

## Attendance Policy

Version No	Purpose/Change	Lead	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
6.0	Reviewed and updated	BW	September 2021
7.0	Reviewed and updated	BW	September 2022
8.0	Reviewed and updated	BW	July 2023

### 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, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. 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**

At enrolment, students signed a commitment contract, agreed to adhere to the following expectations.

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### **Expectations Agreement**

#### **College Values**

- We conduct ourselves with integrity and respect for all.
- We make students' experience central.
- We value individuals and promote self-esteem.
- We work as a team.
- We encourage innovation, creativity and enjoyment.
- We aim for excellence in everything we do.

#### **This means:**

- I will attend and be punctual to all lessons, tutorial sessions, work experience and upskilling activities. I understand there are consequences for lateness and poor attendance.
  - I will respect myself, others and the college facilities at all times.
  - I will be prepared and do my very best in everything I do to complete tasks and work to the best of my ability and on time. I understand there are consequences if I do not do my work.
  - I will follow the college codes regarding dress, social media, safeguarding and exams.
  - I will follow the college classroom expectations, supporting a positive learning environment for all.
  - I understand that in lessons, I will not have headwear on (unless for religious reasons).
  - I will wear my lanyard and ID badge at all times whilst on the college site.
  - I understand that swearing, abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic language or actions will be dealt with in line with college behaviour policy.
  - I agree that bullying is not tolerated or acceptable.
  - I understand that phones and earphones should not be out in class, unless instructed.
  - I will not bring energy drinks into the college and will not have food or drink except bottled water in classrooms.
  - I understand that abusive or inappropriate use of social media is not acceptable, in or out of college.
  - I understand I must not bring alcohol, drugs, solvents or offensive weapons onto college premises. I also understand the seriousness of these actions.
  - I understand that smoking and vaping is only allowed in the designated smoking shelter at the back of the college.
  - I agree to adhere to the Fundamental British Values at all times, which include Democracy, Rule of Law, Tolerance, Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect.
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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.

All students, including returning students, are provided with attendance information as part of their induction process (see Appendix 1).

### **Parents/Guardians**

- To encourage students to attend and be punctual to all lessons at all times and when asked to attend additional lessons or activities by the College or a member of the College staff.
- To contact the College if a student is unable to attend College and on the same day as the absence.
- To be aware that the College may withdraw a student's place if their attendance falls below expectations, in line with the College's Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy.

### **College**

- To accurately record attendance registers for every lesson.
- To monitor attendance against performance targets.
- To monitor attendance for any additional sessions and/or lessons.
- 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.
- To ensure positive attendance is reinforced and praised where necessary.
- To offer a support structure to help improve and develop positive attendance and punctuality.

### **Distribution of Responsibilities**

#### **The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) 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 Governors and SLT on attendance matters.
- Monitor attendance targets with the Faculty Heads and Deputy Faculty Heads and as part of the Student Action Board (SAB).
- Devise attendance initiatives along with the SAB and other managers to improve attendance and performance.

## **Faculty Heads and Deputy Faculty Heads**

- Drive excellent attendance and punctuality to all lessons and activities.
- Discuss attendance issues with students and parents when appropriate and reinforce the college expectations.
- Challenge poor punctuality and attendance and celebrate improvement and excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor the accuracy and timely input of registers by all staff in their area of management.
- Regularly 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.
- Regularly review the Faculty Concern tracker and its implementation and use by staff.
- Communicate and implement attendance initiatives to improve performance across subject areas managed and to ensure positive attendance and punctuality is celebrated across the Faculty.
- Audit and review SMART targets on the ILP linked to attendance and actions to support improvements.

## **Teachers**

- Work with students to attend all lessons/activities and to be punctual at all times by setting expectations, particularly at the start of the academic year and each half term.
- Address attendance issues as soon as possible with students, reinforcing college expectations.
- Communicate with parents as soon as possible and when appropriate, in line with the College protocols, reinforcing 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 raise a pastoral log (thread) for attendance issues, following the College protocols.
- Meet with the Faculty Head and Deputy Faculty Head or Line Manager to discuss attendance targets and any students of concern.
- Challenge poor punctuality and attendance, following the College protocols for contacting parents/guardians.
- Review actions to support individual needs and celebrate improvement and excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that a student is back on track on their return from a period of absence, offering support and 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 on the register if a student arrives 15 minutes late to the lesson.
- Use online reports to monitor attendance by student, class and course.
- Record and report any attendance issues and interventions/actions taken on the Cedar system in line with the College protocols and ensure threads are closed if appropriate and/or if the matter has been resolved.

