

# Student Attendance Policy

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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 (including apprentices\*) to reach a minimum of 87%\* (93%\* during the first six weeks) attendance in all aspects of their studies and to be punctual to all sessions.

*\*Where employer's expectations are above the College threshold, please refer to their target.*

- 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 a KPI for each individual Department.
- 1.3 BMet recognises the correlation between high quality teaching, attendance and performance, and promotes both high quality teaching and high attendance believing these provide students with 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 workshops, 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/Tutorial Facilitators will make sure students can access their own attendance record. It is important to recognise high attendance as much as it is to implement attendance strategies with students to improve their attendance.
- 1.5 Students will be encouraged and supported to achieve a 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 a number of interventions and may ultimately lead to disciplinary action being taken at Stage 3. This is in line with the Student Disciplinary Procedure, as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy, and may ultimately result in exclusion.
- 1.8 Unexplained sudden absence will be followed up by Personal Tutors/Tutorial Facilitators 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 via [MyConcern](#).
- 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 the case 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 (a late table is recommended with the session's resources to reduce disruption). Students are expected to arrive at examinations 10 minutes before the scheduled start time.
- 1.10 Lateness will be reviewed by the Personal Tutor/Tutorial Facilitator following the steps of our Ready, Respectful, Safe expectations (found in the Positive Behaviour Policy). Where this does not lead to an improvement, unauthorised persistent lateness will lead to disciplinary action, in line with the Student Disciplinary Procedure as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy.
- 1.11 Apprentices must be involved in active learning (Off the Job training and/or English and maths) throughout their apprenticeship from the learning start date to the learning end date (the practical period). Some active learning must take place at least every 4 weeks and recorded using SMART Assessor. Apprentices who have not engaged in active learning within a 4-week period should be identified as being 'at risk' and may be withdrawn unless a break in learning is appropriate. *The college will advise employers through the assessors of non-attendance of apprentices at agreed sessions, each month as a **minimum**.*
- 1.12 BMet will monitor student attendance and punctuality regularly with teams and individual staff using reports on ProMonitor; Business Intelligence Dashboard; weekly High Priority Reports, College Senior Leadership Team Reports; Teaching Team Dashboard through Departmental Management Meetings, one to one meetings with staff and Termly Performance Review Boards.

- 1.13 In extreme circumstances, the college may need to monitor attendance using different means e.g., during exceptional circumstances (e.g. lockdowns) and where blended learning models have been delivered, the college may utilise 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 throughout the year in line with the Assessment Policy and reported at the annual Assessment Boards. In cases where there has been non submission of assessments, progression through the qualification is unlikely, except in exceptional circumstances and only where awarding organisation rules permit.
- 2.2 The Vice Principal for Quality Teaching and Learning 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 and Termly Performance Review Boards.
- 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 to promote and manage attendance and punctuality.
  - Ensuring the implementation of the attendance guidance to maximise both attendance and achievement for our students/apprentices paying particular attention to actions within the first four – six weeks.
  - Organise a Welcome Event for parents/carers within the first three weeks and send out correspondence to help set expectations.
  - Arranging for sessions to be visited before 10:00am each day (during the first four weeks), where registers have not been marked, to note who is not there and arrange for students to be contacted by the Attendance Intervention Officers.

- 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.
- Reviewing attendance at course level at least twice a week with teams to ensure all staff have a clear picture of attendance. Actions should include recognition for excellent attendance 98%+ each half term through postcards home, positive text messages, certificates etc.
- Working closely with the Head of English and Maths to agree and implement collaborative approaches to monitoring attendance.
- Organising weekly attendance support sessions for those students with less than 80% attendance in one term.
- Using student 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:

- Delivering high-quality teaching.
- Adhering to the Student Attendance Policy, following attendance guidelines for staff and achieving the attendance target.
- Ensuring the implementation of the attendance guidance to maximise both attendance and achievement for our students/apprentices paying particular attention to actions within the first four – six weeks.
- 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 strategies to ensure high punctuality and attendance is maintained.
- Organising recognition for high/much improved attendance (taking into considerations any relevant factors affecting attendance).
- Identifying concerns in attendance and punctuality patterns, discussing concerns with the student, identifying problems and/or barriers to attendance and punctuality, particularly those identified as high priority students and working with the student to identify and implement strategies to support improved attendance and punctuality. See Staff Guidance for relevant actions to be implemented.

