

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. PRINCIPLES

To ensure students achieve their own academic goals and personal and professional development aspirations whilst studying at the College. This Policy will drive and underpin successful retention, academic achievement and influence positive destinations for our students.

Blackburn College sets high standards and expectations of attendance for all its students. Shared values, fair and consistent application of rewards and sanctions together with excellent teaching and support are all pivotal to promoting positive attendance and raising achievement.

2. PURPOSE

This Policy aims to promote positive attendance to support achievement and progression by setting high standards and expectations and to support staff when dealing with unacceptable poor attendance and the process for failing to meet those expectations.

The College recognises that poor attendance can often be an indication of unmet social/emotional needs. Any formal response to a student's attendance issues will always consider any causal factors that may be an influence. In such cases, early intervention is essential to reduce the need for any subsequent disciplinary. In this situation the Pastoral Support Team may consider a multiagency assessment that goes beyond the student's educational needs.

The College understands that the first step to modelling good attendance is leading by example. This means that all staff, volunteers and visitors to the College must act professionally, responsibly and with integrity. We work to ensure that discipline and standards are consistent across the College so that boundaries and sanctions are clear to all and are applied fairly, proportionately and without discrimination, taking into account Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), as well as any additional challenges that some vulnerable students may face.

3. SCOPE

The principles in this Policy apply to all students on all programmes across College. It defines the expectations for all students in terms of attendance and punctuality. It provides the infrastructure and approach to support students from the start of their journey at the College. Vice Principals, Executive Director of Student Support and Experience, Executive Director of Business Development and External Engagement, Heads of School, Personal/Subject Tutors and Attendance Intervention Mentors are responsible for monitoring progress and attainment throughout the period of study.

4. OBJECTIVES

Blackburn College is committed to ensuring that our College environment supports learning and promotes the wellbeing of students and staff. The role of the College is to create a safe and secure environment for all students so that they develop and achieve on their programme of study. In addition, to this students will develop key employment skills and behaviours for the future world of work.

The College has shared expectations regarding positive behaviour and attendance. These expectations are encapsulated by the Blackburn College '**3 Rs**' approach (**R**espect, **R**esponsibility, **R**eady to Learn).

Students are expected to adhere to the '3 Rs' in the classroom, the workplace, anywhere on College premises and during such off-campus activities as field trips and community projects. All staff are expected to remind students and define clear expectations throughout the year. All teaching staff are responsible for managing attendance in the classroom and all College employees provide a supportive presence around the College campus.

4.1 Attendance and Punctuality

Students are expected to fully attend **all components** of their individual programme of study, including for FE students Maths and English, Tutorial, Work Experience and the Core Qualification. Our ambition is that students achieve a 100% attendance and punctuality whilst studying with the College. It is recognised that the first weeks at College can be an unsettling period for some students and that Adult and Higher Education students have greater study/work/life balances that can impinge upon attendance and punctuality. However, with early intensive intervention and support, students are more likely to be on target and achieve.

During the first weeks at College we recognise the value of early warning signs and alerts to when students may become disengaged. Therefore, if attendance falls below expectations or there is a length of time a student is absent, for example a full week or low level disruptive behaviour is displayed, interventions will be put in place with the student to enable them to get back on target. This will be tracked and interventions recorded on Pro-Monitor. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be informed of the interventions. Failure to improve or make firm commitments to their studies may result in the student being asked to seek careers advice or in some cases asked to leave the College. Failure to attend on a regular basis can also mean that KPI's for student financial bursaries are not hit and therefore payments could cease. Furthermore, as a result of non-attendance for a period of 4 weeks, key regulators such as the Student Loans Company and the Office for Students may cease funding your place at the College and as a result you may be withdrawn from your studies.

