Attendance Policy

Version No	Purpose/Change	Lead	Impact Assess	Review Date
1.0	Introduction of policy	BW		September 2014
2.0	Reviewed and updated for 2015/16	BW		September 2015
3.0	Reviewed and updated	BW		September 2016
4.0	Reviewed and updated	BW		September 2017
-	Reviewed – no changes (full review being undertaken for 2019/20)	BW		September 2018
5.0	Reviewed and updated	BW		September 2019
-	Reviewed – no changes	BW		July 2020

Purpose and Scope

This Attendance Policy has been drawn up to clarify the expectations of all students at Wilberforce College.

High levels of attendance and excellent punctuality are both characteristic of students who achieve above or in-line with their potential. Research shows poor attendance and punctuality has a serious detrimental effect on outcomes for students. High levels of attendance and excellent punctuality are essential in the development of employability skills.

This policy identifies best practice when dealing with attendance. It emphasises the roles and responsibilities of staff, students and parents/guardians. Good attendance and punctuality will maximise achievement. Every student should aim for attendance of 100%.

College staff may refer to the Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy at any time if a student's attendance falls below the expectations set out in this document as agreed during enrolment.

Attendance is the key criteria for determining the payment of any financial assistance, such as college bursaries; poor attendance may result in a student losing this support.

Equality Statement

This policy applies to all College students regardless of age, race, disability, religion or belief, gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, or any other status. All individuals will be treated in a fair and equitable manner recognising any special needs where adjustments can be made. No individual will suffer any form of discrimination, victimisation, harassment or bullying as a result of this policy.

Expectations

Students

As part of their commitment contract, signed upon enrolment to the College, there are the following expectations:

- Attend all lessons, tutorial, learner progress meetings (LPM), work placements and support sessions set out on your weekly timetable or agreed with a member of staff.
- Be available at all times during the college day if required for your studies.
- Be prepared for all your lessons by making sure you bring the appropriate equipment necessary.
- Complete all classwork, homework, coursework and assignments set by staff, on time, and to the best of your ability.
- Show respect for all members of the college community and behaving at all times, and in all places, in a way which helps the college to provide a safe, fair, clean and positive learning environment, encompassing the college values and the fundamental British Values.
- Use the college's IT resources for appropriate educational activity, and making sure you do not use them inappropriately or illegally, as set out in the IT agreement.
- Act as a positive ambassador for the college both within the college and with our neighbours, partner schools and the local community, which includes the reporting of behaviour which is contrary to the college expectations.

Returning students may be placed on a Faculty Contract or College Contract to work to this goal if their cumulative attendance for the previous year was deemed unacceptable by the college Managers.

Parents/Guardians

- To encourage students to attend College.
- To contact the college if a student is unable to attend College.
- To be aware that the College may withdraw a student's place if their attendance falls below expectations.

College

- To accurately record attendance registers for every lesson.
- To monitor attendance against performance targets.
- To report attendance statistics to staff, students and parents/guardians.
- To meet with students to discuss attendance issues.
- To contact parent/guardians when a student fails to attend College without authorisation.

Distribution of Responsibilities

The Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Student Action Board (SAB)

- Determine annual targets.
- Regularly review online attendance reports to analyse attendance trends and take action when appropriate.

Vice Principal

- Maintain responsibility for policy review.
- Report to SMT on attendance matters.
- Monitor attendance targets with the Faculty Heads and as part of the SAB.
- Devise attendance initiatives along with the SAB to improve performance.

Faculty Heads

- Encourage students to attend all lessons and to be punctual at all times.
- Discuss attendance issues with students and parents when appropriate and reinforce the college expectations.
- Challenge poor punctuality and attendance.
- Monitor the accuracy and timely input of registers by all staff in their area of management.
- Use online reports to monitor attendance by student, class and course.
- Meet to discuss attendance targets with the SAB; refer to the Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy if attendance pattern becomes a cause for concern for individual students and apply Faculty Contracts if appropriate.
- Communicate and implement attendance initiatives to improve performance across subject areas managed.
- Report any attendance issues, interventions/actions taken on the Events section of Columbus, under the Attendance heading.

Teachers

- Encourage students to attend all lessons and to be punctual at all times.
- Discuss attendance issues with students and parents when appropriate and reinforce the college expectations.
- Refer to the Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy if attendance pattern becomes a cause for concern for individual students and issue a Concern if appropriate.
- Meet with the Faculty Head to discuss attendance targets.
- Challenge poor punctuality and attendance.
- Ensure that a student is back on track on their return from a period of absence, clarifying and expressing their expectations (rapid catch up of all missing work / assessments)
- Record attendance as soon as possible, and no later than the end of the lesson.
- Enter an L mark if a student arrives late to the lesson.
- Use online reports to monitor attendance by student, class and course.
- Report any attendance issues, interventions/actions taken on the Events section of Columbus, under the Attendance Heading.

