

ATTENDANCE & ENGAGEMENT POLICY 2025-2026

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ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT POLICY

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1** Waltham Forest College is committed to an academically challenging and supportive environment giving our students the best opportunity to succeed on their chosen programme. Central to this commitment is the recognition of the link between student success and their on-course engagement and attendance, with good engagement/attendance tending to lead to better outcomes. In addition, poor engagement/attendance can be an indicator that a student may need further support to achieve success.
- 1.2** This policy provides a framework to identify students requiring additional support and specifies the interventions needed.
- 1.3** The policy defines 'engagement' and 'attendance,' outlining student expectations and potential actions by the College for non-compliance. It applies to all students enrolled in any taught program at Waltham Forest College.
- 1.4** This policy applies to all students and aims to foster a learning environment for students to achieve their full potential. All College staff and students are responsible for adhering to this guidance.

2 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1** Attendance' includes the activity of being present, whether on campus or online, work experience and other activities as required by their study programme or course. Students are expected to arrive at learning activities punctually (on time) and remain present for the full duration. Learning activities may include:
 - Physical attendance at face-to-face scheduled teaching and/or other learning events (e.g. Tutorials, fieldtrips, work experience and/or examinations)
 - Virtual attendance at timetabled teaching and/or other learning events
 - Completion of remote/self study work that has been set
 - Attending meetings with Personal Tutors or other designated College staff
- 2.2** 'Engagement' includes participation in guided independent or group study activities, assessment and feedback, and any other activities required, including:
 - Submitting assessments by the agreed deadline
 - Accessing and/or interacting with course materials, including viewing recap recordings and completing tasks in virtual learning environments
 - Participating fully in sessions

3 UNEXPECTED ABSENCES

- 3.1** Waltham Forest College accepts that on occasion it may not be possible for a student to attend all scheduled teaching activities. Where a student is unavoidably absent, they must advise the appropriate a member of staff stating their reason for absence, before their start of their timetabled or scheduled activity.
- 3.2** Students are expected to provide a reasonable reason for the absence. Follow up conversations may take place and should be backed up with evidence for the reported absence.

3.3 All published assessment submission dates will stand regardless of the student's absence and may impact their achievement for any examinations missed due to the absence.

3.4 It is the student's responsibility to catch-up missed sessions.

4 ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY EXPECTATIONS

4.1 Waltham Forest College expects 100% attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions. This includes the main vocational programme, English and maths, tutorials, work experience and enrichment activities.

4.2 All unreported absences must be followed up by the tutor by contacting the student and/or parents/guardians. All contact must be recorded on ProMonitor, whether successful or unsuccessful.

4.3 Any time missed due to unexpected absences must be made up either by attending additional engagement sessions or by completing agreed remote work, as determined by the tutor, to ensure students do not fall behind.

4.4 If students can demonstrate engagement by completing the assigned work that they missed, then the absence will count as positive. All absences and time/work made up should be recorded on ProMonitor and, and the relevant registers should be updated accordingly.

4.5 If attendance falls below 95%, it will be treated as a cause for concern. The disciplinary process must be followed, and an action plan agreed between the tutor and the student. Parents/guardians must be informed, and all actions recorded on ProMonitor.

4.6 Non-attendance and non-engagement will be dealt with as part of the College's Student Behaviour Policy and Disciplinary.

5 MONITORING ENGAGEMENT AND ATTENDANCE

5.1 Amongst other things, monitoring student engagement and attendance enables the College to:

- Improve retention and student wellbeing
- Increase student commitment to the course and improve academic outcomes
- Mitigate against the impact that low participation has on a student cohort
- Support the College in meeting its obligations to key stakeholders
- Supports students on their next steps

5.2 Student engagement and attendance data will be used by college staff to supplement knowledge of student activity and interventions will be in accordance with the thresholds described below.

5.3 Student activity will be monitored throughout the academic year by Personal Tutors and Progress Coaches and other staff with responsibility for student wellbeing.

- 5.4** Where there are consecutive absences of more than two weeks, the safeguarding team will intervene and take appropriate action to ensure the student's safety and well-being.

6 PRAISE, REWARD AND RECOGNITION

- 6.1** Waltham Forest College sets high expectations for staff and students alike. It is important to recognise those who do well and aim high. Reinforcing positive behaviours, attitudes, and attendance builds a safe and inspiring learning environment.
- 6.2** Staff are expected to act and demonstrate the College values, encouraging these expectations of students through daily interactions, as we are preparing students for the world of work.
- 6.3** To help raise these aspirations and standards it is important to recognise and celebrate success and achievement. Each Curriculum area is to devise and outline a rewards and recognition process each academic year, where we highlight those students who meet and exceed expectations while studying with us.
- 6.4** Rewards may include:
- Monthly 100% attendance and punctuality certificates being issued
 - Most improved attendance recognised
 - Termly rewards for top attenders involving Head of Department (HoD)/Deputy Head (DH) and Assistant Principals (AP)
 - Termly incentive competitions and top group attendance rewards

Each department is to have an outline of their incentive to celebrate which is to be approved by HoD and AP

7 PUNCTUALITY

- 7.1** Good punctuality is reflective of a student's commitment to their course and indicates a professional approach. As we are preparing young people and adults to enter further/higher education and employment, it is crucial that we install high expectations and standards from the onset of their programmes and learning.
- 7.2** For any students on an Education, health and care plan (EHCP), the Head of ALS must be informed of each stage and be invited to meetings. If repeated occurrences have been issued, this will be considered as minor misconduct and the student disciplinary process will be initiated. Please refer to behaviour policy for full details of the process.
- 7.3** The College policy on punctuality is:
- Lateness will be marked in the register. Teachers will check and monitor the registers to identify punctuality problems and address concerns with students and highlight it during tutorials/one to ones so there is a record, after reminding the student once of the procedure and continued lateness a note on Promonitor is to be made
 - Repeated lateness will trigger the student disciplinary procedure

