

# Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Policy Author: Principal & Chief Executive

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## Our Mission

To unleash potential, creating better futures for our learners, businesses and communities

## Our Vision

A Truly Great College, delivering inspirational learning and excellence through career focused education.

## Our Values

**Learner and customer focused** – ensuring they are at the heart of everything we do

**Respectful** – by valuing and treating all fairly and as individuals

**Passionate** – demonstrating energising, engaging and inspiring all to achieve their potential

**Collaborative** – always working together to achieve excellence and growth

**Innovative** – leading the way, seeking new ways to continually improve

**Excellent** – in learning, teaching and assessment; the key to our success



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# Learner Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## 1 Scope

- 1.1 This Policy applies to all learners undertaking a course of further education (FE) or higher education (HE) including Apprenticeships, Adult Education and Professional Qualifications. This includes both onsite, off-site (i.e. in the workplace), as well as online delivery.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this policy the term learners is used to refer to all individuals that are enrolled on programmes of study at the college, including 14-16 learners, 16-18 learners, Apprentices, HE learners and Adults. The term teachers is used to apply to teachers, technical trainers, tutors and trainer coaches throughout this policy.
- 1.3 Records of learner attendance and absence, for all aspects of learner programmes inclusive of on the job and work experience elements, will be maintained for all College-based learners and apprentices (including 14-16, Higher Education, Work Based Learners and records of Work Experience) on college systems. This includes educational visits and trips.
- 1.4 Achieving and maintaining high levels of punctuality is key to learners making strong progress in learning, and supporting in the development of important employability skills and behaviours. Where the term attendance is used in this policy, punctuality is recognised as being part of this, with policy terms applying in the same way (ie. learners should notify the college if they are going to arrive late to a session, in the same way that they would if they are going to be absent for the day).
- 1.5 Where High Need learners are acknowledged to have an authorised absence, the recorded mark will be revisited and amended to reflect the completed work within an agreed timeframe.

## 2 Aim

- 2.1 Attendance and punctuality are critical employability skills required by employers and essential to the successful completion of College studies. Poor attendance sometimes indicates that a learner is becoming disengaged and may be at risk of leaving their course. Alternatively, it can be a sign that support is needed to help a learner deal with personal or welfare issues. Barking & Dagenham College has wide-ranging support systems in place to assist in these circumstances. This policy is required to ensure that learners, teachers and trainer coaches follow the appropriate processes and interventions to maximise learners' attendance.
- 2.2 This policy outlines the whole College commitment to learner attendance and punctuality, and sets out the College's expectations of both learners and staff in order to sustain high levels of attendance.
- 2.3 To ensure that there is an evidenced documentary record of attendance (electronic for all College-based provisions) for all attendees/absentees for each session and that appropriate marks are entered at the start of each session
- 2.4 To ensure that records of attendance and punctuality are used to inform interventions, strategies and plans that will drive improvements in learner attendance aligned to college targets and national benchmarks.
- 2.5 To inform all learners, staff, employers, parents/carers, and other external stakeholders of expectations and responsibilities relating to monitoring and improving attendance.

## 3 Policy

### 3.1 Learner attendance

- 3.1.1 All learners, including apprentices and those studying in the workplace, are expected to attend 100% of classes in all aspects of their programme of study.
- 3.1.2 Learners studying online/distance learning programmes have alternative attendance arrangements in place to those of College-based programmes. Learners will be notified of attendance requirements by their course tutor.

### 3.2 Punctuality

- 3.2.1 Learners are expected to arrive promptly for all classes. Learners who arrive after the timetabled start of a lesson will be marked as late. Persistent lateness should, in the first instance, be challenged by the subject tutor and, if necessary, referred to the Head of Department (HoD) who will deal with the issue through the College disciplinary process. If a learner knows they will be late for a lesson in advance, they must notify either their Support & Achievement Mentor (SAM) or subject tutor before the lesson starts.
- 3.2.2 Persistent lateness may result in non-payment of the 16 - 19 Bursary (which is contingent upon meeting the 95% attendance target and expectations for behaviour and punctuality) for learners who are normally eligible. Refer to the linked Bursary Policies listed at the end of this policy for further clarification on thresholds different client groups.
- 3.2.3 Lateness due to transport issues:

It is the learner's responsibility to ensure that they arrive at College on time for lessons. Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances might result in a learner's bus or train being delayed. The learner must inform their Support & Achievement Mentor (SAM) immediately of the delay and board the next possible bus or train.

