



# Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedures

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### Policy Statement

This document sets out the principles and practice of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy that applies to **all** Greenbank College students, including both onsite and offsite delivery.

To support the delivery of high quality education and training Greenbank College:

- Sets high expectations for attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions
- Works in partnership with students and, where applicable, their parents/carers and employers, to ensure good attendance and punctuality, embedding a culture of reliability and commitment
- Monitors and takes action to improve attendance and punctuality where necessary

### Summary of College expectations of punctuality and attendance

- The College expects all students to attend a minimum of 95% attendance at all timetabled sessions in order for them complete their courses in a timely manner, succeed at their chosen learning and progress to their work / educational goals. This includes online sessions, workshops, compulsory visits and activities, tutorials etc.
- Arrive on time for the beginning of all timetabled sessions, including maths and English (where applicable).
- Minimise disruption to the rest of the class if arriving late to a session.
- Attendance and punctuality of all students will be reviewed after week three and week five of the academic year start date. Any student who has not achieved at least 90% attendance, and who is unable to provide a full justification, may be withdrawn from their College programme of study.
- Attendance and punctuality will be regularly monitored throughout students' time in learning. Failure to maintain good attendance will be dealt with through the College Student Disciplinary Policy.
- Students are expected to give a good reason, backed up with evidence, for all absences and late arrivals. Greenbank asks all its students to plan external appointments, holidays etc. at times and on days when they do not attend College.
- Students are expected to provide a reasonable justification for any lateness. Teaching staff have the right to refuse admission to the class or online session to late students.
- Where absences/lateness can be foreseen in advance, the student should notify the College via their tutor or reception. Appropriate evidence should be provided to the class tutor for the absence to be classed as authorised.

- For unforeseen absences, such as illness, the student must make contact with the College to notify their tutor or reception of their absence as early as possible on the first day of absence and every subsequent day unless they are signed off by a doctor for a given period.
- Upon return to learning after an absence, students must provide evidence of the reason for their absence before authorised absence can be noted in registers.
- Non-attendance may be dealt with as part of the College's Student Disciplinary Policy.

All departments are expected to work cooperatively to view attendance patterns across student timetables as a whole and encourage full attendance.

### **College signing in/out:**

Signing in and out is essential and will also be used to monitor both lateness and termly audits of unauthorised absence from classrooms.

### **Authorised non – attendance:**

All bank holidays, medical appointments upon production of proof, unplanned emergencies and Greenbank educational visits are authorised absences.

### **Non – attendance sickness:**

In cases of absence and sickness, students should notify Greenbank via:

- College reception – Telephone 0151 733 7255 or email [Absence@greenbank.org.uk](mailto:Absence@greenbank.org.uk)
- Email subject tutor
- Email personal tutor

NB: Notification of absence should be made by 08.45 on the first day of absence.

If tutors receive messages from students regarding non-attendance, they will record the information on Pro-monitor and also ensure that they email [Absence@greenbank.org.uk](mailto:Absence@greenbank.org.uk) in order that this information can be circulated to other departments.

### **Unauthorised absence:**

Tutors and staff are expected to support full attendance. At enrolment students are asked for their contact details and advised that they will be available via Greenbank's Student Services database for educational purposes including absence/lateness monitoring. Student Services will ask students for termly updates with regard to their contact details.

Greenbank will phone, text and email students to support full attendance from day one of an absence. Contact with a parent / carer will also be made for all students on study programmes. (See attendance action flow chart below)

## **Implementing the policy - staff procedures and guidance**

1. This document can only cover the most common situations that will occur. Therefore when the procedures and guidance do not appear to cover a given situation, staff should either use their own judgement to resolve the matter, or consult with their line manager. Please note that any reference to registers in this policy relates to the electronic register for both onsite and offsite delivery.

2. In order for the College to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality it is essential that all registers are marked in an accurate and timely fashion. The staff member responsible for the session must complete the register marking as soon as possible and in all cases within 30 minutes of the session start time. Failure to do this may result in students missing out on payments from Student Financial Support e.g. bursary, bus passes etc. causing significant inconvenience and distress.

