ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Contents

1. Scope

Wiltshire College and University Centre (WCUC) recognises that regular absence from college can be an important 'early warning sign' that a student is at risk of not completing their study programme. Working with students and their families is crucial to improving attendance and working collaboratively with parent/carers is usually effective especially where it is emphasised that the presence of the student has been missed in class and wellbeing checks are conducted.

Student attendance and punctuality will be regularly monitored and where appropriate the Student Absence Procedure detailed in this Policy will be initiated.

2. Purpose

- To highlight and ensure that all students understand the importance of attending and engaging with all lessons and learning opportunities, including work experience/placement as required by their course.

- To highlight and ensure that all students understand that persistent, non-justified absences and/or lateness means that they are in danger of not achieving their qualification.

- To ensure that students commit to completing outstanding work as a result of absence and/or lateness, with support as appropriate.

- Where applicable, students understand that professional bodies or awarding bodies may have different requirements for attendance and that failing to meet these requirements could mean they will fail aspects of their course.

- To highlight and ensure that all students understand that failure to attend a lesson or learning opportunity on time disadvantages them and can negatively impact on academic success and future aspirations.

- To understand the responsibility of students to attend on time where group work and collaborative learning is taking place, and the negative impact non-attendance and/or lateness will have on other students.

- To ensure the register system is used for all sessions or activity to record all student attendance on the day of attendance.

3. Definition

Attendance - means being physically present at the session or learning opportunity, arriving on time and staying for the duration of the session and accessing sessions remotely where this is planned on the course timetable.

4. Expectations of the College

- Students are expected to attend 100% of their study programme on time and be ready to learn.
- Programme timetables will be established prior to the start of a programme to facilitate the production and use of registers as soon as the programme begins. Subsequent timetable changes will be coordinated via MIS to ensure that registers are always up to date.
- Lateness will always be challenged by all staff and a learner comment recorded on Pro-Monitor.
- Where absence is unavoidable for work experience/placement the student must call the absence line before their start time. The register for that absence will be populated with an 'R' to show that they have reported their absence. This notification will be noted on the daily absence report which will be made available to the Placement Officers and Programme Leads, so they are aware of the absence.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure all missed work, due to absence from a lecture or learning opportunity, is covered and understood at the first opportunity.
- It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements due to absence from a work experience or industry placement to ensure the hours are made up at the first opportunity in negotiation with the Work Experience Team.
- For students in receipt of 16-19 Bursary / 19+ Bursary / Advanced Learning Loan Bursary the Programme Lead will ensure that if the absence is to be recorded as 'authorised' that they submit the relevant evidence which is indicated in **Appendix 1** prior to the event. **(Appendix 2** details what is considered as 'unauthorised absence' for clarification).
- Registers are a formal auditable document used by the College to record attendance and punctuality. The College will ensure this record is consistently marked and accurate.
- To ensure the accurate marking of registers, this is a contractual requirement for all teaching staff and non-compliance with these procedures will be taken seriously. It is the responsibility of the Head of Faculty (HOF) to ensure all lecturers are made aware of the register marking codes and trained in the use of the electronic register system. **See Appendix 3** for register marking codes.
- The College, via the Programme Lead and course teams, will monitor attendance using the College electronic system.
- All session registers should be completed during or immediately after each session. In circumstances where, by virtue of the activity being undertaken, this is not practicable registers will be completed by the end of that day.
- In circumstances where access to the electronic register is not possible the lecturer will use a temporary paper register and transfer the information to the electronic record by the end of the day.
- In circumstances where the scheduled lecturer is absent the substitute lecturer has the responsibility for ensuring the register is completed before the end of the working day. In exceptional circumstances, where there is no substitute lecturer or supervisor, then the class will be cancelled, and the register marked with the 'cancelled class' mark **(X).**
- Data collected regarding attendance will be stored and used in compliance with the Data Protection Act. Please refer to the College's Data Protection Policy for further information.

N.B. Should a student become unwell whilst at College and they wish to go home (under 18 or up to 24 where an EHCP is in place), they must not leave college until there is an agreement made with their parent/carer and arrangements made for transportation. For Pre-16 students the 14-16 School Link Mentor must be informed so they can inform the school of the action taken.

