



Southport
Education
Group

Attendance Policy

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Introduction

1.1 College timetables are designed to deliver teaching and learning to learners in the number of hours and sessions needed for them to succeed in their chosen Programme of Study. If learners do not attend, they limit their ability to succeed. Learners who are not punctual reduce their study time and delay the teaching and learning of other learners within the group.

1.2 All learners should aspire to have 100% attendance and punctuality. Improving attendance and punctuality enhances achievement and supports learners in reaching their full potential. Attendance is a crucial behaviour in preparing learners for employment.

1.3 All children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Children and young people missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Effective information sharing between parents/carers, education providers, and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all young people are safe and receiving suitable education.

1.4 The College will monitor the attendance of learners identified as part of a Vulnerable Group, having a serious safeguarding risk, and those with an EHCP, on a daily basis.

Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all learners of the College, including those on apprenticeships and adult education programmes.

2.2 This policy covers learner attendance and punctuality for all timetabled sessions and work placement activities.

Learner Responsibilities

3.1 The College expects all learners to:

- Ensure 100% attendance for all sessions, including maths and English (where applicable).
- Notify your Progress Tutor (full-time 16-18, Access and Apprenticeship learners) or course tutor in advance if you will be absent for a session (with an acceptable reason).
- Arrive on time for the beginning of all sessions, including maths and English (where applicable).
- Notify your Progress Tutor (full-time 16-18, Access and Apprenticeship learners) or course tutor in advance if you will be late for a session (with an acceptable reason).
- Minimise disruption to the rest of the class when arriving late to a session.

- Ensure that routine medical and dental appointments are only made on study days or during holiday periods (wherever possible).
- Ensure that holidays are not taken during term time. Unauthorised holidays during term time may result in a learner being issued a warning under the College's Positive Behaviour Policy. Learners must inform the College via a letter to the Vice Principal - Curriculum and Support prior to the holiday taking place. The College calendar is available via the website and is published far in advance of the start of the academic year.
- Understand that unauthorised absences may affect their attendance record, opportunities for progression, and references for employment or further study.
- Recognise that poor attendance and punctuality can result in any financial support being withdrawn.
- Acknowledge that poor attendance or punctuality will result in action being taken under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Staff Responsibilities

4.1 Tutors also have a responsibility to monitor the attendance and punctuality of learners in their sessions and follow the College guidelines:

- Arrive on time to each session.
- Complete registers accurately within 15 minutes of the start of each session to monitor attendance.
- Ensure the register is taken at the beginning of the session and that any learner who is not in class when the register is taken is marked as late. Learners should not be sent away from sessions if they are late.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality of learners closely and set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound (SMART) targets for improvements.
- Inform the Progress (or Pastoral) Tutor of any issues or emerging patterns of absences/lateness so that appropriate measures can be instigated.
- Follow up any learners who are absent with parents/carers (if under 18).
- Follow up absenteeism of vulnerable learners with the Safeguarding Team.

Absence Procedures

5.1 Types of Absence

- **Authorised Absences:** Absence due to an authorised reason as noted in this policy.
- **Known Absences:** Absence due to a reason not noted as an authorised absence in this policy, but the reason has been reported to the college.
- **Unknown Absences:** Absence where no reason has been reported to the college.

5.2 Authorised Absences The following are considered authorised absences if the College is notified in advance and appropriate evidence is provided:

- A hospital appointment or course of medical treatment that cannot be arranged outside college hours (usually up to one day).
- An orthodontist appointment (usually up to half a day).
- Visit to a university to attend an open day/interview or a career-related interview or audition (usually up to one day).
- Attendance at an external public examination (e.g., a practical or theory driving test or performing arts examination, usually up to half a day).
- Attendance at a wedding of an immediate relative (usually up to one day).
- Attendance at a graduation or similar ceremony of an immediate relative (usually up to one day).
- Attendance at a funeral of an immediate relative (usually up to one day).
- Attendance at court or an appointment with a legal adviser (usually up to one day).

Definition of Immediate Relatives For the purpose of authorised absences, the term immediate relative includes:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Siblings (brother, sister)
- In-laws (father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law)

The College will also consider applications for leave in the case of individuals treated as immediate relatives but not included in the above list.

Unacceptable Reasons for Absence The following are examples of unacceptable reasons for absence:

- Unauthorised holidays in term time.
- Part or full-time work that is not part of the learner's programme of study.
- Routine medical appointments (e.g., doctor, optician, physiotherapist, and dental appointments) which can be made outside college commitments.
- Birthdays or similar celebrations.
- Driving lessons.

