WC10 – Attendance Policy

College Policy	
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Contents

Introduction

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation about college attendance through our whole-college culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend college. We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Procedure

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of working together to improve college attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on college attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern college attendance:

Part 6 of the Education Act 1996

Part 3 of the Education Act 2002

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the college census which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of college attendance across the college's policies and ethos
- Making sure college leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole college
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the college

- Monitoring college-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices if and where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the college
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies in consultation with the Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officer to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the college Principal and can be contacted via email: **principal@westerfieldcollege.com**

The Attendance Officer and Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officers

The College Attendance Officer& Safeguarding & Wellbeing Officers are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to college staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

Teachers

Teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, lesson by lesson, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on the MIS within the first 15 minutes of each lesson commencing.

Admin staff

College admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents and students about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the college system
- Update MIS and/or send emails to provide teachers with more detailed support and information on attendance & punctuality.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child/young person attends every day/timetabled session/rehearsal on time

- Call the college to report their child's absence before 8:45 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the college with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child/young person
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child/young person are made outside of the college

Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend college every timetabled day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Call/Email/Message the college to report their absence before 8:45 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep attendance registers for each lesson and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register within the first 15 minutes of each session starting.

It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student cannot attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Students must arrive in college on time on each college day.

The register for each lesson will be taken within 15 minutes of the start of the lesson and will be kept open until 30 minutes after the lesson begins.

Unplanned absence

The student or the student's parent/carer must notify the college of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:45 am or as soon as practically possible by emailing principal@westerfieldcollege.com or through Parent Mail.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the college has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the college may ask the student or student's parent/career to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the college is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/careers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student or student's parent/carer notifies the college in advance of the appointment.

Students/parents should notify the college as soon as practically possible by emailing

principal@westerfieldcollege.com or through Parent Mail.

However, we encourage students/parents/careers to make medical and dental appointments outside of college hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of college for the minimum amount of time necessary. For example, if a student has an appointment in the morning, they are expected to attend college as soon as their appointment has taken place.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the college can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

How students will be marked:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Must sign in at reception using the signing-in system (Inventory)
- Students who are persistently late will be subject to disciplinary action.

Following up on unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend college does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the college will:

- Call and/or text the student and the student's parent/career on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

[*WC10 - Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy- Version 1*]

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained-this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/career on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the college will consider involving an education welfare officer

Reporting to parents/carers

The college will regularly inform parents about their child/young person's attendance and absence levels at Progress Points 1, 2, and 3 and/or when there is a concern with a student's attendance and/or punctuality.

1. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Principal or Vice Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal or Vice Principal's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events that are unavoidable, examples may include but are not limited to the death of a close relative, attendance at a close family/friend's funeral, respite care of a looked-after child, and a housing crisis that prevents attendance.

The college considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be emailed as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The Principal/Vice Principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance-where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the college will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Travel: students travelling for occupational purposes - this covers Roma, English, and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller's family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed on this with the college, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

Attendance monitoring

Attendance of all students is monitored on a daily, weekly and termly basis and appropriate follow up action taken.

Monitoring attendance

The college will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly, and yearly across the college and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of students whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels through the DfE's college absence national statistics releases. The underlying college-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The college will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The college will:

- Analyse attendance punctuality, and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The college will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to lecturers Pathway Leaders, and other college leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of college, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of college.

The college will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the college (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at college
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Principal& Vice-Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the local governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on college attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present(am)	Student is present at the morning registration
\	Present(pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the college
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the college
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved by the college
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in college	Student of non-compulsory college age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	College site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the college
#	Planned college closure	Whole or partial college closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
I	Illness	The college has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma, and traveler absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the college
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the college
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	College is not satisfied with the reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at college after the register closed

[*WC10 - Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy- Version 1*]

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Academic Board unless there are changes that necessitate an earlier review.

Version History

No	Revised on	Version	Changes	Approved by	Date of Approval	Revised by
2	30 November, 2024	2				