



# Attendance & Punctuality Policy & Procedure 2021-22

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## 1. Introduction

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1.1 College timetables are designed to deliver teaching and learning to students in the number of hours and sessions needed by them to succeed on their chosen Programme of Study. If students do not attend then they limit their ability to succeed, students who are not punctual not only reduce their time for study but also delay and restrict the teaching and learning of other students within the group.

1.2 All students should aspire to have 100% attendance and punctuality. Improving attendance and punctuality improves achievement and supports students in achieving their full potential. Attendance is an essential behaviour in preparing students for employment.

1.3 All children and young people, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children and young people missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Effective information sharing between parents/carers, education providers and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all young people are safe and receiving suitable education.

1.4 The College will monitor the attendance of students identified as part of a Vulnerable Group, having a serious safeguarding risk and those with an EHCP, on a daily basis.

## 2. Scope

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2.1 This policy applies to all students of the College including those on Higher Education programmes and apprenticeships.

2.2 This policy covers student attendance and punctuality for all timetabled sessions and work placement activities.

### 3. Student Responsibilities

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3.1 With the above in mind the College expects all students to:

- Ensure 100% attendance for all sessions including maths and English (where applicable).
- Notify your Progress Tutor (full time 16-18) or course tutor in advance if you know that you will be **absent** for a session (with an acceptable reason).
- Arrive on time for the beginning of all sessions, including maths and English (where applicable).
- Notify your Progress Tutor (full time 16-18) or course tutor in advance if you know that you will be **late** for a session (with an acceptable reason).
- Minimise disruption to the rest of the class when arriving late to a session.
- Ensure that routine medical and dental appointments are only be made on study days or during holiday periods (wherever possible).
- Ensure that holidays are not taken during term (the College calendar is available via the website and is published far in advance of the start of the academic year).
- Understand that unauthorised absences may affect their attendance record, opportunities for progression and references for employment or further study.
- Recognise that poor attendance and punctuality can result in any financial support being withdrawn.
- Acknowledge that poor attendance or punctuality will result in action being taken under the Maintaining Student Responsibility - Academic Policy and Procedure.

### 4. Staff Responsibilities

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3.1 It is recognised that tutors also have a responsibility to monitor the attendance and punctuality of students in their sessions and to follow the College guidelines, namely to:

- Arrive on time to each session
- Complete registers accurately within 30 minutes of the start of each session to monitor attendance
- Ensure the register is taken at the beginning of the session and that any student who is not in class when the register is taken will be identified on the register as late. Students should not be sent away from sessions if they are late.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality of students closely and set Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound (SMART) targets for improvements
- Inform the Progress (or Pastoral) Tutor of any issues or emerging pattern of absences /lateness so that appropriate measures can be instigated
- Tutors / Progress tutors will follow up any students who are absent with parents/carers (if under 18). The absence of any School Links/Taster student should be referred to the School Links Co-ordinator.

- Tutors / Progress tutors will follow up absenteeism of vulnerable students with the Safeguarding Team or taster organiser.

## 5. Procedure for notification of absences

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5.1 From time to time, due to sickness/absence, attendance at College may not be possible. Under these circumstances, the following guidance applies. If you are sick and unable to attend you must notify the College before the start of your session on the first day of absence telephoning:

5.1.1 **Full/Part time students (Southport College):** the main Information and Reception Desk at Mornington Road, Southport on (01704 500606).The appropriate email address will be provided during induction.

5.1.2 **Full time students (KGV College):** the main Information and Reception Desk at Scarisbrick New Road, Southport on (01704 530601).The appropriate email address will be provided during induction.

5.2 **A relative or friend can email/call on your behalf** and the email/call should be made prior to the start of your first session. You or the e-mailer/caller must provide the following:

- Your name and/or the caller's name
- The course you are attending
- How long the sickness is likely to last
- Whether medical treatment is being sought
- Your absence will then be logged on ProMonitor to notify staff and registers will reflect that you are sick.

5.3 Upon returning to college after sickness of **fewer than 7 calendar days**, a doctors' note or letter may be requested from the parent/guardian (students over the age of 18 can self-certificate). The written confirmation of the absence should be handed in to your Progress Tutor (full-time 16-18 students) or course tutor (adult and part-time students) immediately upon your return to college.

5.4 Any student who cannot attend due to sickness for **more than 7 calendar days** must provide proof that they have sought professional medical advice. Where possible a sick note or other signed confirmation of the illness should be provided. If the illness continues beyond the period of the first sick note, further sick notes (or other signed confirmation) should be submitted so that the whole period of sickness is covered. If the period of illness becomes protracted and results in the student being unable to successfully complete their course of study, relevant staff i.e. the Health and Wellbeing Coordinator, Safeguarding Officer or Learning Support Manager should be made aware to enable reasonable adjustments to be put into place (if appropriate). The student may be invited to re-start the course during the next academic year or at the next intake, whichever is the sooner.

5.5 All other absence must have been agreed with the Progress Tutor and course leader in advance of the absence.

5.6 Failure to follow the College procedures may result in any financial support provided being withheld/withdrawn.

- 5.7 The College will notify the relevant local authority of the details of relevant students who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten College days or more without permission
- 5.8 Where a relevant learner has not returned to College for ten days after an authorised absence, or is absent from College without authorisation for twenty consecutive College days, the learner can be removed from the admission register when the College and (where relevant) the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the learner. This only applies if the College does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the learner is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

## 7. Higher Education

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- 7.1 Whilst the College expects an attendance rate of 100% it is accepted that occasionally external factors may affect attendance for HE students. The College therefore sets a minimum expectation of 85% attendance for students on HE programmes but recognises that excellent attendance and engagement supports students in achieving their full potential.
- 7.2 In order to ensure the best outcomes for students it should be acknowledged that poor attendance or punctuality will result in action being taken under the Maintaining Student Responsibility - Academic Policy and Procedure.

