

# ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The City of Portsmouth College (the College) is firmly committed to ensuring all learners achieve their qualifications and have an outstanding learning experience during their time at the College. The College recognises the importance and value of outstanding attendance and punctuality as a means to learners achieving success, including progression to higher levels of study, gaining employment, and gaining promotion in employment.

## **2.0 Purpose**

Frequent absences and lateness impact upon learner achievement as well as the acquisition of behaviours required at the workplace. It may also lead to demoralisation, failure to meet course deadlines and ultimately to drop out. The strategy is aimed at dealing effectively with attendance and punctuality issues in order to maximise learning and the achievement of qualifications, and to ensure learners are prepared for their future pursuits in education and the world of work.

It is our responsibility to monitor the attendance of all learners through the register which is a legal and auditable document. We are also accountable for safeguarding all young learners and vulnerable adults and attendance monitoring is a vital tool in enabling this responsibility. The strategy aims to ensure that:

- All learners are made fully aware during induction of the importance of the strategy and how we will deal with attendance and punctuality issues.
- All staff deal with attendance and punctuality in a consistent manner.
- The College does everything it can to address attendance and punctuality issues.
- The College meets its legal and statutory requirements towards Health and Safety and Safeguarding

## **3.0 Scope**

The Strategy will apply to:

All staff employed by the College, including hourly-paid teachers, assessors & trainers, fixed term and fractional curriculum staff and business and support staff with a responsibility to record, monitor and report on attendance.

All learners enrolled with the College to maximise their success and progression to employment or higher levels of study.

Parent/guardians/carers and employers where appropriate, as the College recognises the role they can play through encouraging good attendance and punctuality.

## **4.0 Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality**

The register is a legal and auditable document used by the College to record attendance and punctuality. The accurate completion of a register is a contractual requirement for all teachers/assessors/ trainers and personal tutors and non-compliance will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored and reported on the basis of entries made on the

electronic register system. All electronic registers need to be completed within the first 10 minutes of a lesson (and where this is not possible by the end of the working day).

Attendance will be monitored on EBS and the Dashboard so that unmarked and incomplete registers can be chased on the next day by the relevant Curriculum Manager.

Attendance reports are generated on a weekly basis for curriculum managers, on a fortnightly basis for senior management teams and on a monthly basis for the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the Board of Governors for consideration and action.

Curriculum Managers have responsibility to monitor overall learner attendance and take action to improve poor attendance in order to prevent underachievement or drop out. Particular emphasis needs to be paid to the learners at risk and those most vulnerable to dropping out of college.

## **5.0 Management of persistent poor attendance and punctuality**

### **5.1 Learners**

- Persistent poor attendance and punctuality should be managed using the College's Learner Behaviour Policy
- A four-week non-attendance without extenuating circumstances should result in the learner being withdrawn.

### **5.2 Teachers, Personal Tutors, Trainers, and Assessors**

- Teacher lateness and absence without extenuating circumstances should be managed using the relevant staff code of conduct and disciplinary policy and procedure.

### **5.3 Attendance & Punctuality - Learners and Staff Responsibilities:**

It is important that high expectations and standards are agreed with learners so that they are aware of the impact of poor attendance and punctuality.

Every attempt must be made to help learners overcome difficulties, but learners still need to be aware that persistent lateness can lead to disciplinary action including exclusion, which would be a last resort. Learners who have a valid reason for lateness, e.g., childcare arrangements, signing on etc. must get the prior agreement of their class teacher, personal tutor, trainer, assessor, or employer in writing. A letter or email from the parent/guardian or employer might be required for learners under 18 years of age and apprentices. A copy of the written agreement must be placed in the individual learner's records and the relevant class teachers and personal tutor are copied in.

Where staff or learners feel that a learner's absence may be due to a Safeguarding concern, they need to contact a safeguarding team to share their concerns.

