

Attendance Policy			
Current Status	Operational – Awaiting Authorisation	Last Review:	July 2023
Policy Owner:	Group Head of Pastoral Support and Administration	Next Review:	July 2025
Roles Responsible for Review:		Originated:	June 2015
Approved by:	SET Curriculum	Committee:	EEG Excellence Committee
Type of Policy:	Staff / Students	Quality Assured by:	

1. Introduction and Scope:

- 1.1. The purpose of this attendance policy is to ensure that there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that students maximise their attendance at college. Good attendance is an important government priority and under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 and the Student Registration Regulations 2016 and the 'School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' document (November 2016) the law requires all schools including independent schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all students are boarders, an attendance register. All students (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers.
- 1.2. The college keeps electronic records of attendance.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The college is committed to a positive policy of encouraging students to attend college regularly.
- 2.2. As part of our attendance monitoring, we also look at the attendance of discrete groups to examine any notable differences or indicative patterns.
- 2.3. The college will work with parents and students to secure these aims.
- 2.4. The other purpose of this attendance policy is to ensure there is an efficient system, known to all, for ensuring that students who should be attending the college have registered twice daily, or a reason for non-attendance is known to the college.

3. Registration

- 3.1. Students of compulsory school age must have their attendance registered twice per day. It is the practice of this college to register ALL students (including those over compulsory school age).

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- 3.2. The register must be updated for each timetabled session. In addition, all teaching staff must check that the students who should attend each lesson do.
- 3.3. **The register must** record whether the student is present or absent. Attendance on an approved educational activity is regarded as present for the purposes of registration.
- 3.4. An 'approved educational activity' is defined as:
- a) An activity taking place off the college premises.
 - b) Approved by a person authorised by the Head of Centre or the Local Governing Body (LGB).
 - c) Supervised by a person approved by the Head of Centre or LGB.
 - d) Of an educational nature, including work experience, field trips and educational visits, interviews with prospective employers, sporting events representing the college or for a place in Higher or Further Education.
 - e) Link courses where students attend an FE college for part of their time, or franchised students receiving part of their education off-site at another location while remaining on roll and under college supervision (e.g. sick children being taught at home) or attending approved sporting activities.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. The local governing body will:

- a) Approve the policy and any changes
- b) Receive reports from the Head of Centre
- c) Review the working of the policy in the light of the Head of Centre's report
- d) Ensure that the policy is promoted and implemented

4.2. The Head of Centre will:

- a) Set attendance targets and monitor progress.
- b) Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the college
- c) Determine (in collaboration with leadership and student services) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made
- d) Initiate with appropriate staff strategies to improve attendance

- e) Make an annual report with statistics to the governing body

4.3. The Group Head of Pastoral Support and Administration will:

- a) Oversee the attendance arrangements for students
- b) Work with the Manager of Examinations and Management Information Services (MIS) and MIS to ensure the efficient running of the system
- c) Make periodic checks of the registers to monitor student absence
- d) Make regular checks on the reasons for absence
- e) Ensure that Head of Pastoral/Senior PPT are following up on any absences that are unaccounted for.
- f) Work with the Manager of Examinations and Management Information Services (MIS) and MIS and Head of Pastoral Care/Senior PPT to deal with any issues of inadequate registering.

4.4. Teachers will:

- a) Register the attendance of students at their lessons
- b) It is important that students are not marked absent if they turn up late to a lesson, or if they are sent out of the lesson (by the teacher) to complete work.

4.5. Students are required to:

- a) Attend regularly unless they are ill or have an authorised absence ('attending regularly' means registering before the attendance register is closed for the session)
- b) Discuss with the PPT any planned absences well in advance

5. Weekly Absence Monitoring (Personal Progress Tutors)

- 5.1. PPTs will check student's attendance on a daily basis
- 5.2. PPTs will use either the tutorial sessions or 1:1 session to discuss concerns over student's attendance following this up with them where appropriate
- 5.3. In talking to students, PPTs will often also comment on recurrent punctuality problems; they will emphasise that it is better to arrive late to a lesson (even if there is only five minutes of it left) than to not turn up at all
- 5.4. Where appropriate the PPT can refer a student to Student Welfare for consideration for the 'Fitness to Study' Procedure (see Fitness to Study policy).
- 5.5. Where appropriate (using the Student Disciplinary Procedure), PPTs and teachers can invoke the formal disciplinary procedure for persistent unexplained absence.

