



STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

POLICY OWNER:	Quality
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DATE OF APPROVAL:	
FOR APPROVAL BY:	SLT
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1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that college staff, systems and processes support students to reach a minimum of 89% attendance in all aspects of their studies and to be punctual to all sessions.
- 1.2 As part of the BMet commitment to preparing students for their next steps, good attendance is a college priority. A College attendance target is set annually and is a KPI for each individual Department.
- 1.3 BMet recognises the correlation between attendance and performance and promotes high attendance believing it gives students the best chance of maximising their achievement, developing next-level skills and accessing opportunities to help realise their career goals.
- 1.4 The College is committed to supporting students to attend all timetabled teaching and assessment sessions, including tutorial, enrichment, world of work activities and examinations and to recording, tracking and monitoring attendance at all sessions. Students will be encouraged to manage their own attendance and Personal Tutors will make sure students can access their own attendance record.
- 1.5 Students will be encouraged and supported to achieve 100% attendance rate, including virtual and online learning sessions, in preparation for employment, however it is recognised that there will inevitably be occasions when students are unable to attend due to illness or other genuine exceptional circumstances. This will be classed as authorised absence. Unauthorised absence is not acceptable, as would be the case in employment. See Appendix A for details of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised attendance.
- 1.6 Teachers will ensure that learning opportunities and the associated resources are available to students in the case of absence, through the college's Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle/Teams etc.) It is the student's responsibility to complete all work missed through absence.
- 1.7 Persistent unauthorised absence will lead to disciplinary action being taken, in line with the Student Disciplinary Procedure, and may ultimately result in exclusion.
- 1.8 Unexplained sudden absence will be followed up by Personal Tutors and efforts will be made to establish why a student has suddenly stopped attending as this may be a sign of something serious relating

to the welfare of the student. Any concerns will be reported to the Safeguarding Team.

- 1.9 All students are expected to be punctual to lessons as all classes will start on time. Lateness will be challenged by teaching staff, as it would be in the workplace. Teachers will accommodate students who arrive late, setting objectives around the work missed, but without taking time away from the other students. Learners are expected to arrive at examinations 10 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- 1.10 Lateness will be reviewed by the Personal Tutor following the steps of the Ready, Respectful, Safe Policy. Where this does not lead to an improvement, unauthorised persistent lateness will lead to disciplinary action, in line with the Student Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.11 BMet will monitor student attendance and punctuality via ProMonitor; Business Intelligence Dashboard; weekly College Senior Leadership Team Reports; Termly Review Boards and Departmental Management Meetings.
- 1.12 In extreme circumstances, the college may need to monitor attendance using different means e.g. during the COVID-19 lockdown period and where blended learning models have been delivered, the college has utilised student engagement data and analysis to monitor attendance.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND OBLIGATIONS

- 2.1 The policy applies to all FE students, including part-time students and apprentices. Registers are auditable documents and relate to funding requirements. Validated/Franchised HE students will also be encouraged and supported to attend and maximise their chances of success. The level of attendance required for HE courses is stated in the course handbook and/or programme specification. HE non-attendance leading to non-production of assessments will be reviewed at the annual Examination Boards and in those cases progression through the qualification is unlikely, except in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.2 The Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality is responsible for:
 - The annual review and development of the Attendance Policy
 - The setting of the annual target
 - The monitoring of College attendance
 - Driving improvement through the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

2.3 The Vice Principals and Directorate Management Teams are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff and students understand the attendance and punctuality expectations.
- Ensuring that teaching teams understand the policy and know where to access attendance guidelines for staff on how promote and manage attendance and punctuality.
- Monitoring register completion rates and intervening where non-compliance is identified.
- Accessing attendance reports and monitoring attendance and punctuality in a timely manner, intervening when attendance and punctuality falls below target.
- Using learner voice mechanisms and teaching, learning and assessment monitoring methods to gather information on the effectiveness of session delivery and whether this is impacting on attendance, to inform intervention strategies.