## 8. Procedure for School Links students

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- 8.1 School students studying vocational programmes are expected to attend College in line with the expectations set out in *Section 3 Student Responsibilities* and to notify the College of any absence as stated in *Section 5 Procedure for notification of absences*.
- 8.2 Tutors should notify the Head of Learning Support (01704 392872) of any absence or lateness of any School Links student. They will then inform the relevant school in accordance with their service agreement.

## 9. Vulnerable Students

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- 9.1 There are a number of vulnerable students across the College, particularly in the following groups:
- Looked After Children
  - Care Leavers
  - Teenage Parents
  - Young Carers
  - Those under the Youth Offending Service
  - Those with significant mental health issues
  - Those who have been or are being exploited
- 9.2 These students often have extra barriers to overcome and may require extra support with day to day life. They are often supported by an external network of organisations but need our help and encouragement too. They can experience disruption in their personal lives and education and they may have genuine reasons for absence or poor punctuality that are beyond their control.

- 9.3 In some instances these students may be set realistic attendance targets but the College must be informed of any absence, as set out in *Section 5 Procedure for notification of absences*.
- 9.4 If you have concerns regarding the repeated absence of a learner you should notify the Progress Tutor and Safeguarding Team immediately. Going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks, including abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation; child criminal exploitation; mental health problems; substance abuse and other issues. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future.

## 10. Making Reasonable Enquiries

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- 10.1 The term 'reasonable enquiries' grants Colleges and local authorities a degree of flexibility in decision-making, particularly as the steps that need to be taken in a given case will vary. The term 'reasonable' also makes clear that there is a limit to what the College and local authority is expected to do.
- 10.2 In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that schools, Colleges and the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives and other local stakeholders who are involved. Any information provided will be recorded on ProMonitor.
- 10.3 If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, this information should be passed immediately to a member of the Safeguarding Team who will a referral to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).
- 10.4 When the whereabouts of a child or vulnerable young person is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that the local authority and the College will complete and record on ProMonitor one or more of the following actions:
- make contact with the parent, relatives and carers using known contact details;
  - check local databases within the local authority;
  - follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, College admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
  - check with agencies known to be involved with family;
  - check with local authority and College from which child or young person moved originally, if known;
  - check with any local authority and College to which a child may have moved;
- 10.5 Making these enquiries may not always lead to establishing the location of the child, but will provide a steer on what action should be taken next, for example, to contact the police, children's social care and, in cases where there may be concerns for the safety of a child who has travelled abroad or who is in immediate danger, the Police.

## 11. Data and Confidentiality

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- 11.1 Instances of Children Missing Education (CME) will be recorded in a central record on ProMonitor.
- 11.2 All personal and sensitive information will be managed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) and the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality.
- 11.3 There may be occasion where the College is obliged to disclose information, notwithstanding that the learner has refused consent:
- Where the learner's behaviour threatens their safety or safeguarding, and that of others;
  - *Or* where the College would be liable to civil or criminal liability for failure to disclose.

## 12. Other Relevant Documents

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- 12.1 The following documents and procedures are available from the Student Information Desk or on the College website and for staff on the Intranet:
- Maintaining Student Responsibility – Academic Procedures
  - Maintaining Student responsibility – Conduct procedures
  - Admissions Policy
  - Higher Education Admissions Policy
  - Safeguarding Policy
  - Equality and Diversity Policy
  - Disability Statement
  - Cancellation of Non-Medical Help Sessions Procedure (HE)
  - Information for Students Leaflet

## 13. Contact Details

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- 13.1 For further information on this policy please contact the Assistant Principal – Curriculum & Quality, Head of Central Services, Student Engagement Officer or Quality & Support Officer.
- 13.2 Useful contacts
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|------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Safeguarding Team            |             | 01704 392821 |
| Information & Reception Desk | (Southport) | 01704 392704 |
| Information & Reception Desk | (KGV)       | 01704 530601 |

## Appendix 1: Definitions

DoE statutory guidance *'Children Missing Education'* outlines key principles to enable local authorities in England to implement their legal duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education (CME). Local authorities should be able to demonstrate that they have considered this statutory guidance and where it is not followed, the local authority should have reasonable grounds for not doing so. This advice is not exhaustive and local authorities will need to take into account the circumstances of individual cases.

Sefton Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) define *'Children Missing From Education'* (CME) as:

*"A child of compulsory school age between the age of five and sixteen, who is not registered at any formally approved education activity and has been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time, usually more than four weeks is defined as a child missing education."*

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons. Although not exhaustive, the list below presents some of the circumstances including:

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
- Missing children and runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System –
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families
- Children of Service Personnel
- Missing children or runaways
- Children of new migrant families
- Children involved in 'County Lines'
- They are removed from College by their parents;
- The family move home regularly;
- Family breakdown;
- Children who are classed as 'Vulnerable' such as Looked After Children (LAC), Young Parents, those who are under the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and Young Carers.