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- 5.6. If absenteeism continues to be excessive it is possible that a student could forfeit their place at the college.

6. Concerns Regarding a Student's Attendance

- 6.1. In the first instance, a teacher will seek to discuss attendance patterns with the student, using the Academic Performance Procedure where needed. The teacher will liaise with the PPT as required and post relevant comments on Dashboard.
- 6.2. In support of the teacher, a PPT will seek to discuss attendance patterns with the student.
- 6.3. Whilst such conversations normally focus on absences from the previous week(s), a PPT may also comment on attendance patterns (a particular lesson that is frequently missed, for example) or on a student's overall level of attendance.
- 6.4. A PPT may request written confirmation of an absence once a student has been absent for more than two days or contact home once a student has been absent for more than three days. In both cases, this is at a PPTs discretion.
- 6.5. Where appropriate (post Academic Performance Procedure), PPTs and teaching staff can also invoke the formal disciplinary procedure for persistent unexplained absence.
- 6.6. If absenteeism continues to be excessive it is possible that a student could forfeit their place at college.
- 6.7. Where a student has not been contactable for more than 4 weeks and all reasonable efforts have been made to contact them or their parents/carers then the PPT needs to notify the Head of Pastoral Care and Student Welfare who will decide on the next course of action – withdrawal being an option.

7. Signing Out

- 7.1. Students who are ill during the day must go to reception and the staff there will help the student and either sign them out or call a first aider.
- 7.2. Students who fail to do so should expect to see their absences marked as unauthorised, unless a parent/carer note to explain the absence is subsequently received.

8. Dealing with Anomalies in Registers

- 8.1. Students are frequently marked absent, then claim to have been present (or told they weren't required) at a lesson. In this situation a student will be required to contact the subject teacher, either face to face or via an email, requesting that the subject teacher change the register.
- 8.2. The purpose of this is to allow the subject teacher to challenge the student's claim, and to consult them regarding any disputed register marks.

- 8.3. When a student has been marked present but admits that they were absent, the PPT will notify the Senior PPT/Head of Past4roal Care who will follow this up with Head of Centre.
- 8.4. These processes are inevitably time-consuming and PPTs would be grateful if subject teachers were to take care to minimise such anomalies.

9. Students who are unable to attend school for medical reasons

- 9.1. The PPT will ensure that all relevant teaching staff are aware of students who are unable to attend the college because of medical needs. The teaching staff will ensure that they keep the students informed about the work required to complete their programme.

10. Holiday during term time

- 10.1. There is a clear relationship between educational achievements and attendance. Maximising attendance at college is a key priority both nationally and locally.
- 10.2. Students should not take holidays during term time.

Revision History - Attendance Policy

Revision date	Reason for revision	Section number	Changes made
27 th May 2022	Ownership changes		Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements
24.07.23	Changes to procedure		Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements

Attendance Policy Appendix 1 – Fitness to Study

Attendance Policy Appendix 1 - Fitness to Study Procedure			
Current Status	Operational	Last Review:	May 2022
Responsibility for Review:	Group Head Student Welfare Vice Principal – Students	Next Review:	<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #ffff00; padding: 5px;"> <p><i>Cathy Durrant</i> 2023-07-24 13:06:00</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p>This bit belongs to Sarah Lou and needs to be a separate policy please.</p> </div>
Internal Approval:	SLT	Originated:	

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The College aims to be a welcoming, inclusive college for all who learn, work or use our services. We believe in respect for everyone; and want to develop our community by valuing diversity and advancing equality. The College seeks to ensure that all its students can study and take advantage of the educational opportunities on offer to the best of their abilities in a supportive and inclusive environment. The College recognises its duties under the Equality Act to ensure that it makes reasonable adjustments to address any substantial disadvantages that students with disabilities may face in accessing the services, facilities and benefits the College has to offer.
- 1.2. To maintain the necessary standards, the College has a Code of Conduct and attendance expectation to which all students are expected to adhere and disciplinary procedures to for students who breach the Policy.
 - Our expectation is that students attend all lessons
 - If a student’s attendance falls below 60% then the Fitness to Study (FTS) procedure may be invoked.
- 1.3. There may be times when physical or mental health of students is so affected that academic progress is unable to be maintained. In very rare situations where support is required that is beyond what is reasonable, it is useful to bear in mind that:
 - a) Whilst on a temporary basis it is reasonable for subject teachers and support staff to be flexible with attendance due to ill health, prolonged periods of absence cannot be sustained, as we are not a distance learning college.
 - b) There may be times when the nature of a student’s ill health requires support beyond the expertise or capacity that we can reasonably offer.
 - c) Occasionally ill health may also present a health and safety hazard and in this situation a risk assessment will be undertaken. Sometimes, however, risks cannot be managed at an appropriate level in the college environment.
- 1.4. There are therefore occasions where, for one or more of the reasons above, it will be our collective judgement that to continue at the college is no longer in the best interests of the student.

