

Attendance, Punctuality and Engagement Procedure

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1.0 Why Attendance is Important

Attendance is a key factor in success in education, it is a simple fact. The less time you spend in learning the more likely you are either to not achieve or for your end grade to be significantly lower than it should be. While data on the national picture of attendance in Further Education is currently not available, the data on the links between attendance and achievement is clear at Key Stage Four.

Most recent data shows that learners who had higher levels of attainment in their GCSEs had lower levels of absenteeism than those with lower grades. Learners who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among learners who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among learners who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths. Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent. Among learners with no missed sessions over Key Stage Four, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of learners who were persistently absent.

2.0 Parent/Carer Partnership

In the Lighthouse Learning Trust, we believe working in partnership with parents and carers is key to us supporting learner across the Trust to achieve the best outcomes. Where parents or carers have parental responsibility and/or we have consent to share information with them we will provide regular information on learner attendance.

Parents and carers will have the opportunity to sign up to Parent Portal where they can access all sort of information on learner progress including attendance information. Again where parents and carers have parental responsibility and or we have consent to share we will update them when lessons are missed. It is vitally important that we work together in partnership with our parents and carers.

3.0 Whole Trust Approach

We recognise in the post-pandemic world there are multiple barriers any learner can face when it comes to attending education every day. Learners may need support and encouragement to help them achieve 100% attendance on their course. It is no one person's responsibility to help them do this. All staff have a role in helping to improve attendance. This could range from interventions undertaken to address poor attendance to a passing comment with a learner in the learning centre about the importance of having good attendance.

4.0. Reporting Absences

If a learner is going to be absent the learner, parent or guardian can report the absence by either calling or emailing the learner admin team on the email address or contact number for that institution. Reported absence are recorded as either being reported a parent/carers or by the learner.

4.1. Authorised Absence

As attendance is so key to achieving well at college, it is expected that all learners will do all that they can to book appointments outside of the hours of their Study Programme. Where it is deemed that an absence could be arrange outside of a learner's Study Programme hours or the reason for the absence is not justified, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. Examples of legitimate reasons for absence might include:

- Medical appointments which cannot be made outside of timetabled hours

- Religious holiday
- Attendance at a funeral
- Severe disruption to the transport network
- Driving test
- Learner representatives' meetings
- Responsibilities for caring for a close family member. If this is likely to affect their learning, this should be explored with the learner and support offered.

An absence will not be authorised for any of the following reasons:

- Holidays
- Babysitting
- Driving lessons
- Birthdays
- Leisure activities
- Shopping
- Full or Part-time work (other than work experience).

5.0. Punctuality and Engagement

Attendance is not the full picture when it comes to having the best circumstances for achieving well in education. Learners also need to be on time and fully engaged in lessons. When learners are late to lessons, they will be marked with a late mark. Where learners fall below the expected standard with punctuality will be addressed following the Behaviour Management policy and procedure.

Learners must also engage fully with their learning. Learners sometimes struggle with the totality of their Study Programme. If a learner has decided to attend college to learn how to become a bricklayer, they may not see why they need to continue studying English. All elements of the Study Programme are important, with all parts playing a role in supporting the learner to take their next step. It is therefore incredibly important that we recognise the importance of all elements of the Study Programme and do not unintentionally reaffirm a learner's belief that they do not need to engage in other parts of the Study Programme, like Maths, English, Upskill, Enrichment or Extended Learning.

Where a learner is not fully engaged in their total Programme of Study, including engaging in their core learning aims, this will be addressed through the Behaviour Management policy and procedure.

6.0. Absence Monitoring Process

The attendance monitoring process is how the Trust supports learners who have less than expected levels of attendance. It functions through a combination of automated processes and staff led interventions. All parts of the process start with registers that are accurately marked in a timely fashion.

6.1 Registers

Registers are a key function, and legal record, when it comes to monitoring and managing attendance. All of the attendance monitoring and management processes initiate from the marked register. It is therefore vital that they are completed accurately and in a timely fashion. All staff responsible for completing a register will ensure it is marked within the first ten minutes of the session starting.