2.4 Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to the Student Attendance Policy, following attendance guidelines for staff and achieving the attendance target.
- Establishing a clear expectation of excellent attendance and punctuality during induction and ensuring a punctual start to all lessons.
- **Completing registers accurately within 15 minutes** of the start of the session, according to the register completion instructions, taking care to **use correct register codes** as identified in the attendance guidelines for staff and making sure that **all students have a register mark recorded before submitting the register.**
- Employing a range of incentive strategies to ensure high punctuality and attendance is maintained.
- Identifying concerns in attendance and punctuality patterns, discussing concerns with the learner, identifying problems and/or barriers to attendance and punctuality, particularly those identified as high priority learners and working with the student to identify and implement strategies to support improved attendance and punctuality.
- Where student absences occur, regardless of whether authorised or not, provide the materials and support for the student to catch up the missed learning.
- Any exceptions to the policy for a particular student (e.g. a student with caring responsibilities, who sometimes has difficulty in getting to class on time) must detailed in Pro-monitor by the Personal Tutor and teachers of that student must be made aware.

2.5 Personal Tutors are responsible for:

- Adhering to the Student Attendance Policy, following attendance guidelines for staff and achieving the attendance target.
- Establishing a clear expectation of excellent attendance and punctuality during induction and ensuring a punctual start to all tutorials.
- Conducting a “return to study” interview at the earliest opportunity following any period of absence.
- Monitoring students' attendance across all elements of a student's programme and liaising with all subject teachers and the relevant attendance monitor to contact students through phone calls, e-mails or SMS text messaging to establish their whereabouts, if missing from class.
- Tracking and monitoring attendance and punctuality over time across all elements of a student's programme, understanding the reasons for lateness and/or non-attendance, identifying and implementing the support needed to overcome lateness and/or non-attendance, discussing the impact of non-attendance and lateness on performance and employability and agreeing, where necessary, an action plan to overcome barriers to attendance and punctuality.
- Liaising with all subject teachers and the appropriate student service personnel to ensure effective support is in place and consistency of approach is achieved across all elements of the programme.
- Requesting and recording evidence of any pre-notified or long-term absence, e.g. medical certificate and noting relevant information on Promonitor to inform all relevant teachers.
- Contacting the parents of students under the age of 18 as soon as attendance and/or punctuality gives a cause for concern.
- Invoking the Student Disciplinary Procedure, where non-attendance and lateness persist and does not improve when a significant degree of support has been provided.

2.6 Data Management Staff are responsible for:

- Adhering to the policy and working towards the College targets.
- Ensuring college systems are updated with register information received from teaching staff.

2.7 Absence Response Team are responsible for:

- Receiving messages concerning punctuality or attendance from students and parents/carers.
- Recording any communication about attendance and punctuality on Pro-Monitor.
- Ensuring relevant staff are notified immediately on receiving a message from a student or parent.

- Contacting students on behalf of personal tutors to discuss unexpected absence from class and to encourage attendance.

2.8 Students are responsible for:

- Attending all lessons, tutorials, examinations and any other appointments punctually and at the advertised start time.
- Accounting for any absences or lateness
- Contacting the Attendance Monitor to inform them of the circumstances as soon as possible if they are not able to attend or are expecting to be late due to unavoidable reasons.
- Undertaking the appropriate catch up work as agreed with the teacher following any absence.
- Students that miss examinations may be required to reimburse the college for the examination fees, except in the case of genuine exceptional circumstances.

3. **ABSENCE AND LATENESS PROCEDURE**

3.1 In the event that a student is unable to attend college **they must:**

EITHER use the App that links to ProPortal to report sickness following the attendance guidelines for students.

OR contact the designated Attendance Monitor:

- Sutton Coldfield College: 0121 362 1140
- James Watt College and Erdington Skills Centre: 0121 362 1141
- Matthew Boulton College: 0121 362 1142

3.2 If any student has an on-going medical condition which may affect their attendance and punctuality a letter from the GP explaining this must be provided to their Personal Tutor.

3.3 Students will need to provide their Personal Tutor with evidence of any pre-notified or long-term absence, e.g. medical certificate and the Personal Tutor will note the relevant information on Promonitor to inform all relevant teachers.

3.4 If absence for any reason exceeds 2 weeks a review meeting will be called by the Personal Tutor to assess the impact of the absence on the student's progress and, if necessary, an action plan will be created to support the student's achievement of their qualifications. (Where students are absent from College for a period of 4 weeks without the college establishing the reason for the absence, their place may be withdrawn in line with national funding recommendations.)

3.5 Where a student is unexpectedly absent from class, and notification of non-attendance hasn't been received, the specific form of intervention will depend upon the students' attendance for that term to date. This will ensure the attendance intervention resource available is targeted to support in the most effective way possible.

Category	Termly Attendance to Date*	Intervention	Owner
Green	89-100%	Generally, no intervention required although if attendance is considered an issue, GROW goals may be agreed as part of regular progress reviews.	Personal Tutor
Amber	83-88%	Contact to investigate reasons for absence. By phone in the first instance and text message/email if not possible. Referral to further support (e.g. mentoring team) will be made if appropriate.	Absence Response Team
Red	0-82%	Learner Intervention Plan (LIP). The LIP meeting to discuss underlying causes, challenge and support (with consideration given to Trauma Informed Practice – see Positive Behaviour policy for further details). An action plan with support and goals will be agreed.	Personal Tutor/DM

*these align to the attendance thresholds for Bursary Support and may be adjusted depending on student need and volume.

Tutors, managers and support will be well-informed by regular reports which include key indicators of poor attendance providing the opportunity for early intervention. The reporting system also takes into account indicators of historic underperformance and in this way we aim to ensure that students with greatest likelihood of need, receive support in a timely way.

- 3.6 The Personal Tutor will contact the parents/carers of students under the age of 18 as soon as attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern.
- 3.7 Where attendance and punctuality over time becomes a cause for concern a discussion with the Personal Tutor will take place to understand the reasons for lateness and/or non-attendance, identify and implement the appropriate support, discuss the impact of lateness and/or non-attendance on performance and employability and agree an action plan to overcome barriers to attendance and punctuality.
- 3.8 Where student absence is the result of personal or financial difficulties the student should discuss the details in confidence with their Personal Tutor or with any of the Student Experience members of staff to access advice and guidance.
- 3.9 Where unauthorised absence and lateness does not improve despite significant support being provided to overcome barriers to attendance and punctuality the Personal Tutor will invoke the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

4. COMPLIANCE

- 4.1 The Senior Leadership Team and Directorate Management Teams will use the following mechanisms to oversee the accuracy of recording and reporting attendance and punctuality and to monitor progress towards the attendance target.
- Registers
 - Attendance Reports
 - Promonitor Records
 - Student Disciplinary Records
 - Team Meeting Minutes
 - Termly Review Boards
 - Directorate Performance Meetings

5. OTHER RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Access to the below policies can be found [here](#).

The Student Attendance Policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- The Positive Behaviour Policy and Procedures
- Child Protection & Safeguarding
- LLDD and Vulnerable Learners Policy
- DI Strategy

- Mental Health Policy
- Additional Learning Support Policy
- Student Induction Policy
- Bursary Support Policy
- Remote Teaching and Blended Learning Policy

Appendix A

Absences are either **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is one which has been agreed **in advance** by a Teacher or Personal Tutor.

Absences will normally only be authorised in the following circumstances:

- To attend the funeral of a close family member
- To attend an emergency appointment with your GP
- For religious holidays (1 day)
- To care for an ill dependent child
- To attend a hospital appointment*
- If self-isolating or if advised not to attend by local Health Protection Team or NHS Test and Trace (COVID-19)**
- To sit a driving test*
- To attend a job interview*
- To attend court*
- To attend an educational visit organised by the college, which is not a required element of that qualification, e.g. an A level maths student attending an A Level Physics trip

For all of the reasons marked *, students must provide evidence for Tutors e.g. an appointment card or letter. Absences will not be authorised if proof is not provided. In the case of absence related to COVID-19**, further information may be requested by the College.

Other general appointments, including with doctors and dentists, should be arranged within private study time or after College hours.

In exceptional circumstances not covered by the above, authorised absence may be given at the discretion of the Personal Tutor and the reason will be noted on ProMonitor.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is unexplained absence and reasons for absence which would not be acceptable to an employer, for example:

- Driving lessons
- Baby sitting

- Missing the bus
- Routine appointments with GP
- Sleeping in
- Holidays
- Birthdays or similar celebrations

Please note for sessions delivered online staff should mark students as present if they log into the session (see staff guidance).