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Appendix 1 – Fitness to Study

- 1.5. There may be other circumstances such as pregnancy or gender reassignment surgery where the principles of this policy will apply.
- 1.6. In circumstances where there are significant / urgent concerns about the risks posed by a student's physical or mental health, immediate action will need to be taken. This is especially true when a student may be a danger to themselves or to others. In this situation Welfare Officers will assess the risk posed by the students, will make contact with the next of kin, and gain the student's consent where possible. However, the College reserves the right to make this contact even where consent is not given, or the student is unable to give such consent. The student will be advised that they must return home or be taken to a place of safety. Parents will be asked to collect the student and advised to seek medical aid or indeed take them to the safety of a hospital.
- 1.7. In this instance of high risk, a decision about a student's fitness to study will be made by the Welfare Officers who will assess risk or in their absence a DSL
- 1.8. The student will be required to remain absent from college until their medical practitioner advises that they are fit to return to study and that any potential risks are manageable within the environment in which they are studying. Confirmation of this decision must be made in writing by the GP/hospital where possible. This would also need to be in the best interests of the student's progress.
- 1.9. During the period of absence from the College, the Personal Progress Tutor responsible for the student will maintain in regular contact with the next of kin to ensure the student's wellbeing and progress are monitored and any return to college can be managed positively and effectively. All contact will be recorded appropriately by the PPT, and the Welfare Officer updated.
- 1.10. The College will remain mindful of its duty to care and its obligations to students under the Equality Act 2010 including its obligations to make reasonable adjustments as well as the obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, situations may arise where the support needs of a student as a result of changes in their physical or mental health, fall outside the scope of support the College can reasonably be expected to provide (e.g., providing additional staff support in cases of suspected epilepsy).
- 1.11. This is not an exhaustive list. This is usually the case where the behaviour arises out of a health condition or a disability and persists despite all reasonable adjustments having been made to accommodate it. In these circumstances, the student may not be fit to study.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. Nationally the number of instances of students showing visible signs of illness, mental health difficulties and emotional disorders continues to increase. The number of young people aged 15 – 16 with depression nearly doubled between the 1980s and 2000s, with 80,000 children and young people suffering with depression. Such instances may have an adverse impact on the health, safety, learning and wellbeing of individual students and staff and can present challenges to the organisation in dealing with the issues.

- 2.2. To address these challenges, it is important for the college to have an effective procedure in place to deal with situations where a student's fitness to study is a cause for concern.
- 2.3. This procedure offers a framework where a student's behaviour requires considered and sensitive management, rather than disciplinary action. The procedure will assist the college in addressing cases which are appropriate to progress as disciplinary matters.
- 2.4. The procedure will enable a positive approach to the management of physical and mental health issues and act to support a student's learning, academic achievement and the enhancement of the student experience.
- 2.5. The procedure will assist the College in discharging the duty of care owed to students in distress or where there is concern about the risk that they present to themselves and others. It will also support the College in discharging its obligations under discrimination legislation by demonstrating its commitment to supporting student wellbeing.

3. Definition

- 3.1. Fitness to study (FTS) relates to an individual's capacity to engage satisfactorily as a student, including in relation to academic matters and life generally at the College. Concerns about a student's fitness to study could arise, for example, from issues relating to the student's wellbeing and health and safety or the wellbeing and health and safety of other individuals.

4. Scope

- 4.1. All students in the College

5. Related Documents

- Equality Objectives
- Student Disciplinary Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1. The Head of Pastoral Care will be responsible for the implementation of this policy and for keeping records relating to individual cases. Individual responsibilities are described under section 8.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1. The risk of not having this policy may be that a student may cause harm to him/herself or others whilst in an 'unfit' state to study at the College.