5. Attendance

Authorised and unauthorised absences are contained in Appendices 1 and 2.

Action to take for an unauthorised absence: -
- For cases of persistent non-attendance or late arrival to sessions the Programme Lead will consider a meeting with the student and/or parents to discuss these concerns. Setting SMART targets and reviewing these regularly will support the student. However, before such action is taken consideration should be made about the personal circumstances, mental health, or educational needs of the student. Inclusion & Support should be contacted if a student has an EHCP in place. *If there are any special or mitigating circumstances referral of that student should be made to the Campus Safeguarding Lead.*

Implementing the Policy - Staff Procedures and Guidance

- For the College to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality it is essential that all registers are marked in an accurately and timely way.
- Text messages will be sent to all parents/carers for students that have missed a lesson. This is sent once the register has been marked.
- Students are normally expected to make medical and other appointments outside of timetabled hours. However, we appreciate that some appointments such as hospital appointments are arranged without consulting with the student and where these have been notified to the College in advance they can be recorded as notified absences. When authorising absences staff will need to explore where absences are likely to affect a student's learning and consider: -
  - Whether the case is reasonable
  - The number of absences taken by the individual
  - Repetitions of the same justification
- Contact the student and in the case of under 18-year-old students their parent/carer/employer to ascertain the reason for the absence as soon as practicable. Wherever possible the student should be asked to attend unless there is a valid reason for their non-attendance.
- Record all contact made on ProMonitor to include a record of the discussions, reasons and information given during the discussions. Relevant staff should be 'tagged' into the comment.
- On the first day back in learning the absence should be followed up by the Programme Lead and an explanation sought for the absence, draw the student's attention to the policy, discuss any missed work and record the actions on ProMonitor.
- Should a pattern or non-attendance emerge the Programme Lead should follow this up at the earliest opportunity with the student and their parent/carer/employer for students who are under 18 years old recording the discussion and actions on ProMonitor.
- Programme Leads will identify students who have fallen below the college targets and will take appropriate action. This may include discussing the concerns with the student, setting SMART targets linked to attendance and punctuality within Pro-Monitor and for students under the age of 18, communicating concerns to parents/carers.
- Staff will ensure any absences of a student identified as Looked After or at the request of the Campus Safeguarding Leads are reported in a timely manner to safeguarding. This is to prevent any delay in implementing the appropriate action to support these students.
- In the event of the student not contacting the College to report an absence it is the responsibility of the Programme Leads (Full-time students), Assessor (WBL students) or subject teacher (Part-time students) to ensure that a student is contacted in line with college priorities to investigate the reason for absence and the likely return date.

- Programme Leads will provide relevant support and guidance to students with issues regarding attendance and engagement; safeguarding concerns should be raised on MyConcern to enable the safeguarding team to review and take any appropriate action to support the student which may include a referral to an internal or external support network.

If the level of non-attendance is judged to be unacceptable then the Positive Behaviour Policy should be used. Prior to any warning being issued staff must be able to evidence the following: -

1. Students are advised about attendance requirements and the importance of attending all lessons through induction and course handbooks.

2. Procedures for student notification of absence and lateness should be made clear to all students at induction and reinforced throughout each academic year.

3. All non-attendance and lateness have been followed up in line with the above process and recorded on ProMonitor.

4. Evidence of discussions with student, parent/carer and/or employers are recorded on Pro-Monitor.

5. Evidence has been gathered for any emerging patterns, for example: non-attendance after weekends, absences for full or partial days, missing particular lessons such as English and Maths.

6. Student has had an individual meeting to discuss attendance and punctuality with their Programme Lead which is recorded on ProMonitor. Interventions to improve attendance and/or punctuality will be agreed, with SMART targets set on ProMonitor which are reviewed weekly.

7. Attendance letters have been sent home to parent/carers for under 18 students.

8. Student has been invited to a meeting with their parent/carer/employer as appropriate to discuss concerns around their attendance and punctuality and agreed SMART targets are recorded on ProMonitor which are monitored weekly.

