

STUDENT ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY 2026/27

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1. Purpose

City of Portsmouth 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 to learners achieving success, including progression to higher levels of study, gaining employment, and gaining promotion in employment.

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 policy is aimed at dealing effectively with attendance and punctuality issues 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.

All learners must be made aware of this policy and the College's approach to monitoring and managing attendance and punctuality at induction and be reminded of it regularly. All learners must be made aware that the college has every right to withdraw a learner from their studies where they fail to meet attendance targets.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff employed by the College, including hourly-paid lecturers, 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. For the purpose of this policy, apprentices are included in the term 'learner'.
- Parent/guardians/carers and employers where appropriate, as the College recognises the role they can play through encouraging good attendance and punctuality.

3. Legislative Context

- 3.1. 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 and meeting our statutory responsibilities.

3.2. The College is bound by legislation that encompasses the monitoring and reporting of the attendance of key stage 4 learners (Pre 16 provision).

4. Policy Statement

4.1. It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to ensure a clear process is in place that gives effect to the Attendance and Punctuality Strategy and to this policy document.

4.2. The College process must be triggered whenever a learner's attendance/punctuality falls below 90% (main programme, including Tutorial) and 80% (English and Maths, where part of the Study Programme) either in-week or on a rolling basis. Any process must also be able to be triggered at the request of a class teacher or personal tutor in the following circumstances:

- Where a learner who has been absent cannot be contacted or is non-responsive to contact from their class teacher or personal tutor.
- Where attendance/punctuality remains above college target, but patterns of poor attendance/punctuality are emerging.
- Where a learner fails to provide a suitable explanation for non or poor attendance/punctuality.

4.3. The College based process must ensure that parents/guardians/Local Authority of learners who are under 18 (or who were under 18 at the start of their study programme) or has an EHCP are notified, at least, at the first formal stage of the process (Stage 1 of the Learner Behaviour Policy)

4.4. Where a learner under the age of 18 or have an EHCP is absent for more than two consecutive days without notification, parents/guardians/Local Authority will be notified, and the College based process must make clear who that contact must be made by.

- Non-attendance of each lesson will trigger an automated text message that is sent to the learner and their NOK
 1. Student message: An absence for college session on XX/XX/XXXX at XX:XX has been logged. Contact the college to let us know why you were unable to attend.
 2. NOK message: An absence for college session on XX/XX/XXXX at XX:XX has been logged. Contact the college to let us know why you were unable to attend.

4.5. Teachers and managers working with KS4 learners (Pre 16 provision) must have a clear process in place for contacting the relevant school in line with the College's statutory duties

- 4.6. All staff, learners, parents/guardians, and employers will be made aware of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy and the relevant college process that must be followed.
- 4.7. The College is committed to celebrating and rewarding excellent attendance and it is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to ensure there is a clear process in place for rewarding excellent attendance through the Reward and Recognition awards for 100% attendance and most improved attendance.
- 4.8. The College is committed to supporting learners to improve their attendance and punctuality; however, the College also reserves the right to withdraw a learner from their course where attendance and punctuality fails to meet expectations and where they have reached the final stage of the Learner Behaviour Policy. This is designed to mirror performance management within the world of work and to reflect employment practices whereby an employer can be dismissed for poor attendance and punctuality.
- 4.9. Where appropriate, the College Fitness to Study Policy should be enacted if learners are unable to commit to their studies due to medical issues. For some learners, the challenges they face are so great, that even with all the support available, they are not well enough to study at this time. If attendance and/or punctuality issues are being caused by ill health, it would not be appropriate to suspend or exclude a learner. The Fitness to Study Policy is a far more appropriate process in these circumstances.
- 4.10. Where a learner fails to attend their course following enrolment or where there are four weeks non-attendance without explanation, the College reserves the right to withdraw a learner from their course. Where the learner is under 18 or has an EHCP, the local authority and parent/guardian must be informed.
- 4.11. For the purposes of this policy, persistent lateness is treated as an attendance issue, and learners with punctuality below the college target (98%) will be subject to the relevant attendance monitoring and review process.
- 4.12. Attendance to on-line learning is to be treated in the same way as attendance to face-to-face classes for the purposes of this policy. Where a student is expected to log-in to an on-line class at a particular time and they fail to do so, this will be regarded as an unauthorised absence until such time it can be authorised in the way described above. Where a learner is not expected to log-in at a specific time but is required to provide evidence of

work by a specific time but fails to do so, this too will be regarded as an unauthorised absence.

