

The Technical School at Broadstairs College

Student Attendance & Punctuality

PURPOSE:

At The Technical School, we believe that excellent attendance is fundamental to raising achievement. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and attainment. Students should attend all lessons, and arrive on time.

This policy outlines the approach taken by The Technical School to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality in order to improve student retention and success rates and develop employability skills.

Students are expected to establish and maintain excellent attendance and punctuality at all classes and other learning activities which are part of their timetable. The expectation is that excellent attendance and punctuality is 100%.

Good punctuality and attendance demonstrates that students are committed and that they are keen to learn and progress. Good time keeping and punctuality are an expectation of employers and in preparing our students for work, is an area of their personal development that must be focused upon.

This policy is based on the premise that all classes are started on time. This means that teaching staff do not wait for late comers before the lesson is started. Students who make an effort to arrive on time should not be penalised by having to wait for late comers.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, students and all members of the school staff. The Technical School is committed to working closely with parents/carers and external agencies in order to achieve excellent attendance for all of our students.

There are certain basic expectations that it is important for students, staff and parents/guardians/carers to be aware of and follow:

- Students are expected to attend school regularly and on time
- Parents/guardians/carers are asked to contact the School office to explain any absence prior to the start of the school day, on each morning of absence
- It is our policy to telephone home if absence is unexplained
- Further action may be taken against the student and her/his parent/guardian/carer if a child takes a significant amount or extended period of unauthorised absence

DUTIES

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive full time education by regular attendance at a school or by other arrangements. Parents/carers have the responsibility for making sure their children attend The Technical School regularly and on time.

This policy reflects the amendments that have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which came into force on 1st September 2013. The amendments make it clear that leave of absence during term time may not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any request on the basis of exceptional circumstance will be considered on an individual basis and must be applied for in writing as soon as possible in advance of absence.

A long term absence, which may be due to illness, family bereavement, and breakdown in the family unit etc, will be supported by The Technical School. In such instances work will be provided for the duration and an integration programme where required.

The Technical School is responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the School's roll. In addition, Lesson Registers are taken throughout the day.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Technical School will ensure that:

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Attendance targets are set for individual students and year groups. The School will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all students. Any absence below 100% can be detrimental to learning which increases with the amount of days lost.
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed.
- Parents/carers are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised.
- A Penalty Notice is issued for any holiday taken in term time which is unauthorised.

Students will be encouraged to

- Ensure they attend all lessons on their timetable and arrive before the start of the lesson properly equipped and prepared.
- Always inform their Mentor or teacher in advance (where possible) if they have genuine reasons for lateness or absence. The student will be expected to provide evidence or documentation if required.
- Arrange doctors and other appointments out of College hours where possible.
- Make arrangements to catch up on any work missed during their absence with support as appropriate.

Policy Owner: Deputy Principal Broadstairs College

Approving Body: Full Governing Body

Stage of approval: Approved

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The **Parents** or Guardians will:

- Encourage full attendance.
- Inform the Technical School via telephone on each day of every absence before 9:00 and the reason for absence
- Discuss planned absences with the Technical School in advance (e.g. family holidays, special occasions) taking on board the School's ethics around not authorising holidays during term time.
- Make sure any appointments are made out of school hours.
- Never take holidays in term time

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES:

Mentors are responsible for registering their groups twice daily.

Any student who is absent from the Technical School at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school].

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Morning registration will take place at the start of the day (9.00am). The registers will remain open until 9.15am. After this time, students will be marked with a U, which means that students have an absent mark for the entire AM period. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered (as long as medical evidence can be provided).

The afternoon registration will be at 1.15pm. The registers will close at 1.30pm. Learners arriving after the start of the session but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

Latecomers who arrive after the registration period has finished must sign in at the Technical School reception.

Each absence is recorded and has to be specifically explained as soon as possible (a statutory requirement). The Technical School requires parents or guardians to contact the Technical School by 9.00am on each day of every absence giving the reason for each period of absence.

In the event of a learner being absent from the Technical School and no reason being given, the mentor will contact the learner's parent/carer and a record of the call will be recorded and kept on file.

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be recorded and kept on file for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the learner, that may

require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Absences are categorised into one of the following groups:

- Illness
- Medical Appointment
- Complex family circumstances
- Agreed absence for special reasons
- Allowed absence for religious observance
- Study leave
- Unauthorised absence (truancy or not allowed)

Absence of students to take part in supervised educational activities outside the Technical School but authorised by the Technical School is recorded as “approved educational activity”. This is the equivalent of ‘present’ for the purposes of the annual absence return and performance tables. Such students must be recorded as being off-site for health and safety reasons or in the event of an emergency.

For term time days where the whole College has to close due to severe weather conditions, fire, heating failure or other structural damage, Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances will be used.

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- The Technical School has not given approval in advance for a student to be absent
- The Technical School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence
- Medical evidence requested by the School is not forthcoming
- No explanation of absence is received within three weeks

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents may not authorise any absence.