### 3.3 Conditions of progression onto further study at Barking & Dagenham College

- 3.3.1 Learners must have a minimum attendance of 90% and have successfully completed all aspects of their programme of study to be guaranteed a continued place on any course or progression to a subsequent term or the next stage of their current course or apprenticeship. This includes the vocational course, maths and/or English (where applicable), any approved work placement, tutorials and any timetabled enrichment, online learning or additional sessions. Where learners have not satisfied this requirement, they will be required to attend a progress interview with their head of department and/or director, in order to discuss any concerns about attendance or commitment to study. The senior manager will decide the most appropriate action to be taken. This meeting may require the attendance of parents/ carers, or the employer in the case of apprentices.
- 3.3.2 To guarantee progression to a further year of study, all full-time learners must attend regularly and successfully complete all aspects of their programme of study.
- 3.3.3 Adult and higher education learners must have successfully completed the first stage or Year 1 (as appropriate) of their course, including coursework, assessment and any practical components as applicable.
- 3.3.4 Apprentices must have successfully achieved completion targets relating to all aspects of their apprenticeship standard including knowledge, skills, behaviours and off the job hours.

### **3.4 Attendance intervention protocols and other sanctions**

- 3.4.1 Where learners fail to maintain a satisfactory level of attendance and punctuality, then the College's attendance intervention protocols will be followed. This means that learners, along with their parents/carers or employers (as appropriate), may be asked to attend intervention meetings. These meetings may be chaired by College managers including the principal/chief executive and other senior leaders. The purpose of these meetings is to understand the causes of issues and to agree intervention strategies for addressing the issues highlighted. In some circumstances, the College's disciplinary procedures may also be invoked. In the event that issues cannot be resolved, then the learner's place on the College course may be revoked.
- 3.4.2 In line with funding body guidance and depending on the circumstances, learners may also be required to:
- Attend additional sessions, outside of normal timetabled hours, in order to catch up on missed work
  - Pay tuition/examination fees
  - Repay any grants, loans or financial support received
  - Repay any travel costs subsidised by the College
  - Repay any learner support funds they may have received
  - Reimburse the College for essential course items provided
  - Leave their programme and Barking & Dagenham College

### **3.5 16 - 19 Bursary**

- 3.5.1 For learners in receipt of the 16 - 19 Bursary (which is contingent upon meeting the 95% attendance target and expectations for behaviour and punctuality), learners are expected to achieve at least 95% attendance each month in order to be paid the reward. 16 - 19 Bursary payments are made towards the end of each month based on the previous months attendance (if applicable).
- 3.5.2 Learners in receipt of 16 - 19 Bursary funds will not be disadvantaged financially where attendance is affected by characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. The only other exceptions to 3.5.1 above are hospital or court appointments which are accepted to be immovable. These cases will only be considered on production of formal notification of the appointment. A photocopy of this documentation (or the original) must be forwarded to the Head of Admissions & Onboarding by no later than the Friday of the week of the absence.
- 3.5.3 Any learner who has not attended classes for four consecutive weeks will be deemed to have left the course. Receipt of certain benefits, such as child benefit, are dependent upon College attendance. The College will be compelled to notify the relevant government agency, confirming that the learner is no longer in full-time education, when this information is requested.
- 3.5.4 Learners must have attendance of at least 90% to qualify for receipt of a 'Proof of Study' letter to confirm their attendance at Barking & Dagenham College. Should the learner's attendance fall below this threshold as a result of extenuating circumstances, then provision of the letter is contingent upon the written approval of the appropriate head of department.
- 3.5.5 All learners are expected to arrive at all lessons on time and ready for learning. Persistent unauthorised lateness may result in payment being withheld.
- 3.5.6 All learners are expected to follow the learner code of conduct and ongoing behavioural issues may result in payment being withheld.
- 3.5.7 Any appeals should be made in writing direct to the principal/chief executive.

