

Attendance Policy

Version No	Purpose/Change	Lead	Review Date
1.0	Introduction of policy	BW	September 2014
	<i>Previous versions available</i>		
10.0	Reviewed and updated	SDE	June 2025

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

A. Students

At enrolment, students signed a commitment contract and 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:

1. 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.
2. I will respect myself, the college facilities, equipment and others at all times.
3. I will be prepared and do my very best in everything I do. I will complete all tasks to the best of my ability and submit work on time. I understand that there will be consequences if I fail to meet these expectations.
4. I will complete independent study to support my success, which is 1 hour for every hour in class.
5. I will follow the College codes regarding dress, social media, safeguarding, exams and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
6. I will follow the College classroom expectations, supporting a positive learning environment for all.
7. I understand that in lessons, I will not have headwear on (unless for religious reasons).
8. I will wear my lanyard and ID badge at all times whilst on the College site. I will wear my lanyard and ID badge around my neck at all times, whilst on the College site, ensuring it remains clearly visible.
9. I understand that swearing, abusive, racist, sexist, homophobic language or actions will be dealt with in line with college behaviour policy.
10. I agree that bullying is not tolerated or acceptable.
11. I understand that phones and earphones should not be out in class, unless instructed.
12. I will not bring energy drinks into the College and will not have food or drink except bottled water in classrooms.
13. I understand I must not bring, or be under the influence of, alcohol, drugs, solvents or bring offensive weapons onto college premises. I also understand the seriousness of these actions.

14. I understand that the College is a smoke and vape free environment and that these activities will lead to disciplinary action. I also agree that I will not smoke or vape in the vicinity of the College.
 15. I agree to adhere to the Fundamental British Values at all times, which include Democracy, Rule of Law, Tolerance, Individual Liberty and Mutual Respect.
 16. I understand that abusive or inappropriate use of social media, whether in or outside of college, is unacceptable and may lead to disciplinary action.
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Returning students may be placed on a Formal Intervention or Final Warning to work towards these goals if their cumulative attendance and/or punctuality for the previous year was deemed unacceptable by College Managers.

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

B. Parents/Guardians

- To encourage students to consistently attend and be punctual to all scheduled lessons, as well as any additional sessions or activities requested by the College or a member of staff.
- To ensure the College is contacted on the same day if a student is unable to attend, providing a clear reason for the absence.
- To be aware that the College reserves the right to withdraw a student's place if their attendance falls below the expected standard, in accordance with the College's Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour for Learning Policy.

C. 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.

Assistant Principal (Student Support and Experience)

- Maintain responsibility for policy review.
- Report to Governors and SLT on attendance matters.
- Monitor attendance targets with the Heads of Faculty.
- 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.

Head of Faculty

- 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 Student Action Board; 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 an attendance pattern becomes a cause for concern for individual students and follow the College protocols.
- Follow the '3 Steps' protocol and report a 'Cause for Concern' to the Head of Faculty including identifying targets that need to be met.
- 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 using the Catch-Up Clinic system).
- Record attendance within the first 15 minutes of the session
- 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 always be punctual.
- 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 Action Board

- To encourage and support students in attending all lessons, activities, tutorial sessions, and work placements, and to ensure they are always punctual.
- Meet with the Heads of Faculty and review those students on formal intervention.
- If insufficient progress has been made, issue a Final Warning.
- Initiate a final two-week action plan, monitor and withdraw student from the college if insufficient progress has been made.

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 action 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 Head of Faculty 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 automated email of any unauthorised absences on a Tuesday and Friday afternoon.
- 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.
- Heads of Faculty 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 Student Action Board meets with each Head of Faculty on a fortnightly basis to review attendance and actions/sanctions taken to support individual students.
- 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.

Term-time Holidays

Wherever possible, students should take holidays during College holidays. It is disruptive to miss days at any point during the year, and particularly so at the start of the college year, when new routines are being set up.

If for some unavoidable reason a student needs to take a holiday in term time, you must send a letter to the Principal asking for permission, and stating the reasons why this needs to be during term time. The letter must be sent to the Principal no later than 10 working/college days prior to the Holiday commencing. We will only agree to a student missing days for family holidays in any college year in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Principal.

If it is agreed by the Principal that a student may take a holiday during term time, they will be placed on a College Contract, commencing on their return, which will state that the student agrees, within their own time, to have caught up with all work missed during your holidays and by the end of the three week period of the Contract. Students will be monitored during this period and failure to fulfil the terms of the College Contract will result in further sanctions as stated in the Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour Management Policy, which may result in a student's college place being revoked. If all work is complete and verified by the teaching staff, the College Contract will be terminated, unless the college has reason to believe otherwise.

If a student takes a holiday during term time without the Principal's permission, this will be classed as absent. The college reserves the right to implement the Student Code of Conduct and Behaviour Management Policy and invoke sanctions at any stage of the policy and also withdraw any Bursary payment due to be paid during the period of absence.

Parents and Guardians will be contacted to confirm the request and may be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the application to take a holiday during term time.