- Completing Learner Intervention Plans with students/apprentices and monitoring regularly.
- Where student absences occur, regardless of whether authorised or not, providing the materials and support for the student to catch up the missed learning.

2.5 Personal Tutors/Tutorial Facilitators are responsible for:

- Adhering to the Student Attendance Policy, following attendance guidelines for staff and actively supporting the achievement of the attendance target.
- Ensuring the implementation of the attendance guidance to maximise both attendance and achievement for our students/apprentices paying particular attention to actions within the first four – six weeks.
- 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 focusing on the reasons for non-attendance and agreeing actions to improve attendance, including support mechanisms.
- 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 experience teams/staff 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 as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy, where applicable (see Attendance Guidance for Staff).

- Updating ProMonitor, in detail, where there are 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) and ensuring that teachers of that student are made aware.

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 Attendance Intervention Officers are responsible for:

- Working with management teams to support with student/apprentice contact, when absence is evident.
- Contacting students to discuss unexpected absence from class and to encourage attendance. Officers will be directed by Senior Directors and the Head of Pastoral and Welfare to support specific areas each week. The use of the High Priority Report will be integral to the work of the Attendance Intervention Officers, when identifying those students/apprentices to contact.
- 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.

2.8 Students/Apprentices are responsible for:

- Attending all lessons, tutorials, enrichment session, examinations and any other appointments punctually and at the advertised start time.
- Accounting for any absences or lateness
- Contacting their Tutor, through ProMonitor/Teams or other agreed mediums, 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/Apprentices 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/Teams to report sickness following the attendance guidelines for students.

**OR within the first half-term** call the absence line and leave a message:

- 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/Tutorial Facilitator to assess the impact of the absence on the student's progress and, if necessary, an action plan (through the LIP) 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.

Termly Attendance Rate*	Indicator	Action	Responsibility
93%-100%	Blue	Celebration leading to successful outcomes and progression (please take into consideration students who have health issues and/or disabilities or other contributing factors that might impact attendance, ensuring flexibility to award recognition).	All
87%-92%	Green	Students contacted to <b>discuss barriers to attendance</b> and <b>support/actions</b> agreed and implemented through a LIP. Parents advised of outcome (Letter 1).	Personal Tutor/ Teacher / Trainer Assessor



		Commitment made through Learner Agreement discussed.	
80%-86%	Amber	Parental intervention with DDM/DM to <b>discuss student's barriers to attendance</b> and <b>support/actions</b> agreed and implemented – LIP completed, Verbal Warning and Attendance Report Card issued and monitored for agreed timescale. See Letter 2.	DDM or DM or Director
Below 80%	Red	Student required to attend Support Group with a member of the management team to discuss engagement with learning and building resilience. Notification to parents. Review of LIP and Written Warning issued. Continuation of Attendance Report Card, which is monitored by Director/DM for agreed timescale. See Letter 3.	Director/DM
No improvement to attendance or non-attendance to Support Group	Red+	Stage 1-3 Disciplinary: Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Written Warning</li> <li>• Withdrawal from the programme</li> </ul>	Director

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

Tutors, managers and relevant members of the Inclusive Support Team 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 the greatest likelihood of need, receive support in a timely way.

- 3.6 The Personal Tutor/Tutorial Facilitator/Attendance Intervention Officer 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/Tutorial Facilitator 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/Tutorial Facilitator 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/Tutorial Facilitator will invoke the Student Disciplinary Procedure as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy.

#### **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
  - Teaching Team Dashboard
  - Promonitor Records (including Learner Intervention Plans (LIPs))
  - Student Disciplinary Records
  - Team Meeting Minutes
  - Termly Performance 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
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy
- Inclusive Support Policy
- Student Induction Process
- 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 or friend
- To attend an emergency appointment with your GP
- For religious holidays (1 day)
- To care for a dependent child (due to illness or school closures etc.)
- To attend a hospital appointment\*
- 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 to the college e.g. an appointment card or letter. Absences will not be authorised if proof is not provided.

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/Tutorial Facilitator and the reason will be noted on ProMonitor.

An additional mark to denote health concerns has been introduced. This mark should only be used if the student's attendance is severely being impacted by their health, however they continue to make progress with their studies (assessments on track). DM discussion should take place prior to using this mark. The use of this mark will be monitored.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is unexplained absence and reasons for absence would be similar to those 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).