Tutors

- Encourage students to attend all lessons, tutorial sessions and any work placements and to be punctual at all times.
- Discuss attendance issues with students and parents when appropriate and reinforce the college expectations.
- Refer to the Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy if attendance pattern becomes a cause for concern for individual students and issue a Concern if appropriate, whilst liaising with the Faculty Head.

- Challenge poor punctuality and attendance.
- Monitor student attendance and address as soon as possible and through Learner Progress Meetings when appropriate.
- Report any attendance issues, interventions/actions taken on the Events section of Columbus, under the Attendance heading.

Student Services Staff

- Encourage students to attend all lessons, tutorial sessions and any work placements and to be punctual at all times.
- Use the online attendance report to identify the worst attending students to organise meetings with students and parent/guardians.
- Ensure that persistent non-attending students are removed from the College roll
- Use online notes to record interventions.
- Work with other staff to support improvements in student attendance, creating actions plans when necessary.

Attendance Officer

- Encourage students to attend all lessons, tutorial sessions and any work placements and to be punctual at all times.
- Use the online Absence Marks report to contact students who have failed to attend a lesson.
- Check teachers have completed their attendance registers.
- Email parent/guardians a fortnightly attendance report, where appropriate.
- Use online Events to record interventions.
- Work with other staff to support improvements in student attendance, creating actions plans when necessary.

Bursaries

Bursaries are subject to students having good attendance. Please see Student Services for more details.

How Attendance is Monitored

- Attendance registers are completed every lesson.
- Teachers notify the Attendance Officer if a student is missing from a lesson.
- The SAB monitor attendance each week and follow up students with attendance concerns.
- Faculty Heads monitor attendance on a regular basis and review data trends.
- Student Services Officers use the online Unauthorised Absence report to identify the worst attending students to organise meetings with students and parent/guardians.

Missing

Young people (16-18 inclusive) who go missing usually return the same day. However, in some instances, especially if there are repeated incidents, it may be an indicator of an underlying problem or signs that the child or student is at risk of significant of harm. It is recognised that young people who go missing just once may face the same immediate risks as those who go missing on a regular basis.

It is important to understand that if children or young people go missing on a regular basis, that staff do not become complacent and minimise their response. Each missing episode for any individual requires a consistently high level of response.

If staff at Wilberforce College become aware that a young person is missing, the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding (DSP), their deputy, or a Child Protection Officer (CPO) will contact the parents/carers, in the first instance, to ascertain more information or seek an understanding of their possible whereabouts. Staff should ask the parents/carers if a report has been made to the police and record the incident log number. If the parent/carer has not made a report, details of why should be recorded and the parent/carer informed that the college will do this in their behalf, if it is believed that the young person is at risk or possible risk of harm. Also, at this stage, consideration will be given to referring the matter to Children's Social Care.

Possible indicators of underlying problems or signs of significant harm associated with missing episodes include:

- Problems at home / family conflict
- Abuse or neglect
- Placement issues if Looked After by the Local Authority
- Wanting to harm themselves
- Issues at college including exclusion and bullying/harassment
- Pressure from friends/ associates
- Criminal or sexual exploitation/ trafficking
- Wanting to buy / use alcohol or drugs

Children/Young People Missing in Education

All student attendance (16-18 inclusive) is monitored regularly, as outlined within this policy. If a student is absent, reasonable enquires will always be made to establish their whereabouts. However, if a student remains absent for 10 consecutive, without explanation, or a cause for concern becomes known, the DSP or CPOs must be informed and the College's safeguarding procedures followed.

Child Criminal and Sexual Exploitation

Young people who go missing or are persistently absent from College may be an indicator of exploitation, especially if other key factors are also present.

Some other potential signs of criminal or sexual exploitation are:

- Missing from home and /or being found out-of-area
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts / phone calls and/or having multiple handsets
- Relationships with controlling / older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical or sexual assault / unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in results / performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

At Wilberforce College we monitor absenteeism daily to ascertain students' whereabouts to ensure they are safe from harm. We will work endlessly with all statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, including parents/carers, to protect any child at risk or at possible risk of this form of abuse.

If a member of staff is concerned about a young person who is regularly absent and also presents with any of the signs listed above, they must inform the DSP or a CPO immediately, as per the college's Child Protection Policy.

Please note: that whilst every effort will be made to follow this policy, circumstances may not always allow this or may render certain parts of the policy inappropriate. Individuals will be treated fairly and in line with legislation in all instances.