5.3 Reporting Absences

- For scheduled appointments, notify your Progress Tutor and subject teachers in advance.

- For unforeseen absences, learners or their parent/carer must email the Progress Tutor or telephone the College before 9:15 AM on each day of absence. Provide the learner's full name, reason for absence, and expected length of absence.

5.4 Communication during Absences

- During a period of absence, maintain daily email contact with the Progress Tutor and subject teachers.
- Persistent failure to follow absence notification procedures may result in warnings being issued in accordance with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

Maintaining Learning during Absences

6.1 It is the learner's responsibility to request and complete work missed as quickly as possible. Staff will support learners through various methods, including signposting to online resources and inviting learners to catch-up sessions.

6.2 In exceptional circumstances, the college may offer remote learning options via Microsoft Teams. This will only be agreed as part of the Fitness to Study or when a learner is required to self-isolate.

Attendance Monitoring

7.1 Excellent attendance is seen as central to outstanding academic performance. The college monitors attendance through registers at every lesson and responds to poor or irregular attendance as follows:

- Subject teachers will follow up absences from lessons to check the reason for absence.
- Progress Tutors will monitor overall attendance and follow up any learners who have missed a full day without known reasons.
- Progress Tutors and Curriculum Managers will check attendance weekly to identify patterns of absence or lateness.

Dealing with Persistent or Prolonged Absence

8.1 Learners whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern will be set clear and appropriate targets for improvement and supported to achieve these targets.

8.2 Staff will contact the parents/carers of learners whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern.

8.3 Disciplinary action may be taken in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

8.4 For learners with long-term medical conditions, the college will make reasonable adjustments to support their learning through the Fitness to Study procedures.

8.5 Regular attempts will be made to contact learners or parents/carers during unexplained absences to find out reasons for absence and expected return dates.

8.6 A learner may be deemed to have left college if they have not attended classes for four consecutive weeks without explanation. This will be confirmed by a letter to the learner and their parent(s)/carer(s), and the local authority will be notified for learners under 18.

Rewarding Positive Attendance

9.1 The College recognises that learners come from diverse backgrounds and circumstances, which may affect their ability to maintain perfect attendance. Therefore, our approach to rewarding attendance is both flexible and inclusive, acknowledging individual starting points and improvements made.

9.2 Rewards will be given for:

- Consistent high attendance (e.g. 95% and above).
- Significant improvement in attendance over a term or academic year.
- Overcoming personal or external barriers to maintain or improve attendance.

9.3 Forms of recognition may include:

- Certificates of achievement.
- Recognition in college communications, such as newsletters or assemblies.
- Small prizes or tokens of appreciation.
- Opportunities to participate in special events or activities.

9.4 This approach aligns with the college's trauma-informed practice, ensuring that all learners feel valued and supported, regardless of their attendance record. The focus is on encouraging positive behaviours and celebrating progress.

Supervised Study Programme

10.1 If a learner misses work due to absence, they may be required to catch up on the work through the College's Supervised Study Programme. This programme provides a structured environment where learners can complete missed assignments and stay on track with their coursework.

10.2 The Supervised Study Programme includes:

- Scheduled study sessions supervised by staff.
- Access to necessary resources and support to complete missed work.
- Opportunities for one-on-one tutoring or assistance with difficult subjects.

10.3 Participation in the Supervised Study Programme ensures that learners do not fall behind in their studies due to absences, helping them to achieve their academic goals and maintain good standing in their courses.

Data and Confidentiality

11.1 Instances of Children Missing Education (CME) will be recorded in a central record on ProMonitor.

11.2 All personal and sensitive information will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR), and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.

11.3 There may be occasions where the College is obliged to disclose information, notwithstanding that the learner has refused consent:

- Where the learner's behaviour threatens their safety or safeguarding, and that of others.
- Or where the College would be liable to civil or criminal liability for failure to disclose.

Other Relevant Documents

12.1 The following documents and procedures are available from the Student Information Desk or on the College website and for staff on the Intranet:

- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Disability Statement
- Cancellation of Non-Medical Help Sessions Procedure
- Information for Learners Leaflet

Contact Details

13.2 Useful contacts:

- Safeguarding Team: 01704 392821
- Information & Reception Desk (Southport): 01704 392704
- Information & Reception Desk (KGV): 01704 530601