

Attendance Policy and Procedure (GWHR66)

This Policy applies to all Route2Work learners and staff.

Regular and punctual college attendance is very important. Learners need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Groundwork fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure students are in college and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal, Staff and Board Members at our college work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all learners are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Learners who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning and frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet their learning expectations.

Our policy applies to all learners registered at this college and this policy is made available to all parents/carers and learners.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and Board Members in our college are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve learner achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Date of Issue: February 2020

Review Date: February 2022

- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the college.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and learners of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a learner's education.
- Work in partnership with learners, parents, carers, staff and agencies so that all learners realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which learners feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage them to develop a sense of responsibility for their attendance.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of staff in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among staff, parents, carers and learners.
- Ensuring that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure that the young person attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping learners with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good college attendance and punctuality.
- The learner's ILP (Individual Learning Plan) which includes an attendance target to support them to achieve and develop skills needed for good attendance.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, learners, staff and Governors on college attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting learners who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at college which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at college.

Definitions:-

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a learner has been away from college for a legitimate reason and the college has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a learner has been unwell and the parent/carer telephones the college to explain the absence.
- Only the college can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers/learners do not have this authority, consequently not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a learner is away from college without the permission of the college.
- The absence is unauthorised if a learner is away from college without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

Procedures

Our college will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

Date of Issue: February 2020

Review Date: February 2022

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, Board members, parents, carers and learners.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the college.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents/carers to improve individual learner's attendance and punctuality
- To report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the ESFA/DfE if requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Management Team/Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of college staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher/tutor

Class teachers/tutors are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by learners and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Management Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their learners the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at parent/carer consultation evenings where necessary

Deputy Head of College

The Deputy Head is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of college attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the college Governors.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance
- Home visits where necessary

Support Staff/Key Workers

Support Staff/Key Workers are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Contacting parents of absent students within 30 mins of a student not turning up for class

Date of Issue: February 2020

Review Date: February 2022

- Recording details of learners who arrive late or go home early.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by learners and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Deputy Head..

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends college regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the college on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the college in advance of any medical appointments in college time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the college as soon as possible about any reluctance to come to college so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registration

Tutors have the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any learner who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning session. The attendance register must be completed by the tutor by 10.00am.

All attendance records are documented using hard copy registers and the data being transferred onto Groundwork database. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

Lateness

Learners arriving 15 mins after the start of their first session will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late and is documented on the register for each learner. Any learner who arrives late will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning.

Learners who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to college afterwards will be marked as having attended a medical appointment.

Learners who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each learner is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the college will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences:-

Parents/carers should contact the college on the first day of the learner's absence. When parents/carers notify us of the absence it is important that they provide us with details and reasons why the learner is absent. Medical appointments – we will require evidence of appointments.

Date of Issue: February 2020

Review Date: February 2022

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the register. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for the absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Deputy Head has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for an absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The Route2Work Facebook page should **not** be used as a method of reporting absence.

First Day Contact

Where a learner is absent from college and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent/carer, then we initiate a first day contact process. Attendance is checked on a daily basis by Support Staff and Tutors, to identify those learners who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the learner is absent and we will contact the parent/carer to check the reasons for the absence. Staff will start to make telephone calls at 9.30am.

Parental/Carer Request for Absence from College for Holiday

The Deputy Head and Headteacher will only allow leave of absence if they are satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist. Where possible, any request for leave of absence/holiday during term time must be submitted in writing to the college at least 4 weeks before the requested leave date.

Appendices:-

1 Attendance Monitoring Escalation Procedure.

- Telephone call to learner in the first instance, if no response then contact parents/carers – after 9.30am on day of absence. (Noted in the Learner Contact Log)
- If poor attendance continues over a two week period, (for example, learner timetable states 7 sessions and attends less than half or learner's attendance is considerably lower than 95%) letter sent to parent/carer. (Letter 1)
- If attendance does not improve within one week of Letter 1 being sent, a home visit will be organised within one week. (Letter 2)
- Home visit carried out with two members of staff. (Noted in the Home Visit Contact Sheet)
- If a home visit is unable to be organised, an unannounced home visit will then be carried out. If contact is still unsuccessful an appointment card will be left stating a visit was attempted. (Noted in the Home Visit Contact Sheet).
- If the unannounced home visit is unsuccessful a letter will be sent advising of referral to Connexions/LA Advice Team. (Letter 3).