### 3.6 Recording and communication of information about attendance and punctuality

- 3.6.1 Learner attendance is monitored on a daily basis, with registers marked at the beginning of each session. If learners are sick or have an emergency and can't get into College then they (or someone on their behalf) must email [absence@bdc.ac.uk](mailto:absence@bdc.ac.uk) before 9.00am or the scheduled start time for evening classes. Full-time learners can also contact their Support & Achievement Mentor (SAM) directly by telephone. Adult learners are expected to contact their tutor and apprentices should contact their apprenticeship officer.
- 3.6.2 If the College is not notified of the absence of a 16-18 full-time learner in advance, then SAMs will attempt to make contact with the parent/carer (in the case of a 16-17-year-old) or with the learner (in the case of a learner aged 18 years or over). In the event that it has not been possible to establish contact with a 16-17 year old, or their parent or carer, within 24 hours, then the absence will be treated as a potential safeguarding issue. For this reason, it is crucial that learners and/or parents/carers make contact with the College promptly at the time of the absence.
- 3.6.3 Information about attendance and punctuality is made available to learners through the College's 'e-Trackr' progress information system. Support & Achievement Mentors (SAMs) and members of the teaching team will regularly discuss attendance information with learners.
- 3.6.4 The College will communicate information about attendance and progress to learners and their parent/carers (for 16-18-year-olds on full-time programmes) and employers (for apprenticeships) through a range of methods. This could include the use of regular text messaging, emails, telephone calls, letters and meetings. The information is also available for learners and parents/carers and employers on college tracking systems.
- 3.6.5 Role of parents/carers in supporting attendance and progress:
- In the event of ongoing attendance issues relating to 16-18-year-old learners, as well as any issues relating to behaviour or progress on the course, then the parent/carer is required to engage with the College through an invitation to a meeting (or alternative means of discussion). These meetings may be chaired by College managers including the principal/chief executive and other senior leaders. The purpose of these meetings is to understand the causes of issues and to agree intervention strategies for addressing the issues highlighted. In the event that issues cannot be resolved, then the learner's place on the College course may be revoked.
- 3.6.6 Mid-year progress reviews:
- Parents/carers of full-time learners will be invited to a mid-year meeting to discuss attendance and progress and review the written mid-year report. Parents/carers are strongly encouraged to participate in these meetings. In the event that attendance in person is not possible, then parents/carers are required to arrange an online meeting or telephone discussion with the course tutor.
- 3.6.7 Requests for references from potential employers:
- The College is regularly requested to provide job references for learners. It is clear that attendance and punctuality are critical skills required by employers, and the College will therefore quote learner attendance and punctuality levels in any reference we are asked to provide.

## 4 Roles and Responsibilities

### 4.1 Learner attendance - Expectations of teaching staff

Staff have a critical role to play in promoting learner attendance and punctuality. The expectation is that learners will attend 100% of scheduled sessions and be present at the timetabled start-time. To support this, it is expected that staff will:

- Set clear expectations with learners during pre-entry course interviews and during induction

- Set a good example by always being on time for class
- Set learners clear and meaningful targets for attendance and punctuality in e-Trackr and progress reviews
- Fully engage learners in lessons that are interesting and promote learning
- Reinforce attendance and punctuality through communications with parents/carers of young people
- Constructively challenge learners who are not in lessons during teaching time
- Mark registers accurately within the first ten minutes of the lesson and submit immediately. After submission, the register can subsequently be updated with any late arrivals to the lesson. See 4.2.1 below.
- If the lesson takes place in a venue where there is no access to online registers, then the register must be marked and submitted as soon as possible and certainly by the end of the working day