3. Registers are auditable documents and must be maintained in a timely and accurate fashion. Where it is identified that a member of staff persistently fails to mark a register, or marks registers late, they may be subject to disciplinary action. Where registers remain outstanding after 7 days the presumption will be for disciplinary action. In the event of a staff member being off sick the cover rota tutor is responsible for arranging cover and ensuring that the register is completed.

4. Students are normally expected to make medical and other appointments outside of timetabled hours. However, where a student knows in advance that they are unable to attend a lesson, they must report the absence via central administration or via their tutor, and provide evidence of the absence to the nominated person in advance, so that the absence can be noted as 'authorised' in the register. When authorising absences the nominated member of staff will need to consider:

- Whether the case is reasonable
- The number of absences taken by the individual
- Repetitions of the same justification

Where the justification is backed up by evidence examples of legitimate reasons for absence might include:

- ✓ Religious holiday
- ✓ Attendance at a funeral
- ✓ Medical appointments which cannot be made outside of timetabled hours
- ✓ Severe disruption to the transport network
- ✓ Driving test
- ✓ Student representatives' meetings or responsibilities for caring for a close family member. If this is likely to affect their learning, this should be explored with the student and support offered.

An absence will not be authorised for any of the following reasons:

- Babysitting
- Holidays
- Driving lessons
- Birthdays
- Leisure activities
- Shopping
- Full or Part-time work (other than work experience)

5. If the nominated member of staff judges the absence to be legitimate they should change the absent mark to authorised absence in the register.

6. When the absence cannot be foreseen, the student should advise the College, either by telephone or email to central admin/tutor on the day of absence. The class tutor responsible for the register will mark the student 'absent'.

7. Where no justification for the absence is provided in advance, the member of staff nominated to follow up absences must contact the student, and, in the case of 16-19 (up to 25 with EHCP) year olds, their parent, guardian or employer to ascertain the reason for the absence as soon as practicable. Wherever possible the student should be asked to attend unless there is a valid reason for non-attendance. The member of staff should record any contact made, discussions, reasons and information on ProMonitor and ensure this is communicated to other staff as required.

8. On the first day back in learning, the student is required to provide evidence to support the absence to their class tutor. Evidence for the absence may be in the form of a note from a parent, carer or guardian (for students under 18 or up to 25 for students with an EHCP), or a medical certificate in the case of absences of 5 or more days.

9. When the member of staff who marked the student absent next sees the student, they should ask for an explanation for the absence, draw the student's attention to the attendance policy and stress that non-attendance will be followed up and dealt with.

10. Should a pattern of non-attendance emerge, the tutor should follow this up at the earliest opportunity with the student, recording any information on ProMonitor. The students' Personal Tutor must be advised.

11. If the level of non-attendance is judged to be unacceptable then the College Student Disciplinary Policy should be used to deal with the matter. As the policy states that we expect a minimum of 95% attendance, anything below this, unless by prior agreement or with valid reason, is unacceptable. It would therefore be appropriate to use the Disciplinary Policy as soon as problems become apparent, rather than leave the problems to grow without formally tackling them.

## **Students' responsibilities**

You are expected to:

1. Attend 100% of all scheduled classes either in person or online relating to your programme of study as confirmed on your learning agreement
2. Arrive on time for the beginning of all sessions, including maths and English (where applicable).
3. Minimise disruption to the rest of the class when arriving late to a session.
4. Report any absence due to illness or other reason to the College by 8:45am on the first and every subsequent day of absence (by phone or e-mail to Reception/class tutor/personal tutor)
5. Do everything possible to avoid necessary absences by making medical appointments outside class time unless it is an emergency
6. Avoid going on holiday during term time
7. Arrange appointments with careers advisors outside of lesson time
8. Provide medical evidence for absences of more than 5 consecutive days
9. Tell us in advance if you know you are going to miss a lesson e.g. attending an interview
10. On the first day back in learning after an absence, present evidence to support your absence.
11. Comply with our Attendance and Punctuality Policy and associated sanctions if your attendance falls below 90%

## **Staff Responsibilities**

All staff are responsible for ensuring the good attendance and punctuality of their students and for dealing with attendance and punctuality issues whenever they occur. There are some specific responsibilities attached to staff; these are outlined below:

**The delivery staff or those taking class registers are responsible for:**

- Accurately completing the register on the day of attendance
- Noting in the register any absences and lateness
- Following up absence with the student when they next meet
- Reporting any persistent issues with students to the attendance team or Curriculum Manager
- Promoting good punctuality and attendance through their own behaviour and teaching standards
- Update ProMonitor with notes and actions

**The Personal Tutor is responsible for:**

- Working with the curriculum team to follow up any absences and ascertain reasons
- Working with the student to improve absence
- Dealing with any personal/pastoral issues that affect poor attendance and punctuality
- Liaising with parents or guardians in order to improve attendance and resolve issues
- Updating ProMonitor with notes and actions relating to attendance or punctuality.

