



SOUTH  
LEICESTERSHIRE  
COLLEGE

# Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2014-15

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## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 At South Leicestershire College we believe in the importance of a high rate of attendance and punctuality in order for our learners to succeed. Our learners, as a whole, have proved more likely to achieve their qualification if they regularly attend classes. Learners who arrive late have a huge impact not just on their own learning but also on the progress of the rest of the class.
- 1.2 The Attendance & Punctuality Policy outlines how teaching staff, support staff and learners should work together to strive to improve attendance and punctuality and help students achieve their full potential.

## 2. Main Principles

- 2.1 Learners are given a 100% expectation for attendance with a 95% target to accommodate for illness.
- 2.2 Teaching staff, progress coaches and learners should be aware of what qualifies as an authorised absence for record on the register and what qualifies as an unauthorised absence. The guidelines for this are outlined in this policy.
- 2.3 The college has high expectations on the implication of pro-active monitoring of learner attendance. This is implemented from teaching staff, progress coaches and the attendance officer.
- 2.4 There are clear consequences that arise if learners are failing to meet college requirements for attendance. These are outlined and followed as per the attendance policy.

## 3. Learners with special circumstances

- 3.1 If a learner has a disability or an on-going medical difficulty that directly affects their attendance or ability to arrive on time this should be identified with the learner and the additional support team. The college will work with the learner to ensure that reasonable

adjustments and supports are in place and levels of expectation set accordingly. Any reviews or disciplinary actions will take into account and be responsive to the needs of learners with disabilities, learning difficulties or other emotional, social or behavioural needs. Support will be offered and provided where appropriate.

## 4. College expectations of Teaching Staff

- 4.1 All teaching staff are required to communicate clearly the college's high expectation of punctuality and attendance; where appropriate teaching staff should be prepared to hand out the attendance policy or other relevant materials to help raise awareness of college procedures.
- 4.2 All teaching staff should consistently reinforce the message that poor attendance is not acceptable and where it falls below an agreed level this will lead to action, including possible disciplinary action or even withdrawal. Teaching staff must also make learners aware of additional support services available.
- 4.3 All teaching staff should make learners aware of the expected method of contact for if they are going to be absent; which should be by 9.30am, or at least half an hour before they are due to be in the session. The absence should be reported through the attendance officer.
- 4.4 Teaching staff should be reporting any absence of learners to the relevant progress coach and the attendance officer. This relates to occasions when:
  - The learner reports their absence to the teaching staff directly instead of the attendance officer.
  - There is a learner or multiple learners missing who have not reported absence to the teaching staff, the progress coach or the attendance officer. Following checks carried out by the progress coach, teaching staff should speak to the learner and the progress coach at the next earliest opportunity to set work missed in the session.
  - There is a long term issue which causes a learner to be absent for a significant period of time.

- 4.5 Teaching staff should complete the class register accurately and fully within half an hour of the session commencing.
- 4.6 Teaching staff should strive to update contact information as often as possible.

## **5. College expectations of Progress Coaches**

- 5.1 All progress coaches are required to communicate clearly the college's high expectation of punctuality and attendance; where appropriate, progress coaches should be prepared to hand out the attendance policy or other relevant materials to help raise awareness of college procedures.
- 5.2 All progress coaches should consistently reinforce the message that poor attendance is not acceptable and where it falls below an agreed level this will lead to action, including possible disciplinary action or even withdrawal. Progress coaches must also make learners aware of additional support services available.
- 5.3 All progress coaches should make learners aware of the expected method of contact for if they are going to be absent; which should be by 9.30am, or at least half an hour before they are due to be in the session. The absence should be reported through the attendance officer.
- 5.4 In the event of unauthorised or unreported absence, progress coaches should be checking the submitted register of their relevant caseload to check and follow up on any absentees. When necessary and available, the progress coach will conduct classroom checks, for their specific area, in the morning and afternoon of each day. Any noted absentee(s), will receive a phone call, text and/or emails from the progress coach enquiring about the learners' absence. If there is no response to these initial attempts at contact then the attendance officer will follow up these enquiries.
- 5.5 Progress Coaches should be reporting any absence of learners to the relevant teaching staff and the attendance officer. This relates to occasions when:
  - The learner reports their absence to the progress coach directly instead of the attendance officer.
  - There is a long term issue which causes a learner to be absent for a significant period of time.
- 5.6 The progress coach should address any absences with the learner through 1:1 meetings and set targets as part of their progression. Details of which may be outlined at the progress coaches' discretion, though it must ensure the learner is given realistic yet challenging

targets for improvement and makes the learner aware that they will continue to be monitored for future progression.