9. Support identified has been put in place for any personal or pastoral issues that have affected attendance or punctuality.

10. Student has been discussed in team meetings and identified as 'at risk' where attendance has fallen below benchmark. This should be reviewed weekly by the Programme Lead.

11. Where SMART targets are not met and attendance and punctuality remain a concern, the Programme Lead will follow the Positive Behaviour Policy and issue a Stage 1 written warning.

It may be relevant for students identified in the following categories to have some level of flexibility with their attendance and/or punctuality if they have been disclosed: -

- Young Carer
- Looked After Children
- Care leavers
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers children
- Students with identified strategies in the Education, Health and Care Plan

6. Associated Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Positive Behaviour Policy

7. Equality Impact Assessment

Wiltshire College & University Centre strives to ensure equality of opportunity for all students, local people and the workforce. As an employer and a provider of education, the College aims to ensure that none are placed at a disadvantage as a result of its policies and procedures. It is intended that this policy and procedure is fair to all. Where any part could potentially lead to unequal outcomes, the policy then justifies why this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

8. Data Retention Statement

Wiltshire College & University Centre is committed to ensure the data it collects, and holds is in line with the ICO's guidance and meets data protection law. Where appropriate a Data Protection Impact Assessment will be undertaken as and when policies are updated to ensure risks to the individual and college are considered and managed.

For further information please refer to Wiltshire College & University Centre's Data Protection Policy.

9. Policy Review and Ownership

This policy and procedure are owned by the Director of Safeguarding and Student Services It will be reviewed periodically in light of developments in employment legislation, good employment practice or audit; and to ensure it continues to be relevant and supports operational effectiveness.

10. Amendments Log

Version	Date of Issue	Amendment summary	Author(s)
V1.1	30/01/2024	For approval	Jo Kelly
V1.2	17/7/24	Approved by P&Q	Jo Kelly

Appendix 1- 16-19 Bursary / 19+ Bursary / 23+ Advanced Learning Loan Bursary Authorised Absence

If a student wishes an absence to be recorded as 'authorised, they must inform their Tutor/Course Lecturer prior to the event and provide the evidence indicated in the table below.

Reasons for Authorised Absence	Evidence required
A planned medical appointment	Appointment card or letter
A special religious holiday	Letter from parent/carer or student (if living apart from parent or guardian)
A university/college open day or university/college/careers or job interview	Letter from parent/carer, university or employer or Careers Adviser
Work experience that is an integral and agreed part of a course	Appropriate written evidence for the reason of absence
An emergency needs to look after a family member or other person for whom the student has a caring responsibility	Letter from parent/carer or relevant social service. Programme Lead authorisation
Attendance at a probation meeting	Appointment letter
Participation in a Community-Campus activity, including representing the course or college in inspections/agreed student involvement events and sporting activities	Programme Lead authorisation
Bereavement and attendance at a funeral of a close relative or friend	Parent/carer/Social Services letter
Severe disruption to transport (strike action/severe weather/serious road accident)	Confirmation from Student Services
Driving test	Appointment card/letter/date on driving test booking app
Jury service	Notification letter
Severe weather conditions that cause the closure of the college or recommendation that students from certain regions do not travel to the college	Positive instruction – e.g., 'Salisbury Campus closed due to snow, timetable will run as normal via Teams.'

Appendix 2 Unauthorised Absence (consider the description of absences – authorised/unauthorised)

Unauthorised Absence reasons -the College does not authorise absence for the following reasons
Sickness Periods during which a student is suspended from college under the College's disciplinary procedure Holidays Part-time or full-time work which is not part of the student's course Leisure activities Birthdays or similar celebrations Non-essential child-minding or looking after people for whom the student is not identified as a carer Shopping Driving lessons Medical appointments which can be arranged outside the scheduled programme timetable ***if you are unsure whether an absence should be authorised or not please discuss with your line manager.**

Appendix 3 - Register Marks (copy of MIS Register Marking Instructions)