**The Attendance team is responsible for:**

- Monitoring attendance and punctuality issues at team meetings and taking early action to resolve issues
- Ensuring that registers are marked accurately and in a timely fashion and following up on any unmarked registers with individual teaching staff members
- Ensuring that, in the event of a staff member being absent, the register is taken or reallocated on the timetable in instances of long term absence
- Ensuring major changes to timetables are communicated to the management information team
- Implementing the Policy if required for a Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 sanction in relation to poor attendance or punctuality.

**The Curriculum Manager is responsible for:**

- Monitoring overall attendance at team level
- Working with the attendance team on strategies to improve overall attendance/punctuality for the College
- Working with the attendance team on implementation of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy where a learners attendance or punctuality has escalated over and above a Level 1, Level 2 or Level 3 sanction
- Authorise a 'Notice to Improve' attendance letter, where required
- Implement a 'Notice to Withdraw' letter if attendance doesn't improve.

**How attendance is recorded**

A register is taken for every lesson in College including 1:1 Tutor Reviews, GCSE English and Maths and Functional Skills. Tutors mark a register.

Registers have the following marks to report attendance as set out below:

- / for present
- O for absent
- L for late (after the tutor has begun the lesson)
- A for an authorised absence
- E for left early
- \$ for sick

- D for disciplinary
- P for work placement
- H for home study

NB – Attendance of all students will be reviewed after the first five weeks of the academic year. If at that time students have not achieved AT LEAST 90% ATTENDANCE, they will be asked to attend a meeting where their future at the College will be decided

## **Reporting on attendance**

The College monitors attendance closely and personal tutors will receive a summary of student attendance. Any absences and late marks will be shown and tutors will ask students about these. Attendance rates will be included on all reports about individual student progress and in all references that are written to potential employers, other colleges or universities. If students have a genuine reason for a high absence rate we will comment sensitively about this in any reference. We aim to be fair to students but, in line with our values, if attendance is unsatisfactory for no good reason we will be honest about this. The College's usual practice is to discuss references with students when they are being written.

### **What if attendance is poor?**

If attendance rates are unsatisfactory students can expect this to be followed up by your tutor initially and senior staff if required.

Parents/guardians of students aged under 18 (up to 25 with an EHCP) are normally contacted if poor attendance becomes a problem. If you have worries or personal problems that are affecting your attendance, please discuss these with your Personal Tutor. Poor attendance may be dealt with as part of the Student Disciplinary Policy and may result in a final written warning or exclusion. If a student is absent without sufficient reason for more than 4 weeks, a 'Notice to Withdraw' letter will be sent.

## Frequently asked questions

### 1. What will be accepted as an authorised absence?

Absences will only be authorised if the College know in advance there is a good reason, such as:

- Medical appointments which cannot be made outside of timetabled hours
- Religious holiday
- Attendance at a funeral
- Severe disruption to the transport network
- Driving test
- Student representative or other College meetings that you are asked to attend
- Responsibilities for caring for a close family member (if this is likely to affect your learning please discuss this with your personal tutor)
- Participation in a significant outside activity e.g. taking part in a regional or national event
- A visit to an employer, another college or university either to attend an open day or for an interview
- A work experience placement where this is a requirement of the course

### 2. What are not acceptable reasons for absence?

The following reasons for absence are not generally acceptable:

- Holidays/leisure activities
- Part time employment
- Birthdays
- Driving lessons
- Shopping

### 3. What about unplanned absence?

In the case of an unplanned absence the College will take into account:

- The number of absences a student has already taken
- Repeated absences (especially for the same reason)
- Whether evidence of absence can be provided
- Whether the College feel it is reasonable.

You must tell the College as soon as possible on the day of absence that you will be missing lessons, otherwise we will treat the absence as unauthorised (other than in cases such as an emergency situation involving a family member).