- 5.7 Progress Coaches should strive to update contact information as often as possible.

## **6. College expectations of the Attendance Officer**

- 6.1 The attendance officer has initial access and control of each centralised method of reported absence. The phone line to call in, text and emails lie in the first instance with the attendance officer. If, for whatever reason, the attendance officer is unable to be the first point of call, then an allocated member of staff will take these initial responsibilities in their place.
- 6.2 The attendance officer will follow up on any unauthorised absence within 1 working day of receiving the query from the progress coach. Allowances can be made if, for a multitude of reasons, the attendance officer is not able to follow up within the day; but this will be completed the next working day.
- 6.3 The attendance officer will monitor learners whose overall attendance percentage falls below college expectations of 95%.
- 6.4 The attendance officer will monitor any learner who is seen as a cause for concern; this may arise from teaching/support staff referrals, or from regular monitoring of learner attendance.
- 6.5 The attendance officer will regularly obtain attendance reports for learners/ subject areas that may be a cause for concern and discuss with curriculum and support staff.
- 6.6 Any information obtained with regards to any learner should be logged on the PS Plus account located on the SLC database. This information is logged onto this as it is confidential reference for the attendance officer only.
- 6.7 Any issue with learner attendance should be a team effort to address. The role of the attendance officer is to act as mediator between teaching staff, progress coaches and the learner and to make referrals as necessary for disciplinary action and additional support.
- 6.8 The attendance officer should strive to update contact information as often as possible.

## 7. College expectations of the Learners

- 7.1 All learners are required to attend **all** scheduled lessons and arrive **before** the start of the lesson appropriately prepared to begin work.
- 7.2 All learners are required to inform the attendance officer **before** the lesson if they are going to be absent and have a genuine reason. This can be done in person; the attendance officer is based in the Additional Support Office (1-04), by phone (0116 2643535 ext 3796), by text to 88020SLCATTEND stating their name, course and reason for absence or by email (absence@slcollege.ac.uk).
- 7.3 Learners should strive to be in control of their own time keeping and levels of attendance.
- 7.4 Learners should understand what is required of them with regards to punctuality and attendance and what the consequences are of falling below college expectations.
- 7.5 Learners should be aware that it is not appropriate to schedule health and other appointments during college hours. If this cannot be avoided, a medical note or some sort of proof will be required.
- 7.6 Learners should be aware that it is not appropriate to schedule holidays during term time. If there is something unavoidable a learner needs to be in attendance of, this should be discussed with the learners' college tutor before to discuss any arrangements that can be made.
- 7.7 All learners should commit to complete outstanding work as homework from missed classes, with support as appropriate.
- 7.8 Learners should keep make sure their contact information is up to date and accurate. If a learner changes any of their contact information they should inform the college as soon as possible.

## 8. Rules for Authorised Absence

All authorised absences are marked on the register as **A** and should have the following characteristics:

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- 1 They should be for a known purpose
- 2 The purpose should be valid
- 3 The member of staff should have agreed the absence in advance, preferably in writing.

Examples of occasions when teaching staff may allow an 'authorised absence' include: -

- Job interviews.
- University Interviews or Higher Education Fairs.
- Hospital appointments (should provide appointment card or letter).
- Religious festivals for the religion to which the learner belongs. Up to 4 days per academic year are permitted for recognised festivals falling during the College calendar.
- An appointment with an IAG Adviser.
- Attendance at a probation meeting or a court appearance.
- Attendance at a funeral.
- Severe disruption to the learners mode of transport to College e.g. bus or rail strike, leaving them with no practical means of getting to College.
- Driving test and theory test.
- Emergency doctor and dentist appointments are permitted (an appointment card is required). Normally these should be booked outside lesson time.
- Student Representative Meetings (these are known in advance and details sent to tutors)

*The list is not intended to be exhaustive or definitive. The decision to grant authorised absence remains at all times with the College. If an occasion arises where you are uncertain contact your programme area leader.*