



BOLTON COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY 2019-2020

1. Policy Statement

The College has an expectation that students attend all of their lessons. Attendance refers to the scheduled time spent on College programmes, and this can be categorised as classroom lessons, lectures, workshops, work placement, on-line learning, or tutorials and one-to-one progress reviews as specified in the student's learning agreement or individual learning plan.

Regular and consistent attendance is expected and is critical to any student's success and achievement of their learning goals. The College expects all students to recognise that good attendance and punctuality will maximise achievement and enhance not only their achievement but develop their employability skills.

High expectations of attendance and punctuality will be required by future employers and therefore staff set and enforce high expectations for attendance and punctuality.

All students should aspire to have 100% attendance and punctuality.

For the first time in 2019/20, the College will have access to the school attendance rates of students. This information will allow the College to take a much more forensic approach to attendance management. The College will now move to attendance targets per team/area which will allow for realistic **aspirational targets** to be set at student level. However, the basic principle of full and punctual attendance must continue as the fundamental ambition for student conduct.

Student Welfare:

Genuine short and long-term absences and absences arising from substantial personal difficulties will be fairly assessed and monitored by curriculum teams in conjunction with Learning and Development Mentors (LDMs) outside of the absence process and recorded appropriately on registers.

All authorised absences should be supported with documentary evidence e.g. hospital appointment letter. Evidence should be copied and retained as it may be required by auditors.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all further education students.

3. Responsibilities

All students are expected to:

- attend all of their timetabled sessions which make up their study programme, unless prior agreement has been made and agreed with the tutor;
- return promptly after any timetabled break. Failure to do so will result in a late mark being recorded in the register. Three late marks will trigger an intervention from the teacher.
- obtain permission from tutor at the start of the session if required to leave class earlier than set finishing time (attendance will be recorded on register);
- arrive at the start of the sessions properly equipped and prepared;
- enter the class quietly with minimum disruption and explain their lateness to the tutor at an appropriate point in the session;
- contact the absence line (number on the front of the ID card) by 8.30am on their first day of absence explaining their absence and indicating its duration;
- retain and provide evidence to support the reason for absence;
- inform their LDM/course tutor if a prolonged absence is planned to discuss the possibility of an alternative study arrangement. In addition, students can contact Student Services, if they wish to discuss reasons for prolonged absence, and where additional support can be offered;
- arrange medical appointments, driving lessons, and any other appointments that are non-emergency in their own time; and
- ensure that any part-time work undertaken outside their college programme does not clash with their timetabled sessions.

Students who consistently breach these responsibilities will be subject to the College's Behaviour Contract or Disciplinary Procedure

All staff are expected to:

- be in the classroom, prepared and ready to start their lesson on time and where possible no less than 5 minutes before the beginning of the session (allowance should be taken where the tutor has no clear break between classes but expectation that classes will start on time).
- Allow students into the classroom and provide an early engagement activity prior to start time (allowance should be taken where the tutor has no clear break between classes but expectation that classes will start on time).
- Absence monitors will attend all morning and afternoon sessions for English and maths 16-18 and follow up any unauthorised absence with telephone calls the student and parent (if the student was aged 16-18 at the outset of the course). Outcomes will be reported back to the English and maths and vocational teams.
- Teaching staff will follow up all unauthorised absence in sessions other than English and maths with telephone calls to the student and parent (if the student was aged 16-18 at the outset of the course).

- All staff to ensure that the lateness procedure is followed i.e. in a late mark being recorded in the register. Three late marks will trigger an intervention from the teacher.
- Heads of Area/Curriculum Leaders should ensure that classes are fully covered for staff absences or rescheduled for suitable alternative times; under no circumstances should classes be cancelled and students sent home for this reason.
- All tutors are expected to complete the electronic register at start of or during the session, where this is not practicable the register to be completed by the end of day. This is the formal auditable document used by the college to record attendance and punctuality. Non-compliance with this procedure is taken seriously by the College.
- Curriculum Leaders and Heads of Area are expected to regularly analyse attendance and punctuality records for every programme and this to be made a priority for weekly team meeting agendas to monitor that appropriate interventions have been made.
- Timetables for every full-time programme are to be available to individual students prior to the start of the course to facilitate the production and use of registers as soon as the programme begins. Any subsequent changes to be kept to a minimum in order to ensure registers are accurate and up to date
- In any instance where the scheduled tutor is absent, the curriculum leader has the responsibility for ensuring any substitute tutor completes the register in an accurate and timely manner
- Individual absences by a normally good attender will be addressed by tutors in order that learning that has been missed is discussed and the student is clear on what he or she needs to do to catch up. These interventions must be recorded in the intervention log by the tutor. Absences by students with erratic attendance or those who appear in the daily Consecutive Non-attendance report (CAN report) issued by the Personalised Learning Leader will be addressed and actioned by the LDM.
- Any issues arising from an unauthorised absence e.g. student does not return after break, should be addressed on the first day they occur or immediately after the teaching session.
- Managers will scrutinise attendance patterns by class and provide support where needed to ensure that levels of attendance are maintained.

4. Absenteeism and Lateness

Each case of absenteeism is different and will be treated individually. The College accepts that many valid causes of absenteeism exist and will work with students on an individual basis to best address the needs and wants of each student.

Retention Officers and teaching staff must ensure that all unexplained absences are followed up on the first day using the most appropriate means to ensure timely intervention (text, phone call, email, letter etc.).