## **4.2 Staff management of learner absence:**

- 4.2.1 There is no system of authorised absence and learners will therefore be marked as either present, absent or late. The punctuality of learners must be monitored closely. Learners are expected to arrive promptly for all classes. Any learners who are not present at the timetabled start time must be marked as late. Persistent lateness must be challenged in the first instance by the tutor and, if necessary, dealt with through the learner disciplinary process. Learners arriving between 10-30 minutes late to a lesson will be marked as late, after 30 minutes, unless there are exceptional circumstances, it will be deemed an absence.
- 4.2.2 It is important that the course team (subject tutors, course tutor and support & achievement mentor (SAM)) all work closely together in challenging and managing learner attendance and punctuality. One-to-one reviews with learners are a key opportunity to address any concerns. Where there are concerns about persistent absence or lateness, then issues will be escalated accordingly and appropriate interventions made. Interventions could include both support plans and disciplinary actions.
- 4.2.3 Any learner who is absent from College for four consecutive weeks will be deemed to have left College and must be withdrawn from the course by the course tutor unless exceptional circumstances are agreed.
- 4.2.4 If a tutor is absent then the cover tutor must ensure that the class register is marked.
- 4.2.5 Amendments to register marks may be made by teachers within 24 hours of a session. Requests to change attendance marks on registers after 24 hours must be authorised by the head of department and submitted to MIS by lunchtime of the Monday on the week following the lesson.
- 4.2.6 MIS will produce regular learner attendance reports. This includes a 2 week non-attendance report in addition to those available through visualisations and e-Trackr.

## **4.3 Attendance intervention protocols, including responsibilities of managers and senior leaders**

- 4.3.1 Staff throughout the College have crucial roles to play in managing and maximising learner attendance. Teachers, Support and Achievement Mentors (SAMs), Apprenticeship Officers, Curriculum Managers, Heads of Department and Senior leaders must all set the clear and consistent expectation with learners that they are expected to attend 100% of timetabled sessions and be punctual. If a learner's attendance starts to reduce, then SAMs, teaching staff and apprenticeship officers (as appropriate) have clear responsibilities to:
- communicate attendance information to learners, parents/carers and/or employers
  - swiftly initiate appropriate interventions, in line with attendance intervention protocols, that will facilitate improved attendance and support the learner to catch up with any missed learning.
- 4.3.2 Where attendance does not improve following initial agreed interventions, then meetings with learners



and parents/carers involve gradually escalating levels of management and senior leadership involvement, in line with the College's attendance intervention protocols.

- 4.3.4 Heads of Department and Curriculum Managers have particular responsibilities for ensuring that protocols for attendance and punctuality are applied robustly and consistently across their areas of responsibility. They are also accountable for attendance and punctuality within their areas.
- 4.3.5 Learner attendance and punctuality in each curriculum area are monitored constantly using live data from the College's information systems. The department's attendance data will undergo continuous monitoring and rigorous evaluation through internal quality assurance processes. Sample checks of learner attendance in classes (including any sub-contracted provision) are also undertaken as part of the teaching, learning and assessment quality assurance processes.

## 5 Additional Groups

### 14-16 learners

In the event that any 14 – 16 year old learners are recruited (for example, young people who are elective home educated) then the following protocols apply:

- A teacher will notify via email the relevant Support & Achievement Mentor (SAM) of any learners who have not turned up at class.
- All teachers must insist that all learners go to the designated classroom and that the register be taken before any other activity is undertaken. (e.g. on-site practical work). There must be no delays in the completion of a 14-16 register for any session.
- Teachers, 14-16 SAMs, safeguarding and wider support and welfare staff must keep safeguarding as the paramount focus with all 14-16 learners, in line with college policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education expectations.
- At lunchtime, all 14-16 learners will be advised to use the designated zone which will be supervised for taking lunchbreaks and/or daytime break periods

## 6 Policy Review

This policy will be periodically monitored in light of legislative or regulatory changes, and in any event formally reviewed, and revised if necessary, on an annual basis in July/August.

## 7 Related Policies and Documents

The following policies/procedures are related to the Learner Attendance and Punctuality Policy:

- 16 – 19 Bursary Policy
- 19+ Adult Bursary Policy
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Learner Code of Conduct
- Learner Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- SEND Policy
- GDPR Policy