8. Data Protection

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- 8.1. The College acknowledges that as a result of implementing this policy it will receive personal data of a confidential and sensitive nature and shall ensure that all such data is handled, processed and stored accordingly.
- 8.2. Normally, sensitive personal data and confidential information will only be disclosed to third parties with the express, informed consent of the student for the purposes of implementing this procedure. However, there may be rare occasions where the College is obliged to disclose, notwithstanding that the student has refused consent. These include:
 - Where the student’s behaviour threatens his/her safety or the safety of others.
 - Where the member of staff or the College would be liable to civil or criminal penalty for failing to disclose.
 - Safeguarding Concerns

9. Telling the College

- 9.1. The College will do all it can to create an inclusive and supportive environment to encourage students to feel safe to disclose and tell us about their learning needs, medical conditions and disabilities. Students can speak to their PPT, teachers or any member of staff at any time. There are many opportunities for disclosure such as on application, interview, enrolment, induction and at 1-1 reviews. Students are made aware of the extensive range of student services at the college both at induction and as part of the tutorial programme.
- 9.2. Students are encouraged to disclose any physical or mental health conditions as part of their application. Information disclosed does not prejudice any decision about the application. The information is used to establish how best we can respond to the individual need and what reasonable adjustments can be made. Early disclosure is encouraged so that the student can receive support at the earliest opportunity and that we can make reasonable adjustments during our pre-enrolment activities such as summer induction.
- 9.3. In cases where a complex or significant physical or mental health condition is disclosed on application, it may be appropriate that we seek further information from health professionals to formulate a support plan, including when the student has an Education Health and Care Plan. A transition meeting may take place to discuss and agree details of the support plan, the appropriate programme to be studied and any reasonable adjustments. In these cases, the support plan will require formal medical paperwork to be provided. Agreement will be reached on the information given to staff so that they can best make adjustments.
- 9.4. Whenever students disclose to a member of staff, we will always seek to provide appropriate support, whether the condition is pre-existing or begins during study at the college. Students each have a Personal Progress Tutor with whom information is most likely to be shared; however, all members of staff have a duty of care and students may share this information with any member of the college staff. Members of staff may refer students who disclose to the Welfare team.

- 9.5. The Head of Pastoral Care or Senior Welfare Officer or colleagues from the Student Services team will meet with students, provide information for staff, and create support plans. The support plan may also involve referral to outside agencies, such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services or the student's GP. This is particularly true where the health condition causes significant concern, since the expertise and capacity of the college in providing medical support is finite and the responsibility for medical support lies with the external services.
- 9.6. Occasionally a deferred start for the following academic year may be appropriate if students are not able to begin a programme of study at the College because of a physical or mental health condition. This may be possible if there has been improvement to their condition by the next enrolment and students meet the conditions of general entry requirements. Guidance will be given both on what support might be appropriate to ensure fitness to study on return the following academic year, but also importantly on what evidence will be expected at enrolment to support this. Any future enrolment would be with the recommendation of external agencies involved, the agreement of parents/guardians and a support plan.

10. Support during the course

- 10.1. Any member of staff who is concerned about a student's fitness to study should refer his/her concerns to the student's Personal Progress Tutor (PPT), providing detailed written evidence/ assessment of concerns.

The PPT may decide to:

- Take no further action
 - Act or refer it to an appropriate member of staff to take action (usually the Senior Personal Progress Tutor)
 - Refer it to the s Senior Personal Progress Tutor for action under stage 2 below
 - All actions will be recorded and kept on the student's file.
- 10.2. The appropriate member of staff may approach the student and explain that concerns about their fitness to study have emerged. The student should be given the opportunity to outline his or her views on the concerns. The various sources of support open to the student to address the concerns should be outlined, and the student encouraged to utilise them. It should be made clear to the student that it is their responsibility to be fit for study and that there is a recognised concern within the College.
- 10.3. At the end of any discussion as per 8.1.1 above:
- The member of staff shall record any agreed actions using the FTS Policy pro-forma, stage 1.