/	Present	This is used when a student arrives on time for a lesson
0	Absent	This is used when a student is absent from the classroom for the duration of the lesson without authorisation e.g., illness – this will affect bursary payments
P	Placement/work experience	This is only to be used when a student is out on placement/work experience. This can only be used by MIS. Any requests to mark students on registers as placement must go to MIS Business Partners.
L	Late	Used when a student arrives late for a lesson; tutors should follow college policy
M	Left Early	This is used when a student leaves a lesson early or does not come back to lesson after a break; tutors should follow college policy
H	Working from home	Learner is not attending lessons but is engaging from home. This can only be used by MIS. Any requests to mark students on registers as working from home must go to MIS Business Partners.
A	Authorised Absence	This mark is to be used for students where an absence is authorised for reasons in the list below: • Planned Medical Appointment • Specialist Religious Holiday • University Open Day or Interview • Careers or Job Interview • Probation Meeting • Student Life Activities • Bereavement/Funeral • Disruption to Transport • Driving Test • Jury Service • Severe Weather Conditions • ESOL Agreed Absence for Shift Pattern • Suspended • Trip • Sickness/Injury • Working from Home/Distance Learning • Placement/Work Experience • Home Office Meeting • Family Commitments
C	Course complete	This mark is used when a student has completed the course earlier than planned and is therefore no longer required to attend the lesson. Such circumstances should be agreed by the Head of Faculty and Head of MIS.

I	Injury/Sickness	This mark is used when a student is absent for a long period due to an injury or sickness, stopping them from attending their lessons. If a lecturer wants to assign this mark to a student they must contact their MIS Business Partner.
T	Transferred	This mark is used when a student is no longer required to attend the lesson. This may be because they now attend an alternative session, or they have been transferred off the course.
W	Withdrawn	This mark is used when the student has been withdrawn from the course.
E	Exam	This marks is used when the student is attending an exam scheduled at the same time as the register session. If a lecturer wishes to mark a session with this mark, they must contact their MIS Business Partner.
X	Class Cancelled	This mark is used when the class has been cancelled by the lecturer/tutor.
R	Recorded Absence	This mark is used when the college has been notified of the student's absence e.g., parent has rung to make us aware the student is unwell.
G	Trip	This mark is used when the student has not been able to attend as they are on a trip organised by the college.

Appendix 4 - Attendance Concern Flow Chart

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  2+ absences in one week/3+ over two │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Discussion with student –           │
│  record on ProMonitor                │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
        ↓                    ↓
┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
│ No further       │  │ Further absences │
│ absences         │  │                  │
└──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
        ↓                    ↓
┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ No further action│→ │ Discussion with student  │
│ unless further   │← │ and parent –             │
│ absences occur.  │  │ record on ProMonitor     │
└──────────────────┘  └──────────────────────────┘
                                 ↓
                      ┌──────────────────┐
                      │ Further absences │
                      └──────────────────┘
                                 ↓
                      ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                      │ Meeting with curriculum tutor │
                      │ & student – notify parent –   │
                      │ record on ProMonitor          │
                      └──────────────────────────────┘
                                 ↓
                      ┌──────────────────┐
                      │ Further absences │
                      └──────────────────┘
                                 ↓
┌────────────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ If a parent is unable  │← │ Meeting between curriculum    │
│ to attend the meeting, │  │ tutor, student, and parent –  │
│ they will be informed  │  │ invite curriculum –           │
│ it is going ahead and  │  │ record on ProMonitor          │
│ the outcome            │  └──────────────────────────────┘
│ communicated to them.  │                ↓
└────────────────────────┘  ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                            │            Review            │
┌────────────────────────┐  │ Student and parent to attend │
│ 4 Consecutive Weeks of │  │ – college representation to  │
│     Non-attendance     │  │ be agreed prior to review    │
│                        │  │ dependent on concern         │
│ 4 weeks non-attendance │  └──────────────────────────────┘
│ from all sessions will │                ↓
│ result in withdrawal   │  ┌──────────────────┐
│ from programme of study│  │ Further absences │
└────────────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
                                         ↓
                            ┌──────────────────────────────┐
                            │ Review with HoF/DH &          │
                            │ Curriculum Tutor and refer to │
                            │ Get Ahead for support if      │
                            │ appropriate                   │
                            └──────────────────────────────┘
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