6.2 Attendance Interventions

With attendance being so important with links to learner's wellbeing safety and achievement, where attendance is becoming a barrier to learner's learning the Trust will use several interventions to improve attendance and reduce absence.

6.2.1 Absence Text Messages

The first alert that learners and parent/carers will receive in relation to attendance is an automated text message. Messages are sent to learners and parent/carers when a learner is absent from a session. This is done twice daily, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, based on the register marks for that day. It is hoped that this will make sure both learners and parents/carers are fully aware when a learner has missed a session in a timely fashion.

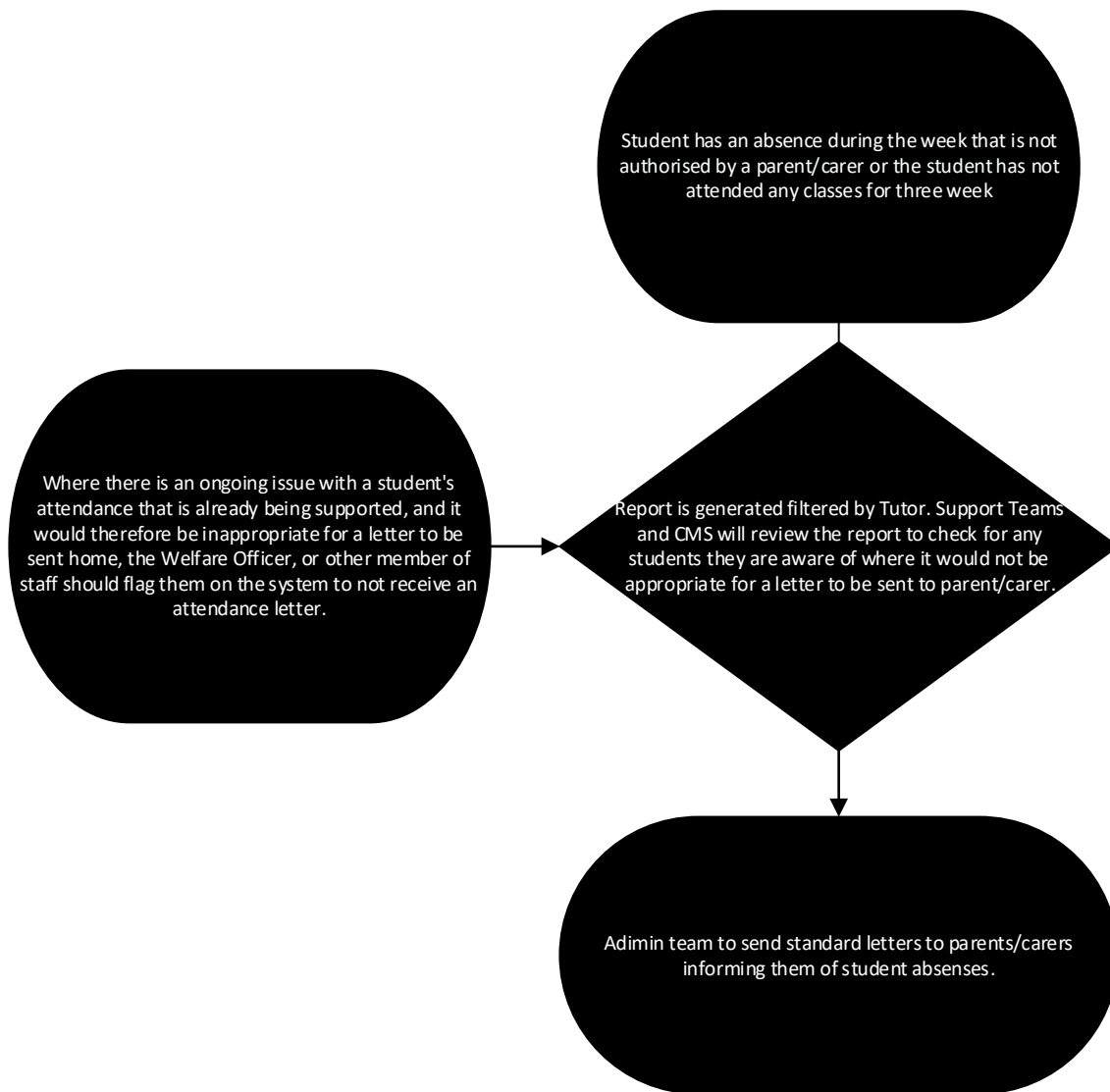
6.2.2 Weekly Absence Letters/Emails

The next stage in the absence monitoring and management process is that any learner who is absent, except those who have an absence reported by a parent/carer will have a letter/email sent home outlining any sessions they were absent from during the previous week and outlining the consequences of an attendance level less than 100%.