11. Stage 2

- 11.1. If the behaviour does not improve, or if it is considered too serious to address informally as outlined above, if possible, the student will be asked to meet with the Senior Personal Progress Tutors
- 11.2. The student should be informed of the purpose of the meeting and advised of any documents they may need to bring.
- 11.3. The student may be accompanied at the meeting, by either a PPT, a Parent/Guardian or support worker.
- 11.4. The purpose of the meeting will be:
 - To make the student aware of the nature of the concerns that have been raised.
 - To hear and consider the student's views and to ascertain the student's perception of the issues identified and also to ensure that the student clearly understands the College's expectations regarding fitness to study.
 - To agree the best way to proceed.
 - To ensure that the student is fully aware of the possible outcomes if difficulties remain.
- 11.5. It is important to agree a written action plan and timeframe, setting out what is required to be undertaken, the support offered to the student, the expectations for future behaviour/ attendance and the consequences if the student fails to engage or the behaviour/ attendance does not improve. This will be recorded on the Fitness to Study pro-forma, stage 2.
- 11.6. The PPT is responsible for checking that the steps agreed in the action plan are implemented and reviewing progress against the plan.
- 11.7. This will not, however, prevent escalation to stage 3 if the Senior Personal Progress Tutor considers it necessary.

12. Stage 3

- 12.1. If significant or persistent concerns about a student's fitness to study remain, or if the Senior Personal Progress Tutor or Senior Welfare Officer has determined that the case is too serious to deal with at either Stage 1 or 2, the matter should be referred to the Head of Pastoral Care or Group Head of Welfare and Safeguarding who will convene a meeting to consider the case.
- 12.2. At the meeting:
 - Relevant people may be called to provide evidence or to provide written statements, as part of stages 1 and 2.
 - Where possible, the student will also be invited to attend at one point during the meeting and may have an appropriate adult accompany them for support.

12.3. As a result of the meeting, the decision may be to:

- Take no further action.
- Require an enhanced action plan, which should include the steps to be taken and the required timescales.
- Require the student to temporarily interrupt their studies.
- Request the student leaves the college.

12.4. This will be recorded on the Fitness to Study pro-forma, stage 3.

13. Appeal

13.1. The student shall have the right of appeal against any decision to require the student's studies to be temporarily interrupted or to exclude the student. Any Appeal must be made in writing to the Deputy Head of Centre within 10 working days.

13.2. The grounds for appeal are:

- New evidence
- Procedural irregularity

13.3. The Appeal will be heard by the Deputy Head of Centre

13.4. The Appeal Panel shall have the power to determine its own procedures for the hearing, but generally:

13.5. The student should indicate whether he/she will be attending the Appeal meeting and the names of those who will be accompanying him/her.

13.6. If the student and/or their representative fail to attend, without good reason, then the hearing may proceed without them.

14. Return To Study

14.1. A student can apply to restart at the college via the usual online application. This application will be considered on an individual basis and only if the student meets the course and legal requirements.

14.2. At the point at which return to study is considered appropriate, during the academic year, the student shall contact the PPT who may ask for evidence that the student is fit to return to study with reasonable adjustments if required.

14.3. A return to study plan, Fitness to Study pro-forma stage 4, should be completed highlighting what support is needed to enable the student to return to education and, if appropriate, a risk assessment will be drawn up to take into account the experiences that gave rise to sustained absence, and to minimise the risk of recurrence.

14.4. If return to study is deemed not to be an option and the student is dissatisfied, the student does have the right to appeal as per section 9. If this has already taken place, then he/ she should follow the college's usual complaints procedure.

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Agreed action:

Student signature:

Date:

Stage 3- Completed by Head of Pastoral Care

Agreed action:

Student signature:

Date:

Appeal- meeting with Deputy Head of Centre

Date:	
<u>Appeal Decision</u>	Signature:
.....	
Decision upheld	<input type="checkbox"/>
Decision repealed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stage 4- Return to study plan.	

Attendance Policy (inc. Fitness to Study) Appendix 2 – Revision History

Revision History - Attendance Policy (inc. Fitness to Study)

Revision date	Reason for revision	Section number	Changes made
27 th May 2022		3.4 b & c	Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements
27 th May 2022		4.1 b&c	Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements
27 th May 2022		4.3 b&f	Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements
27 th May 2022		6.7	Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements
27 th May 2022		Appendix 1 1.6	Addition of 1.6
27 th May 2022		Appendix 1 6.1	Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements
27 th May 2022		Appendix 1 9.4 & 9.5	Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements
27 th May 2022		Appendix 1 10	Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements
27 th May 2022		Appendix 1 13	Change of title of persons involved to oversee arrangements