The Governing Body has agreed to adopt the Government initiative of Imposing Fixed Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and persistent lateness to Registration.

Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued and will have 15 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and/or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices are issued by the court officer to the family home. Non- payment of the Penalty within the 42 day time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

It is important that on return from an absence that all learners are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed on to the other students.

Leave of absence is only authorised in exceptional circumstances. In accordance with

government guidelines, the Technical School's default position on holiday requests is to reject. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday leave be permitted. Factors which are considered when deciding whether a leave of absence should be authorised are:

- Stage of student's education and progress;
- The student's attendance and punctuality record;
- The length and timing of the absence requested;
- Special reasons supporting the request.
- Under no circumstances will a leave of absence be authorised if:
 - the student's attendance over the past year is less than 92%;
 - there are public examinations or coursework deadlines during or immediately after the proposed leave;
 - the student has a serious work deficit; or
 - a leave of absence has previously been authorised.

Guidance outlining when a leave of absence is likely to be permitted is attached to the request form.

Parents who wish to apply for a leave of absence must complete the official request form. This form can be collected from reception or downloaded from the Technical School's website. Completed forms should be returned to the Head of School at least 3 months before the proposed absence (where possible). The Technical School reserves the right to delete from roll a student who fails to return to the School within 10 term time days of the agreed return date.

College right to remove a student from School roll due to non-attendance.

- Where a student is not attending and this is persistent
- Where the persistent non-attendance is not due to sickness or unavoidable cause
- Where support and re-integration has been offered and no attendance gained.

The college will contact parent/carer with a warning letter of its intention to remove the student if no improvements are made, this will be sent on the fourth week of absence. The improvements must be seen in the week following the letter sent. If no improvements are made the action will be taken with a confirmation letter to parent/carer and the relevant local authority.

The local authority will then make alternative arrangements for the student's education.

REWARDS FOR ATTENDANCE

The Technical School has a rewards system in place for good attendance. At the end of every term an attendance certificate is sent home. Students who have achieved 100% attendance will receive a certificate to place in their Progress File and be entered into a Prize Draw.

Students who achieve 100% attendance for the whole year will receive a voucher as well as a certificate.

PUNCTUALITY PROCEDURE

All classes to start on time with a planned 'starter' activity that fully engages all students as soon as they enter.

If a student is late (arrives after the timetabled start of the lesson) they should be marked on the register as late.

Late comers should be acknowledged and asked to take a seat as quickly as possible (with minimal disruption to those who arrived on time). Students should be asked to explain the reason for their lateness at the end of the lesson. If the teaching member of staff is concerned about the reason behind the lateness the student should be referred to their Mentor.

The third time a student is late to either registration or a lesson in a week the Mentor will issue and supervise a lunch-time detention. The Mentor will ascertain first whether there is a valid reason for the lateness in which case the detention will not be served.

Three detentions for persistent lateness in a Term will trigger a letter being sent home. A fourth detention will trigger an interview involving the Head of School, Mentor, Student and her/his parents/carers. At this meeting, it will be pointed out that if no improvement in punctuality is seen in the following 2 weeks then the student will be required to complete the 'Every Day Matters' course. Held after school hours, this course is intended to act not only as a deterrent but also as an opportunity to teach students the importance of good time-keeping.

If there is still no improvement in punctuality to registration then as stated earlier in the policy, The Governing Body has agreed to adopt the Government initiative of Imposing Fixed Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and persistent lateness to Registration.

Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued and will have 15 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and/or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices are issued by the court officer to the family home. Non- payment of the Penalty within the 42 day time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

REWARD EVENTS

Reward events are held twice a year to acknowledge those students with good attendance, punctuality and behaviour:-

a) Christmas & Easter – A range of options

b) Summer Reward Trip – Held during the final week of term and may involve a visit to a theme park.

A list of students unlikely to be invited to an award event is issued 4 weeks in advance. If the student achieves perfect weeks from that point forth they will be invited. This gives the student the opportunity to show improvement.

Registers should be marked as follows:

- / present in school/lesson
- L late up to 15 mins after start of am or pm session or arrival after the start of a
- U more than 15 mins late to am or pm session
- X exit early
- O absent from school or lesson without authorisation
- B off-site educational activity
- C leave of absence authorised by the school
- E excluded but no alternative provision made
- H holiday authorised by the school
- I illness
- M medical or dental appointment
- R religious observance
- S study leave
- G holiday **not** authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the
- # planned school closure e.g. professional development day

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

An Attendance Review Meeting will take place each week to discuss, update and agree strategies relating to attendance. This meeting will be chaired by the Head of School and involve the Mentors.

An Intervention Strategy Group meeting will take place every six weeks. This will be chaired by the Head of School and attended by Mentors and teaching staff. Attendance will be a standing agenda item.

The Head of School will lead on the implementation of the policy. This individual will monitor the effectiveness of the policy and procedures and where necessary, make recommendations to the School's Advisory Body for improvement.