### **Academic Mentors and Student Facing Support Staff (if applicable)**

- Encourage and support students to attend all lessons, activities, 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 raise a pastoral log (thread) for attendance issues, following the College protocols.
- Challenge poor punctuality and attendance and celebrate improvement and excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor student attendance and address any issues as soon as possible including contacting parents/guardians if appropriate.
- If applicable, enter an L mark on the register if a student arrives 15 minutes late to the lesson.
- Report any attendance issues, interventions/actions taken on the Cedar system as a Pastoral Log (thread) as an attendance concern and ensure threads are closed ones issue has been resolved.

### **Student Services Staff**

- Encourage and support students to attend all lessons, activities, tutorial sessions, any work placements, additional maths and/or English lessons 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 with support for the next steps arranged.
- Use the Cedar system (Pastoral Log) to record interventions.
- Work with other staff to support improvements in student attendance, creating actions plans when necessary.
- Challenge poor punctuality and attendance and celebrate improvement and excellent attendance and punctuality.

### **Attendance Officer**

- Report any unauthorised absences to parents via email on a daily basis.
- Encourage students to attend all lessons, activities, tutorial sessions, any work placements, additional maths and/or English lessons and to be punctual at all times.
- Report any student trends or absence concerns to the Student Services Manager.
- Check teachers have completed their attendance registers and report any issues to the Student Services Manager.
- Email parent/guardians an attendance report, where appropriate.
- Challenge poor punctuality and attendance, and celebrate improvement and excellent attendance and punctuality.
- Work with other staff to support improvements in student attendance.

### **Bursaries**

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

## How Attendance is Monitored

- Attendance registers are completed every lesson.
- Parents/guardians receive an email of any unauthorised absences on a daily basis.
- Teachers will contact students and parents/guardians in line with the College protocols.
- The Student Action Board (SAB) monitor attendance each week and follow up students with attendance concerns.
- Faculty Heads and Deputy Faculty Heads monitor attendance on a regular basis and review data trends and actions taken by staff.
- Student Services staff use the online Unauthorised Absence report to identify the worst attending students to organise meetings with students and parent/guardians when appropriate.
- Attendance systems allow staff to view and track class and group attendance, which can inform intervention if required but also to recognise positive attendance.
- All actions regarding attendance concerns are recorded on the College's internal information system.

## 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 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/guardians, in the first instance, to ascertain more information or seek an understanding of their possible whereabouts. Staff should ask the parents/guardians if a report has been made to the police and record the incident log number. If the parent/guardian has not made a report, details of why should be recorded and the parent/guardian informed that the college will do this on 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, but are not limited to:

- 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
- Peer-on-peer abuse including sexual harassment and sexual violence

## **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 a significant period of time, without explanation, or a cause for concern becomes known, the Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding, their Deputy or a Child Protection Officer 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 to ascertain students' whereabouts to ensure they are safe from harm. We will work endlessly with all statutory and non-statutory stakeholders, including parents/guardians, 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 Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding, their Deputy or a Child Protection Officer 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.*

## Appendix 1 – Guidance for Students

Positive attendance is essential for a positive experience, learning and outcomes. Wilberforce College will support every student to attend well and be punctual, both essential behaviours now and for future progression in higher education, apprenticeships, or employment.

We will help you to achieve the very best, with support and challenge.