- 4.13. Attendance at Work Experience or Industry Placement is to be treated in the same way as attendance to sessions at College for the purposes of this policy. Where a learner is absent it is the responsibility of the parents/carers (if under 18 years of age or has an EHCP) or the learners (if 18 or over at point of enrolment) to contact the work placement and the work experience officer regarding reason for absence.

5. Responsibilities

- 5.1. Learners - All learners have a responsibility to attend all their classes, and to notify their teachers if they are running late or not able to attend.
- 5.2. Learners under the age of 18 at the start of their programme or who have an EHCP it is the responsibility of the parents/carers to notify their teachers/personal tutor by calling or emailing below and leaving notification of the reason for their lateness or absence. Parents/carers should repeat this for each day of absence or for extended absence, discuss with their teacher and personal tutor their expected return date.
All campuses: 023 92 328966 or absence@copc.ac.uk
- 5.3. Learners over the age of 18 at point of enrolment should notify their teachers by calling/emailing below and leaving a notification of the reason for their lateness or absence. Learners should repeat this for each day of absence or for extended absence, discuss with their teacher and personal tutor their expected return date.
All campuses: 02392 328966 or absence@copc.ac.uk
- 5.4. For 16-18-year-old and EHCP learners, all absences are unauthorised until such time they are supported with evidence from their parents/guardians or relevant organisations (hospital, driving test centre etc). For adult learners, whilst they can self-certify absences for ill health, they should also provide evidence of other appointments.
- 5.5. Where a learner knows that due to extenuating circumstances, they are likely to be late or need to be absent on a regular basis, they must inform their teacher and personal tutor at the start of the course or as soon as they become aware. An agreement between learner and teacher must be made in writing and recorded on EBS where the request is a reasonable one.
- 5.6. Members of teaching staff and support staff with attendance monitoring responsibilities – all members of staff are responsible for the attendance to their classes. They can and should call upon the support of their line

manager and/or support staff to support with attendance management strategies, but ultimately they must take responsibility for the attendance of their own learners and must be able to demonstrate that they have implemented the relevant attendance and punctuality process along with the Student Behaviour Policy.

5.7. Subject teachers are responsible for direct learner follow up for persistent unnotified absence for all aspects of their programme of study.

5.8. Personal Tutors are responsible to follow up persistent attendance issues directly with learners, parents, and guardians and by implementing the Learner Behaviour Policy as required.

5.9. Managers – all managers involved in the latter stages of the relevant attendance and punctuality management and review process must ensure that they have followed the process and that their staff have done the same.

5.10. Managers are responsible for routine weekly monitoring of learner attendance data and ensuring follow up of learners with attendance below College Targets. They are responsible for delivery of the Learner Behaviour Policy implementation and the overall attendance of learners within their area of responsibility.

5.11. Parents and Guardians – all parents and guardians of young people aged 18, at the start of their programme and under or with an EHCP have a responsibility to inform the college of absences either on the first day of absence or where a student self-certifies on the first day, to verify that absence with either an email, letter, or phone call. Learners who are 18 years of age at the start of their study programme can 'opt-out' of having their parents or guardians notified of any college business. Parents or guardians of students who are 17 at the start of their study programme but who turn 18 during their study programme will continue to be notified of college business including concerns around attendance.

6. Associated Policies

- To be read in conjunction with the College Attendance Strategy & Procedure.
- To be read in conjunction with the College Fitness to Study Policy.
- To be read in conjunction to the College Learner Behaviour Policy.

7. Monitoring and Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually.