



# Attendance Policy (with Covid-19 addendum)

## Policy Statement

The Department for Education (DfE) has published numerous reports that link absence and attainment. The reports conclude, in general, that the higher the overall absence rate, the lower the likely level of attainment. Specifically, students at GCSE with no absence are 2.2 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A\*-C or equivalent and 2.8 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A\*-C or equivalent including English and mathematics than pupils missing 15-20% of GCSE lessons. It is reasonable to assume that good attendance at the College is therefore necessary for students to fulfil their potential. This policy sets out how this will be supported and achieved, besides the fact that a good attendance record is a statutory requirement for Compulsory School Age (CSA) pupils, and students who receive the sponsorship of the College to obtain a visa to study in the United Kingdom (via UKVI).

## Aim

Encourage all students to maintain 100% overall attendance in order to promote their achievement and success.

## Principles to be followed to achieve this aim

Ensure all College staff (in particular, Teachers and Personal Tutors) are proactive in following up non-attendance and that there is prompt, accurate and comprehensive liaison with stakeholders by the appropriate staff.

There will be recognition of critical times in the life of a student after absences (e.g. after long term illness, bereavement) when we need to be proactive to ensure that the student is well supported and good attendance is picked back up. Every case must be judged on its specific circumstances.

## Statutory guidelines and responsibilities

### *UKVI*

The College will observe the requirements of UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). Maintaining satisfactory attendance is part of the visa conditions for students studying under a visa in the UK. It is the responsibility of the institution to ensure accurate attendance monitoring and prompt follow up occur across all courses.

- We will cease to sponsor students who repeatedly fail in meeting attendance requirements.
- The College will cease to sponsor any Tier 4 student who misses 10 consecutive contact points. A contact point is defined as an entire day (Monday to Friday). In addition to timetabled classes, contact points may also include meetings with residential staff or welfare/pastoral staff if necessary in welfare cases.
- A student who has missed 10 missed contact points may, in exceptional circumstances, be allowed back into the College. The student will be required to document any reason for the absences and continued sponsorship will be at the discretion of the Vice Principal/Principal.
- When the College ceases to sponsor a student, this will be reported to UKVI via the SMS and
- the Tier 4 visa will then be curtailed by UKVI



## **Student responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of all students to ensure that they attend every lesson or other session on their timetable. If students are aware in advance that an event will result in them missing lessons they must seek authorisation in advance. Students must provide appropriate evidence for any absences. There is a sickness procedure that students must follow for relevant staff to consider authorisation.

## **Staff responsibilities**

Staff must support students to maintain 100% attendance.

Teaching staff must complete the register for every lesson during the first 10 minutes. They must promptly amend the register when a student arrives late to their lesson. Teachers should discuss and challenge lateness occurrences with students every time it occurs. Personal Tutors monitor and manage student attendance and should discuss and challenge all unauthorised absences for the students they are responsible for.

## **Procedures**

The policy is aimed to reflect the age range of students attending the College. New teachers will receive an induction on their role in attendance matters.

*The roles of college staff and strategies for supporting students to maintain 100% attendance are contained within the Attendance Procedural document and associated appendices.*

## **Authorisation**

Authorised absences are times away from College for a good reason. Unauthorised absences are those which the College does not consider reasonable and for which “no leave” is given.

UKVI state that authorised absence should be ‘reasonably granted’. This means we should actively consider the intentions of the student, i.e. whether they are genuinely intending to continue their course and the impact of any absence on the student’s ability to complete their course. If either of these factors is in any doubt, we may need to consider alternative action, such as withdrawal or deferral.

Late return to the College and/or early departure caused by flight schedules will need to be sanctioned by the College on an individual basis, but only when there is a very good reason.

There are clear, well defined procedures for reporting medical absences. These procedures are communicated to students upon induction to the College and students must follow them for an absence to be considered for authorisation.

Educational visits (such as university open days/interviews/auditions) will usually be authorised if evidence is provided to the College and procedures followed.

The College recognises that as a multi-cultural and mixed faith community there are events that will fall in term time, however, these will not be authorised.

# ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY, COVID-19 ADDENDUM

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Date added to Policy	July 2020
Next Review Date	As required, based on UK Government guidance
Lead for Review	Principal, Rector, Head of Student Administrative Services CSVPA, Office Manager CATS, Attendance Officers

## Introduction

In response to the global Covid-19 outbreak we have made amendments to our Attendance and Engagement Policy to be able to better track students studying by distance. Attendance is required by distance learners both to support academic success and progression, and to meet UKVI requirements where relevant.

## Educational settings status Form

When required the government Educational settings status form will be completed as requested.

Students in boarding accommodation will be considered to be 'present in the educational setting' during any self-isolation period, as long as they remain under our care.

## Distance learning

UKVI have confirmed registered sponsors can also commence sponsoring new students who will start studying through distance or blended learning in the 2020-2021 academic year provided they intend to transition to face-to-face learning as soon as circumstances allow. UKVI expect Tier 4 students with a CAS to continue to be monitored.

Where a student is studying by distance learning, the colleges will use expected online contact points to monitor engagement. The college will withdraw sponsorship from students who stop engaging with their distance learning for any reason unrelated to Covid-19.

## Register codes for distance learning

To avoid misunderstanding with the current attendance code, developed to enable CATS Colleges to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way, the College has created additional marks for students undertaking distance learning. All other marks used (by attendance staff) will remain the same.

Code	Definition
G	Student Present Online
J	Student Present Online but late
K	Unauthorised Absence Online

## Follow up for Distance Learners

It is expected that all the school's normal processes for congratulating those with excellent levels of engagement will continue. Congratulating those who do well is as, if not more, important than supporting those who are struggling.



Students having difficulties accessing the system should immediately contact College staff so that it can be recorded appropriately. We will generally also require a parental email confirming any reasons for non-engagement.

Students who are not engaging with their studies as expected will receive regular communication from staff at the College. It is understood that there may be valid reasons that students are not attending. It is important that every effort is made to find out what the College can do to help.

## Stage Warnings and Distance Learners

In recognition of the difficulties that some students may have accessing lessons remotely, flexibility is allowed in marking students as authorised absence. Flexibility may also be required with IT issues, however repeated issues will require follow up.

Engagement with teaching staff and completion of work can also be taken into account when reviewing a stage warning. A note must be recorded on Shackleton.

Students are not required to attend classes scheduled at unsociable hours (defined as pre 8am and post 8pm in their timezone). Relevant students should contact the Attendance Officer and confirm which lessons they cannot attend and these registers will be marked as 'N' – optional.

Standard stage warnings will apply, subject to the flexibility noted above. Normal college sanctions will not apply but formal letters will be sent according to the standard Student Behaviour Policy. Students may receive an improvement plan or a behaviour contact to encourage improvement.

For students who are not in the UK, the college can refuse to assign a CAS, or withdraw a previously assigned CAS, on the basis of student non-engagement. This would not normally apply unless a student is on a Stage 4 warning.

## Students not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)

**Any student who has symptoms of Covid-19 or has tested positive for Covid-19, or who lives with someone who has symptoms of Covid-19 or has tested positive for Covid-19, must not attend classes in person.**

**Students who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed Covid-19 will be offered a daily lateral flow test for 7 days. If they choose not to take those tests they will be required to self-isolate and must not attend classes in person. Students in quarantine must also not attend classes.**

A student who is ill and unable to attend should be marked as 'M' (medical absence). Other students should be encouraged to participate in the online provision offered to them. If there is a requirement on registers, then these students should be marked as 'Z' (not expected). Alternatively the online register codes can be used. Notes must be made explaining that the absence from face to face lessons is due to circumstances related to Covid-19.

For students in independent accommodation, either the student (if over 18) or their parent/guardian can self-certify absence for up to 5 missed days.



Students unable to attend in person for more than 5 days because of Covid-19 should obtain an isolation note, which can be done online via <https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note>.

## School closures

During any period of school closures all students will be required to continue studying online and online attendance marks will be used to record engagement.

## Policy Review

We will continue to monitor the Covid-19 outbreak and assess the associated risks carefully. We may need to amend or add to this addendum as circumstances or official guidance changes. We will communicate any significant changes to staff, parents and students.

## Related policies

Student Behaviour Policy

Reviewed by:	Ben Dolbear (Senior Pastoral Director)
Review date:	July 2020
Next review:	August 2021