### **5.4 Learners' Responsibilities:**

- It is a requirement that all learners be expected to have 100% attendance rate to all learning activities (classroom, workshop, work placement, off the job learning sessions, educational visits, etc.)
- All learners should inform their teacher, personal tutor, assessor, and employer using the appropriate channels of communication when they will be late or absent from a learning session.
- Students U18 at start of course or with an EHCP - parents have to report absence for each day

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they are not in college

- All learners arriving late to a learning session should ensure that they do not disrupt the session and should join the session on the invitation of the member of staff.
- All learners are expected to attend 1:1 meeting to discuss attendance and/or punctuality if their tutor has concerns. They need to own the targets agreed to improve attendance and punctuality.
- All apprenticeship learners should contact their employer and trainer/assessor/teacher regarding lateness and absences.
- All learner absences will be recorded in the e-register and the information used as part of disciplinary proceedings if necessary.

### **5.5 Attendance & Punctuality: Teachers, Personal Tutors, Trainers, Assessors, Registry and Managers Responsibilities:**

- Learning sessions must start on time rather than wait for latecomers. Late arriving learners must wait until a natural break in activities before receiving a detailed explanation of the lesson's aims from the teacher.
- It is not appropriate to exclude learners from learning sessions for lateness except where health and safety reasons or learners not wearing the requirement uniform or clothing make this appropriate. Staff must deal with latecomers at the end of the lesson, letting the whole College know what is happening.
- All learner absences must be properly recorded in the e-register.
- Learners' attendance and punctuality will be monitored and recorded rigorously by the class teacher, personal tutor, trainer, or assessor, in liaison with the Curriculum Manager
- It is the learning sessions' teacher, personal tutor, trainer, assessor's responsibility, with the support of the Attendance and Student Support Officers to follow up on learners who do not attend their learning sessions. In addition, an automated text will be sent to the learner and parent/carers (under 18-year-olds and learners with an EHCP) for every session that is missed.
- In the individual induction sessions with tutees, personal tutors must discuss attendance requirements and the learner's responsibility to contact their learning sessions' teacher, trainer, or assessor when there are valid reasons for absence either known in advance or after the event. It should be made clear to the learners that persistent lateness or unauthorised absence is classed as misconduct and will trigger the disciplinary procedure.
- The Individual Learning Plans should address lateness with targets for improvement which are reviewed and monitored.
- Personal tutors should review punctuality during 1:1 meeting and set targets for improvement where there is persistent lateness or absence. Persistent issues should also be dealt with under the Learner Behaviour Policy.
- Learner punctuality and attendance should be an agenda item at team meetings and, if required, strategies to improve attendance should be agreed at such meetings.
- The Apprenticeship Liaison Officer should inform employers and sponsors of learners' non-attendance, so they are aware of the issues.
- All HE students with attendance and punctuality concerns should be notified about the impact of non-attendance on achievement of the qualification.

### **5.6 Students with disabilities, learning difficulties or other support needs:**

The College will support learners with learning difficulties, disabilities and medical conditions that affects their ability to achieve 100% attendance or to be punctual to all classes. The relevant student support services team will make arrangements for reasonable adjustments to be made and ensure

support is in place.

The needs of learners with learning difficulties, medical conditions or disabilities will be taken into consideration during any reviews or disciplinary action, with regards to attendance. All learners should be encouraged to talk to their personal tutors if they need support to enable them to achieve 100% attendance and be punctual to all learning sessions.

SEND Team leaders will inform the Local Authority regarding any concerns with a learner's attendance or punctuality.

## **6.0 Authorised Absence**

The following reasons for absence are acceptable:

- Driving test (not lessons) \*
- Hospital admissions or stays\*
- Emergency Doctor or Dental Appointments\*
- Funeral of close relatives
- Religious holidays and festivals (where the student practice the religion of faith)
- A medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside college/lesson times\*
- A career or job-related interview or a university interview or open day visit\*
- Pregnancy sickness
- Prenatal & Postnatal appointments\*
- Court appearances (jury service, probation meetings, etc.) \*
- Care of a relative or person, where the student is a registered carer\*
- Moving home
- Absence sanctioned by a designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

\*Students must provide evidence to their personal tutors e.g., appointment cards, emails, or letters