### Why?

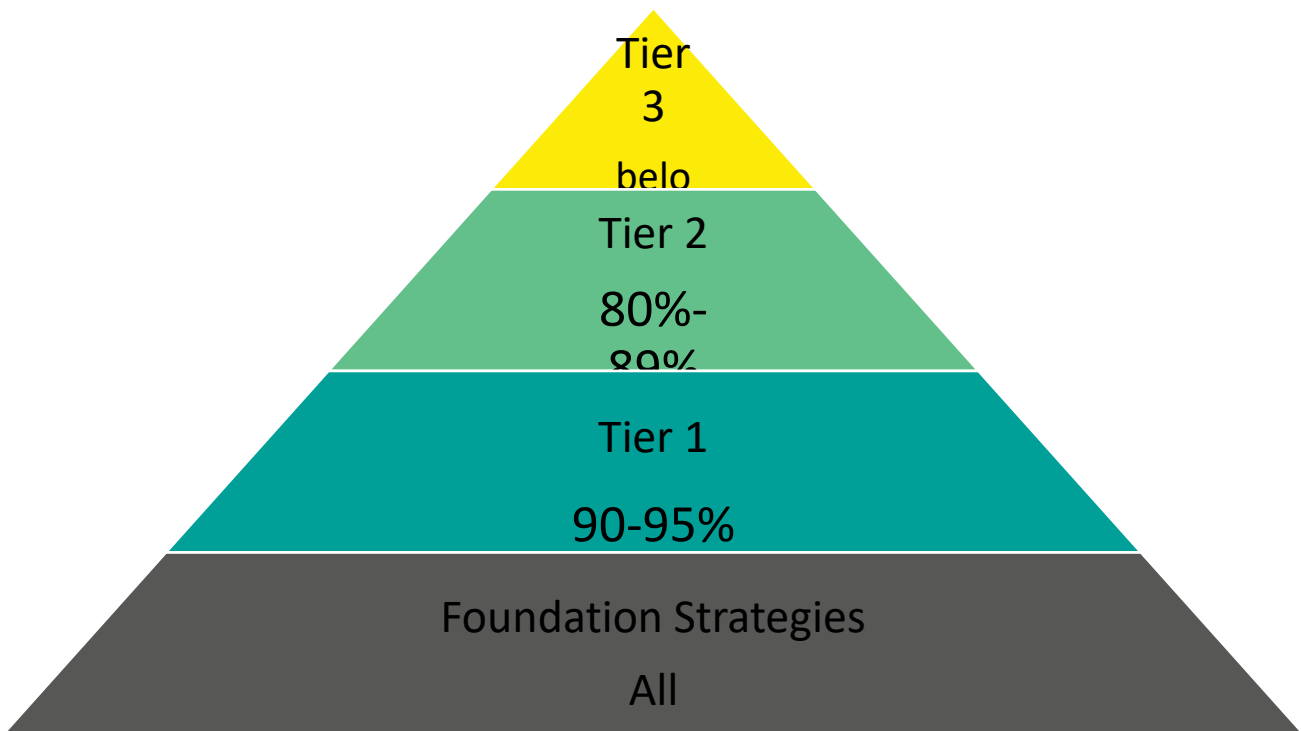




## What happens if I am poorly?

1. Parent/guardian to inform the College reception before 9.00am of the day of absence.
2. It is expected that you will catch up with any learning or work missed.
3. You should seek additional support if required by contacting one of our support services or speak directly to your teacher.

## Attendance process – what to expect:



- **Foundation Strategies** are in place for all students across the College, supporting you to maintain great attendance by engaging in the strong College community, providing Academic Mentors and support links, checking you are enrolled on the right courses and providing an enriching curriculum so you can build relationships with your peers and the staff here at the College. You will gain access to outstanding teaching and learning experiences to ensure you enjoy your time at Wilberforce College and achieve your potential. Celebration of great attendance and improved attendance will be promoted every half term due to its importance. Faculty teams will submit termly nominations for awards.
- **Tier 1** strategies are aimed at encouraging better attendance for all students and preventing absenteeism before it affects achievement. You will have meetings with your teachers to review attendance and punctuality as part of your assessment reviews. Support plans will be discussed to ensure you keep on top of studies and gain any support needed.
- **Tier 2** interventions are designed to address barriers to attendance for students at greater risk of chronic absenteeism, such as those who missed over 10% of learning. As students you should expect a Faculty Head meeting and a Faculty Contract agreed by yourself.

- **Tier 3** approaches provide intensive support to students missing too much learning to succeed, often involving wider support and access to agencies if needed. A review of your College place will be completed within the first 6 weeks of the academic year. If improvements are not made you may be asked to leave the College. As students you should expect a meeting with Student Services and a College Contract agreed by yourself. When placed onto a College Contract your place at the College will be reviewed by a Senior Leader.

**Expect staff to contact and inform your parents/guardians that you have been late or have missed a lesson.**

### **Support networks**

We understand that at times some students may experience issues that will impact on attendance, such as mental health. We need to know how we can support you, working with you to improve access to learning so your journey with us is positive, with support available to manage your studies and health side by side. Speak to Student Services, located at the College reception if you need any additional support.

### **Key contacts**

Student Services (based at the college reception): [student.services@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:student.services@wilberforce.ac.uk)  
College reception: 01482 711688

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Ben Wallis [bw@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:bw@wilberforce.ac.uk)

Lead Person for Child Protection (Deputy Safeguarding Lead): Jo Brownlee  
[jbr@wilberforce.ac.uk](mailto:jbr@wilberforce.ac.uk)

Contacts for external agencies can be found on the College website [www.wilberforce.ac.uk](http://www.wilberforce.ac.uk) or speak to a member of the Student Services team located at the reception.