Procedure

1. Write a letter to the Principal requesting permission to take a holiday during term time stating the reasons why you consider that you have exceptional circumstances. This letter should be handed in to Student Services.
2. If agreed by the Principal; sign the College Contract in the presence of the Student Services member of staff.
3. Meet with all appropriate staff prior to the holiday to collect work that will be missed.
4. Hand in completed work to the relevant staff and inform the Student Services Manager that it has been completed. Your teachers will be contacted to check that the conditions of the College Contract have been met.

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:

Registers

- **Staff Responsibility:** The staff member responsible for the session must complete the attendance register within **15 minutes** of the session's start time. Once completed, the register should be **closed**.
- **Attendance Officer:** The Attendance Officer(s) will add any information received relating to absence or lateness to the register, starting **20 minutes after** the session begins.

Attendance '3 Steps' System

Step 1: Missed lesson

Trigger	Action
Student misses a lesson	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Attendance Officer alerted by teacher on 'Attendance Reporting' Teams channel.2. Teacher or Attendance Officer attempts to contact the student via a telephone call and the outcome documented on Cedar.3. Automated absence email sent <i>on Tuesday and Friday afternoons</i> to parents/guardians notifying them of the student absence(s).4. At the earliest opportunity, Teacher informs student about required attendance at the Catch-Up Clinic to make up for the lost lesson time and documents on Cedar.
Late arrival at lesson	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Over 15 minutes late to lesson, register is recorded as 'Late' and amount of time late indicated on register. Teacher informs student about required attendance at the Catch-Up Clinic to make up for the lost lesson time and documents on Cedar.

Step 2: Second missed/late lesson (same week or same lesson in two consecutive weeks)

Trigger	Action
Student misses or is late to a second lesson in the same week or misses the same lesson over two straight weeks.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Teacher meets student to identify any barriers to learning.2. Teacher records barriers and/or concerns on college system (Cedar).3. Teacher contacts parents/guardians to voice concerns regarding absence from lesson(s).4. Student informed by teacher to attend Catch-Up Clinic* to recover missed learning and documents on Cedar

*[***Catch-Up Clinic** - This is an academic support initiative designed to assist students who have missed learning due to unauthorised absence or disengagement during scheduled lessons. Under the guidance of subject teachers, Progress Mentors, or Heads of Faculty, students may be directed to attend compulsory catch-up sessions. These may involve independent study in the Learning Resource Centre (LRC), temporary placement in parallel classes, targeted small-group interventions, attendance on non-timetabled days, or other tailored support measures. The Catch-Up Clinic is a key element of our broader academic support strategy, ensuring that all students are given the opportunity to close learning gaps and sustain curriculum progression.]*

Step 3: Continued misses or chronic lateness

Trigger	Action
More lessons missed, persistent lateness, has not caught up with work.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher refers student to Head of Faculty for formal intervention using the 'Cause for Concern' thread on Cedar and includes the target(s) the student must achieve. 2. Head of Faculty informs parents/guardians about the attendance pattern and the need for formal intervention. Head of Faculty reiterates to parents/guardians the possible consequences if student does not engage in the intervention strategies and documents on Cedar. 3. <i>Formal intervention:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Head of Faculty mandates the faculty Progress Mentor to meet with student and start formal intervention, if required b. Two-week action plan set by Progress Mentor for student from targets provided by teacher/Head of Faculty and documents on Cedar c. Academic Mentor informs parents/guardians of plan and conveys consequences for failing targets through parental email d. Academic Mentor addresses potential learning barriers, plans catch-up steps and monitors student progress. <i>Student Action Board (SAB) involvement:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Head of Faculty notifies Student Action Board at fortnightly meeting of student progress b. Student Action Board offers/provides pastoral or SEND support (if required) and monitors student progress c. When carrying out the two-week review, if progress is good: Formal intervention is suspended, and student moves to support or monitoring. d. If progress is insufficient the Student Action Board issues a Final Warning.

Final warning stage

Trigger	Action
No improvement after formal intervention.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Student meets with Student Action Board members (Assistant Principal and Student Services Manager).2. New two-week action plan initiated.3. Parents invited to attend meeting and reminded of potential further consequences.4. Two-week review:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. If progress is made: Final Warning suspended, and student enters support or monitoring.b. If no progress made: Student will have place at college withdrawn

Appeals process

Students and their parent/guardian may request a meeting with the Student Action Board to appeal a decision, but this will only be granted where new and relevant evidence is presented by the student. The purpose of the meeting is to review the new information and determine whether it warrants a reconsideration of the original decision.

Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Automated System	Sends absence emails in Step 1
Teacher	Logs absence/lateness, informs student, meets them in Step 2, and makes call(s) to parent/guardian. Informs Head of Faculty and provides targets.
Attendance Officer	Alerted by Teams, may make follow-up calls
Head of Faculty (HoF)	Receives referrals in Step 3, leads formal intervention, liaises with Student Action Board and Progress Mentor (if required)
Progress Mentor	Drafts and oversees two-week action plan in formal intervention and monitors
Student Action Board	Provides support and escalates to Final Warning if needed. Gives student Final Warning and removes place at college (if required)

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 to 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): Stewart Edwards sde@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.