.
- 7.11 Learners, parents and carers can view a learner's attendance on Parent Portal.
- 7.12 Learners with persistent poor engagement and attendance will be reviewed at weekly At-Risk meetings with the PDT, Assistant Director and Learning Support. Supportive actions, attendance interventions and SMART targets will be discussed before agreeing to escalate attendance and engagement concerns through the attendance escalation procedure. Learners must be given the opportunity to engage in "pay back" and improve attendance with realistic time scales before sanctions are considered.
- 7.13 The Attendance Officer, PDT, ILA teams, PDT Team Leader and the Be Safe team will use ProMonitor to record appropriate information relating to learner absences. Where safeguarding concerns are identified these will be recorded within CPOMs software and reported via the 'Be Safe form'.
- 7.14 All information will be used to identify learners at risk of leaving College or failing the course.
- 7.15 Subject teachers will contact learners who fail to attend their lessons. Teachers should continue to complete ProMonitor to record the impact of the absence and actions taken to support the learner. It is important that subject teachers work closely with the Personal Development and ILA teams to challenge learner punctuality and/or attendance.
- 7.16 Attendance is a Key Performance Indicator for the College. The PDT/ILA, Personal Development Team Leaders, Personal Development Manager and Assistant Principal Learner Services will monitor attendance data on a daily and weekly basis.
- 7.17 Where an apprentice does not attend timetabled college lessons the College will record the absence and report the absence to the employer.
- 7.18 The College manages attendance at work placement closely for apprenticeships and T level programmes, and ensures employers are made aware of any reason for absence. Similarly, the College works with employers to ensure the College is aware of any nonattendance at the placement.

## **8 Absence During the College Day**

- 8.1 Should a learner need to leave for exceptional circumstances within the College day, they should gain approval from the or Assistant Director before leaving the premises. If the Assistant Director is not available then the PDT Team Leader or Personal Development Manager will be able to authorise the learner leaving the premises. Parent/carers should be notified before the learner leaves the premises and take the necessary steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the learner. This should be recorded on ProMonitor.
- 8.2 Teachers are responsible for following up on non-attendance in lessons. Dedicated times at the end of the College day are reserved for lectures to contact parents/carers directly to ensure learners are encouraged to attend and to communicate missed learning content.

## **9 Managing Poor Attendance**

- 9.1 All learners are **expected** to have attendance of at least 90% (target) with aspirational attendance 93% and above. Learners with attendance below 90% will be closely monitored and learners with attendance below 88% will be considered to have low or poor attendance.

- 9.2 Should a learner's attendance become a concern, the College will initiate its Attendance Escalation Process to ensure timely support, intervention and accountability
- 9.3 Relevant information from the 1:1 meeting will be shared with the curriculum teams so that the learner can be supported to engage with learning.
- 9.4 When meeting with the learner, the PDT/ILA will carefully consider the learners fitness to study. Where fitness to study concerns are identified a referral by the Assistant Director should be made to the Safeguarding, Behaviour and Welfare Manager who will lead a fuller review under the Fitness to Study Policy.
- 9.5 The PDT/ILA will continue to closely monitor attendance and support all learners identified as having poor attendance through daily monitoring, reports.

## **10 Supporting a Learner After a Period of Absence**

- 10.1 The College is committed to supporting the learner on their return to college to ensure that they have not been disadvantaged by their absence.
- 10.2 This support may require the learner to attend on their study day or at a designated time until all missed learning hours are "paid back".
- 10.3 Materials and activities available to support the above will be made available, often on the College's Virtual Learning Environment or through other means where appropriate.
- 10.4 Regular monitoring and 1:1 meetings with the PDT/ILA or tutor will take place until the learner and lecturers are confident sufficient progress has been made. The Academic Coach can also support with catch-up learning.
- 10.5 Learners "paid back" hours, the resulting progress and actions should all be recorded on ProMonitor.

## **11 Attendance Management**

- 11.1 In the first instance, absence should be managed by the PDT/ILA and class tutors. Any mitigating circumstances affecting attendance and adjustments will be agreed by the Assistant Principal Learner Services.
- 11.2 Where learners' attendance does not improve, the attendance escalation process can be used.
- 11.3 Where a learner exhausts the attendance escalation process, the Assistant Director will request that the Assistant Principal will determine the most appropriate outcome for the learner. This could lead to a withdrawal for attendance or an exclusion for non-attendance.
- 11.4 At any point in the process, the Assistant Director can refer the learner for Fitness to study. Reasonable adjustments should be made for learners with EHC plans.