Please note that we have an obligation to the Student Loans Company and The Office for Students that we are fulfilling our part in having you attend classes in exchange for the tuition fees we receive. When you are not attending for a period of anything over two weeks, we are then obligated to suspend your student finance if you are not here to attend classes. This suspension of payments would result in you being suspended from receiving maintenance payments and us from receiving tuition fee payments. This could trigger a recalculation to the amount of maintenance entitlement. Following any such suspension, we would then have to consider the possibility of withdrawing you from the programme due to sustained absence, appreciating that this may be due to entirely valid and justifiable reasons as to why you cannot commit to regular attendance and submission of work.

All Lecturers and Personal Tutors have the responsibility to track and monitor attendance and punctuality for their students for all aspects of their programme of study.

Where greater concerns arise or persistent non-attendance or engagement are identified, students will be referred to the Student Pastoral Officers, or Student Attendance Progress Mentors. These Teams will make direct contact with students to re-engage them in their learning. They will liaise directly with Personal Tutors, to ensure a full picture of the student's commitment to their studies and any barriers are known. Where possible they can assist in providing details of assessments, that have not been submitted or topics covered in studies.

4.1.1 Principles Underpinning Positive Attendance and Punctuality

- All classes start and end on time
- Learning is not disrupted by absent staff, students or late students
- Student attendance and punctuality is managed consistently across the whole College
- The value and importance of punctuality and full attendance is raised by all staff
- A positive and proactive approach will be made to maximise student attendance and punctuality
- Excellent attendance and punctuality will be celebrated

4.1.2 Apprentices

The attendance and behaviour of students that are studying towards an apprenticeship is robustly monitored by the employer and assessor. If an Apprentice attends College for 'off the job' training, they will be monitored and interventions applied in line with this Policy and Procedure.

4.2 Safeguarding

All staff must be vigilant to safeguarding issues and concerns, particularly when managing student behaviour and attendance. Where there are safeguarding or welfare concerns, an alert to the cross-College Safeguarding Team must be made immediately, in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

4.3 Contact with Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers play a big part in ensuring that the student is responsible for their own attendance in College. Where appropriate, we will ask Parents and Carers to work with the College to support their dependent's learning. This includes informing the College of any special education needs or personal factors that may affect their dependent's attendance. The College will invite Parents and Carers to attend meetings with staff to discuss any attendance issues and to support any interventions that are put in place. Parents and Carers will usually be contacted in agreement with the student, but in some circumstances, this may be without consent. For students over the age of 18, Parents/Carers will only be contacted with their consent or where it is appropriate to do so if there is a safeguarding concern.

We work with Parents and Carers to understand the needs of the student and any specific attendance issues. Where appropriate, the College provides regular reports to Parents and Carers via the electronic student management system, telephone and at Parent/Carer

events. We encourage Parents and Carers to communicate with the College if they have a concern about their dependant's attendance.

We recognise our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 in respect of students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). Whilst all students identified with SEND are covered under this Attendance Policy, the College recognises that these students often require support which is different from, or in addition to, that required by their peers in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to all students. Advice will be sought from external agencies, where necessary, to assist with putting in place appropriate support strategies. These will be monitored and reviewed regularly. Further information is detailed within the Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy.

5. MONITORING AND REVIEWING

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Executive Director of Student Support and Experience in conjunction with the Vice Principal for Curriculum and Quality and Heads of School, with specific practice reviewed annually through the self-assessment and self-evaluation process. The effectiveness of the Policy will be measured through:

- Analysis of stakeholder feedback
- Analysis of attendance and retention data
- Analysis of disciplinary trends
- Analysis of retention and achievement data

6. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

Executive Director of Student Support and Experience, Vice Principal - Curriculum and Quality, Curriculum Managers and Heads of School, are responsible for implementing the Policy and Procedure.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Blackburn College is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and providing a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment means that this Policy has been reviewed to ensure that it does not discriminate (either intentionally or unintentionally) any of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender (including gender identity), race, religion or sexual orientation and meets our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, this Policy has no adverse impact on any of the above protected groups.

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