### 4. What do you mean by 'evidence of absence'?

The following things can be counted as evidence for an authorised absence;

- A letter from a parent/care/guardian (students under 18 only)
- A medical appointment card
- A doctor's certificate (in the case of absences of 5 or more days)
- Driving test notification letter
- An email or letter regarding an interview
- University Open Day confirmation of booking

**5. What happens if it snows or if the weather is really bad?**

If the weather is severe the College may shut for health and safety reasons. The College will announce any closures on the College website and through other routes. This would be classified as an Authorised Absence should learning not be able to be delivered online.

# Poor Attendance/Punctuality Process

## Tutor Action

<u>What do I do?</u>	<u>Remember</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send email to <i>Absence</i> (admin staff will initially chase up attendance for safeguarding purposes)</li> <li>Contact student to speak to them regarding absence / ensure that they will be in the next session. If student doesn't respond parents/carers contacted and discussion takes place</li> <li>Subject specific 4 week action plan with targets set</li> <li>Manage Learner Meetings Attendance</li> </ul>	<p><b>ILLNESS</b> – monitor and challenge</p> <p><b>ERRATIC / UNAUTHORISED</b> – progress more quickly</p> <p>Check for any work the student has missed after absence. It is expected that tutors will have day-to-day discussions with students on attendance</p> <p>All discussions and actions are recorded on Pro-Monitor comments</p> <p>Some discussions and actions may need to be recorded on CPOMS</p>

## Personal Tutor Action – if no improvement from tutor actions

<u>What do I do?</u>	<u>Remember</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with PT and student recorded on Pro monitor: Manage Learner Meetings → Attendance. 4 week action plan with targets set and closely monitored. Support put in place where necessary</li> <li>Parents / carers informed and provided with a copy of the targets to be achieved. PT closely liaises with parents / carers to ensure that targets are met</li> <li>After 4 weeks action plan suspended or extended if further monitoring deemed necessary</li> </ul>	<p>Check on progress and learning – is student achieving minimum expected grade? How is the student to catch up on all work missed? Is absence across all subjects or specific to one? Have you sent a copy of the action plan to parents / carers?</p> <p>All discussions and actions are recorded on Pro-Monitor comments</p> <p>Some discussions and actions may need to be recorded on CPOMS</p>

## Manager Action Plan – if no improvement from Personal Tutor actions

<u>What do I do?</u>	<u>Remember:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1<sup>st</sup> CAM (College attendance meeting) to take place</b></li> <li><b>Parents / carers to be invited in writing by post. Minutes to be typed and a copy sent to parents / carers (via email or post)</b></li> <li><b>Manager, student and parents / carers work closely on appropriate intervention strategy to re-engage</b></li> <li><b>Actions closely monitored and adjusted to ensure optimum results</b></li> </ul>	<p>Daily monitoring of student attendance and contact needs to be made with both student and parents / carers if there is an unauthorised absence</p> <p>Work collaboratively with external agencies in ensuring any barriers to attending College are removed</p> <p>All discussions and actions are recorded on Pro Monitor comments</p> <p>Some discussions and actions may need to be recorded on CPOMS</p>

### **The Attendance Team:**

#### **the attendance team will operate in addition to the actions above**

- The attendance team will meet on a regular basis and discuss students with attendance under 95%. Subject and Personal Tutors and Managers will be contacted regarding intervention if not fully recorded on Pro-Monitor
- The meetings will look at student performance and if:
  - A: Improvement shown – praise given (action plans and monitoring will continue)
  - B: No Improvement shown – Letter sent to parents / carers outlining current actions and CAM 2 to take place

All discussions and actions are recorded on Pro-Monitor comments.  
Some discussions and actions may need to be recorded on CPOMS

### **NO improvement despite Interventions action plan**

Parents / carers invited to final meeting. A member of College SMT and a tutor should attend the meeting as a minimum. Please note any details of home visit here.

Decision made on next steps – has all intervention been considered and applied? Is it in the best interest of all parties that the student is withdrawn from their study programme / course?

All discussions and actions are recorded on Pro-Monitor comments.  
Some discussions and actions may need to be recorded on CPOMS

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Agreed by Greenbank Board of Trustees



Dr Alan Irving, Chairman