

Attendance Policy

Version No	Purpose/Change	Lead	Impact Assess	Review Date
1.0	Introduction of policy	BW		September 2014
	<i>Previous versions available</i>			
9.0	Reviewed and updated	BW		July 2024

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Attendance Policy is to clarify the expectations of all students at Wilberforce College and has been informed by staff and student voice.

High levels of attendance and excellent punctuality are both characteristic of students who achieve above or in-line with their potential. Research shows that 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 potential. Every student should aim for 100% attendance.

Refer to the Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy if a student's attendance falls below the expectations set out in this document as agreed during enrolment. A student's place is at risk if their attendance and punctuality fall below what is expected of them. 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.

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.

Returning students may be placed on a Formal Intervention or Final Warning to work towards this goal if their cumulative attendance and/or Punctuality 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 and identify any barriers to learning.
- 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)

- Determine annual targets.
- Regularly review online attendance reports to analyse attendance trends and take action when appropriate.
- Issue and monitor Final Warnings to students who consistently fall below College expectations for attendance and/or punctuality.
- Revoke a College place when a student persistently fails to adhere to College expectations for attendance and/or punctuality, ensuring any barriers to positive attendance have been reasonably addressed and the student has had the opportunity to achieve positive attendance/punctuality.

Vice Principal

- Maintain responsibility for policy review.
- Report to Governors and SLT on attendance matters.
- Monitor attendance targets with the Faculty Heads.
- Devise attendance initiatives along with other managers to improve attendance and performance.
- Monitor students who have had their College place revoked ensuring they are offered support into alternative provision or employment.

Faculty Heads

- Drive excellent attendance and punctuality to all lessons and activities and identify early any trends and patterns that cause concern.
- 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 Vice Principal; 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 Formal Interventions if appropriate.
- Regularly review the Attendance '3 steps' and ensure it is implemented and used consistently by staff across the faculty.
- 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 Faculty Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) linked to attendance and actions to support improvements.

Teachers

- Set and clarify high 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.
- Work with students to identify any barriers to learning and support them to attend all lessons/activities and to be punctual at all times.
- Communicate with parents/guardians as soon as possible and when appropriate, in line with the College protocols ('3 Steps'), 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 following the College protocols.
- Meet with the Faculty Head to discuss attendance targets and any students of concern.
- 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 and record the number of minutes late.
- Use online reports to monitor attendance by student, class and course and take action where necessary, in line with College protocols.
- Record and report any attendance issues and interventions/actions taken on the Cedar system in line with the College protocols.

Progress 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 and record the number of minutes late.
- Report any attendance issues, interventions/actions taken on the Cedar system as a Pastoral Log (thread) as an attendance concern.

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 reports 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 and/or the Faculty Head of the class area.
- 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.
- Staff monitor and identify attendance and punctuality trends on an ongoing basis in line with the College protocols.
- 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.
- The Vice Principal meets with the Faculty Head on a fortnightly basis to review attendance and actions/sanctions taken to support individual students.
- The Senior Leadership Team review attendance on a monthly basis as part of their formal meeting cycle. Individual students on a Final Warning will be reviewed by SLT each week.
- 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 Safeguard Lead (DSL), their deputy (DDSL), 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
- Child-on-child 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 enquiries 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 DSL or DDSL 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 DSL or DDSL 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 8.45am 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

All staff will follow the College protocols (3 steps) as identified below:

Step 1 – If a student misses a lesson or is late to a lesson (more than 15 minutes). If absent, an automated email will be sent to the student's parents/guardians that same day informing them of absence from a lesson. The Attendance Officer will be informed if possible and a follow-up call made to the parents.

Step 2 – If a student misses or is late to a second lesson that week or the same lesson over two consecutive weeks, the member of staff will meet with the student and identify and record any barriers to learning (if applicable). A concern will be recorded on the College systems and a phone call to parents will be made by that member of staff. Arrangements will be made for the student to make up for 'lost learning'.

Step 3 – If further lessons are missed and/or punctuality is consistently poor the student will be referred to the Faculty Head for a Formal Intervention. Parents/Guardians will be contacted regarding the ongoing patterns of behaviour.

Formal Intervention – At the Formal Intervention stage, a meeting will be arranged for the student to meet with their Progress Mentor. A two-week action plan will be put in place, which may involve a daily attendance report or other initiatives. Any barriers to learning will be addressed and a plan to catch up on lost learning put in place. Parents/Guardians will be informed of the situation, actions taken and the consequences if the students fails to meet the targets set.

If reasonable progress has been made to achieving the targets set by the two-week review date, the Formal Intervention can be removed and the student placed either on a support plan to continue to make progress or in a monitoring group.

If a student fails to make reasonable progress towards achieving the targets set by the two-week review date they will be referred to SLT for a Final Warning to be issued.

Final Warning – At the Final Warning stage a meeting will be arranged for the student to meet with a member of Student Services and a member of SLT. A two-week action plan will be put in place, which may involve a daily attendance report or other initiatives. Any barriers to learning will be addressed and a plan to catch up on lost learning put in place. Parents/Guardians will be informed of the situation and offered a meeting with Student Services and SLT and made aware of the consequences if the students fails to meet the targets set.

If reasonable progress has been made to achieving the targets set by the two-week review date, the Final Warning can be removed and the student placed either on a support plan to continue to make progress or in a monitoring group.

If a student fails to make reasonable progress towards achieving the targets set by the two-week review date they will be referred to SLT and a decision made to remove their place at the College. Parents/Guardians will be made aware of this decision and the support available to the student in securing alternative provision or employment.

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. The College has a Fitness Study Policy, which may be invoked if necessary to support a student in accessing learning. Speak to Student Services if you need any additional support.

Key contacts

Student Services: student.services@wilberforce.ac.uk

College reception: 01482 711688

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Ben Wallis bw@wilberforce.ac.uk

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Jo Brownlee jbr@wilberforce.ac.uk

Contacts for external agencies can be found on the College website www.wilberforce.ac.uk or speak to a member of the Student Services team.