LDMs/course tutors are also required to monitor student attendance (via registers/EBS agent reports and SiD student at risk monitoring tool) and to address issues of absenteeism according to this policy.

Teaching staff are expected to make a professional judgement on whether an absence is authorised in advance (explained). This judgement will also consider whether equality issues could have any bearing on the student attendance levels, and make suitable allowances where this occurs. Examples could include: attendance at recognised religious events or festivals, change in mobility arrangements for less able bodied students and unforeseen childcare issues. 'Explained' absences still count as an actual absence.

5. College process for monitoring unexplained absences or lateness

Every student has the responsibility to report their absence prior to their timetabled session. Where the absenteeism is known in advance, the student is responsible for informing their LDM/tutor. Similarly, if the student knows they are going to be late arriving for class in advance, a late slip should be obtained from their LDM/course tutor and presented to the tutor on arrival.

With unexplained absences, the Retention Officer or class tutor is expected to make contact with the student, in order to investigate the reasons for their absence/lateness and record the outcome the agreed data base.

LDMs are timetabled to facilitate immediate following up of **consecutive non-attendance** at a student's first class of the day upon return to learning. Students leaving College before all their classes without prior authorisation will be contacted the same day by the LDM.

Where students are unresponsive to LDM interventions, attendance management will be escalated to the relevant vocational management team for a follow up interview with the student.

The staged process of monitoring attendance and punctuality of students is to be adopted across college. This is shown below:

Monitoring Process for Attendance and Punctuality:

a) Unexplained Absence

After any unexplained absence, formal contact will be made with the student (and the student's parent in the case of students aged 16 up to the age of 18 at the beginning of the course) by the Absence Monitor (English and maths) or class tutor to establish the reason for absence and to ensure future good attendance. If the student is an apprentice the employer will also be contacted. If a student does not have a parent, guardian or carer, the student will be identified as "at risk".

Two consecutive or intermittent unexplained absences to a session will be followed up by the LDM who will explore underlying issues that may be affecting attendance and take appropriate steps to return the student to learning; or in the case of an apprentice by the

course tutor. A behaviour contract may be imposed on the student to set out the standards of attendance required for continuation.

Three consecutive or intermittent unexplained absences from a session or breach of an attendance/behaviour contract will lead to an interview with a Head of Area or Curriculum Leader and may lead to the student being placed on a behaviour contract or losing their place at College. Parents will be informed and invited to all meetings for students aged 16 up to the age of 18. If the student is an apprentice, the employer will also be invited.

If attendance does not improve after the intervention of curriculum managers, the student will be referred to the appropriate Curriculum Director and this may result in the student being asked to leave the course.

b) Patterned Absence and Lateness

Inappropriate patterns of absence should be challenged by the tutor at the next attendance to class. If the student is an apprentice the employer should also be contacted. The student will be considered "at risk" and will be issued with an attendance/behaviour contract which will be monitored by the LDM/tutor.

Patterned, intermittent absence should be treated as per section a.

If the student continues to show no improvement as a result of the Action Plan, then they will be deemed to have broken the Student Code of Conduct and will enter the Student Disciplinary process at Stage 5.

All interventions are to be recorded in the agreed database. The log provides a date stamped auditable record should it be required or actions taken be challenged. The intervention should be recorded by the person who takes the action.

If a student has had four consecutive weeks of non-attendance then they must be withdrawn from the College in line with the EFA/SFA funding regulations. This applies, unless there are specific individual student problems which must be discussed and agreed between the student and tutor/LDM concerned. It is the responsibility of the LDM/course tutor to inform the curriculum leader, so that the withdrawal form can be completed as appropriate. While this process removes the student from funding, every possible method of retaining the student must continue until fully exhausted.

c) Monitoring Explained Absences

Tutors should use their professional judgement to identify inappropriate patterns of explained absence.

Recurrent explained absence must always be supported by appropriate documentary evidence.

If a tutor considers explained absences to be potentially bogus, or if the number of absences exceeds two and there is a lack of documentary evidence, class based students will be referred to LDMs for intervention. Apprentices will be referred to the curriculum leader and the employer notified. These absences should then be followed up as per section a.

6. Principles of positive behaviour, reward and praise

The College intends to base its Policy on positive behaviour, reward and praise with high expectations set for every student. The main principles are:

- All sessions will start on time
- All staff and students to be prepared and ready for every session
- No class should be disrupted due to staff absence
- Student attendance and punctuality to be consistently managed across College and recognised by all
- Punctuality and full attendance to be measured alongside performance and quality of provision
- Good attendance and punctuality will be celebrated at every opportunity and where possible linked to employability

7. Practices and activities used to improve attendance and promote positive behaviour

- The use of positive behaviour to improve attendance by students is expected of all teaching staff. Motivational language should be used to ensure that students understand the importance of their attendance to all aspects of their study programme.
- Organised trips and rewards are to be used at curriculum level in all areas in 2016/17 to encourage good attendance (these should be planned to avoid interruption to maths and English classes).
- All student awards should have a good attendance component.
- Walk throughs to be encouraged to ensure that a consistent message is being conveyed with regard to attendance, especially in the first weeks of the new term so bad habits are not formed.
- Authorised absences are to be recognised positively in data analysis.
- SiD to be used to monitor student attendance and impact of attendance on their performance and progress.

Author	Director of 14-19
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