Where the Trust has the ability to share information with parents and carers they will receive a letter/email stating the sessions learners have missed that for any given week when a learner is absent, unless the absence was already approved by a parent or carer.

6.2.3 Seven Day Warning Letters/Emails

Where learners have not attended and have not been in communication with the college for three weeks, a letter/email will be sent informing them that unless they start attending or make contact with the college to discuss their barriers to education within the next seven days they will be withdrawn.



6.2.4 Attendance Monitoring Meetings

An automated weekly report on attendance by mode is sent to each Curriculum Manager, Progress Tutor and Welfare Officer working with that mode. They will meet weekly together, following the reports production, and identify actions with regards to learners who are of concern. This meeting should include:

- Identifying the learners of high priority and complex cases that the Progress Tutor and Welfare Officer should focus their time on trying to reengage. The meeting should identify who will be taking the lead on each of these complex cases and what type of action is appropriate with them.
- Identify cases that need to be escalated through the disciplinary process
- Identify cases that need to be escalated through the fitness to study process
- Help the Curriculum Manager identify any lower-level cases that they may want to direct teaching staff to contact during their half hour of directed time contacting learners.

Progress against the actions should be reviewed each week and escalation should be discussed if there is no improvement in attendance and/or engagement, without identified just cause.

6.2.5 Attendance Phone Calls

Each week, each member of teaching staff will use half an hour of their directed time to directly contact learners regarding attendance. This may be a combination of contacting learners who have a lower attendance level than expected, learners who have missed their lessons that week and learners who have exemplary attendance and achievement as praise and reward. Which learners should be the focus of these call each week will be directed by the Curriculum Manager.

6.2.6 Attendance Task Force

The Student Services Manager on each site will run a daily Attendance Task Force during the last 30 mins of the day. Each day three or four members of the support teams will be on a rota to make calls to learners whose attendance falls between 60% and 85% for that half term. The aim of the call will be to discuss any barriers to them attending and discuss any support that can be provided to overcome these barriers. All interactions will be recorded on Pro-Monitor.

6.2.7 Home Visits (Richard Taunton Sixth Form College Only)

Any learner where contact through the Attendance Task Force has not been possible, there are continued concerns around attendance, and/or they are being sent a seven-day warning letter, will be referred to the home visit support, which is being provided by the local authority, with the hope that they will be able to make contact and reengage the learner.

6.2.8 Parent/Carer Webinars

At checkpoints one and three, the parents/carers of any learners who have identified concerns relating to their attendance will be invited to attend an attendance webinar. As part of the Parent/Carer Partnership, the webinars are designed to underline the importance of attendance with parents/carers and help to break down any barriers parents/carers might be facing when it comes to support in their children to high levels of attendance.

6.2.9 Governor Intervention Programme

Through these processes, any learners who are identify as potentially benefitting from mentoring can be offered mentoring support from the Trust Governors. This will be coordinated through the Student Services Managers at each site and the Vice Principal – Inclusion and Student Experience.

6.2.10 Attendance Review Meetings

Given the importance attendance has, any learner who has a level of attendance below 90% without a justified reason is at risk of losing their place on the programme. For learners on a Study Programme, this will be reviewed at week four. Any learner with an attendance figure of below 90% without a justified cause, will be invited to attend a meeting with their Curriculum Manager and a member of support staff where their place on programme may be withdrawn if there is not just cause for such a low level of attendance.

6.2.11 Rewarding Good Attendance

Where possible staff should take every opportunity to praise and reward good attendance. This might be through a phone call home or a post card home, or event just a conversation with the learner that recognises that their outstanding attendance has been recognised and appreciated.