- Dependant on the stage of the disciplinary process the student is on, the result of this could be suspension, only following a meeting with the Director of Curriculum (DoC) and once all interventions have been exhausted. (See student disciplinary process and flow chart).
 - Depending on the stage of the disciplinary process, this may ultimately result in suspension, following a meeting with the Assistant Principal and once all interventions have been exhausted. (See Student Disciplinary Policy and flow chart).
- 7.4** If a student is on an EHCP, the Head of ALS must also be informed and present , possibly with the local authority, and a request for an annual review is to be made before any withdrawal can be approved.
- 7.5** All outcomes and stages must be fully documented on ProMonitor and communicated in writing to all relevant parties within five working days of the meeting. Only a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has the authority to sanction a student's suspension or withdrawal.

8 ATTENDANCE

- 8.1** Good attendance is essential to ensure that effective teaching is taking place and staff are not continuously refocusing students that have been absent without explanation. Students need to recognise and understand the expectations of training providers and employers, for them to succeed and progress in their careers and life.
- 8.2** We expect attendance to remain at 100%, any time off should be made up either by attending additional time at college or completing work remotely, so students do not fall behind.
- 8.3** All absences and time/work made up should be recorded on ProMonitor. If attendance falls below 95% a cause for concern and student disciplinary process is to be followed, and an action plan arranged, agreed between the tutor and student which will be updated on ProMonitor.
- 8.4** If a student is expecting to be absent, they must phone, email or message on Teams the course tutor and their lecturers before their session has started.
- 8.5** Students must phone, email or send a direct Teams message to the group tutor and lecturer/s whose lessons will be missed before the start of their lesson (8:30am) on the day of absence. Messages must not be passed to other students.
- 8.5.1** Students should leave a message about absence, covering the following details:
- Your full name and the course
 - The date and time of your call/message
 - The names of teachers who need to be informed
 - The reason for your absence
 - When you expect to return
- 8.5.2** Students that have an unauthorised absence (i.e. they have not contacted the college on or before the day of their absence) will receive a reminder from the teacher about the absence policy and failure to follow this process will result in the student disciplinary process commencing.

- 8.5.3** Students that have a further unauthorised absence without contacting the college will be spoken to and a note made on Promonitor as the start of the student disciplinary process.
- 8.5.4** Students that continue to be absent without contacting the college student will again, continue the student disciplinary procedure and relevant interventions and actions followed.
- 8.5.5** Dependant on the stage of the disciplinary process the student is on, the result of this could be suspension only following a meeting with the Assistant Principal and once all interventions have been exhausted. (see student disciplinary process and flow chart). Any outcomes and stages will be fully documented on Pro Monitor and communicated to all parties in writing within 5 days of the meeting. Note: Only a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) can sanction a student being withdrawn.
- 8.6** If a student is on an EHCP, the Head of ALS must also be informed and present at meetings, possibly with the local authority, and a request for an annual review is to be made before any withdrawal can be approved.
- 8.7** Continued absence or patterns of frequent non-attendance will also be referred to the HoD and BeSafe Team to investigate. This will include when there is a 2-week consecutive absence without a valid reason as this could indicate a safeguarding concern, even if the student has contacted the college on each day of their absence. The College reserves the right to enact its Home Visit Policy to implement a home visit if deemed necessary.
- 8.8** Please note, any poor and unauthorised attendance during the induction period (first 6 weeks) at college may warrant withdrawal from programme without following the below procedure, as this is a time when standards are set and learners are expected to follow the attendance and code of conduct to demonstrate they are suitable for the programme they are enrolled onto. Learners who hit 90% during this period are at risk of withdrawal and parents/guardians will be invited to discuss this at 'At Risk' Parent evening either in person or via Teams meeting with the personal tutor.
- 8.9** All actions and interventions need to be recorded onto Pro Monitor.

9 WHO DOES WHAT AND WHEN

- 9.1 Enrolment:** Students will be informed of the need for full attendance and punctuality during course information sessions and interviews and will sign the Student Contract.
- 9.2 Induction:** At induction, students will be reminded about the Student Contract and attendance expectations and may sign a commitment to attend all scheduled sessions on time, including English and Maths classes if applicable.
- 9.3 Tutorials:** During half termly tutorials the group tutor will discuss any attendance and punctuality concerns and set clear SMART targets for making improvements. Should concerns not be improved the relevant disciplinary process will be followed.
- 9.4 Probation Period:** The first 6 weeks of courses will be probationary periods to assess students' commitment. Disciplinary procedures may support attendance improvements. During this period, the usual student attendance process may be

shortened, leading to potential withdrawal for breaches. Every attempt to reengage their student will be attempted and recorded onto Promonitor, before withdrawing

- 9.5 At Risk Parents Evening:** For students in breach of this probation period or demonstrating poor attendance and punctuality, parents/NoK's will be invited to an 'At Risk' Parent evening within the first half term, where concerns will be discussed to allow the student to make improvements before a decision of withdrawing from programme.

10 STUDENTS WITH EDUCATIONAL HEALTH CARE PLANS

- 10.1** If a student is going through the attendance process and has an EHCP, the Head of ALS & Inclusion must be informed at all stages so this can be communicated back to the local authority. Additionally, for students involved with social care or virtual school, the BeSafe team must be informed to facilitate appropriate liaison with partner organisations.
- 10.2** Any meetings held with the student will require a member of the ALS team in attendance, and where a student on an EHCP is at risk of being withdrawn or excluded the Head of ALS must be informed.
- 10.3** The ALS team will request an urgent annual review if the student is at risk of being withdrawn, to ensure the student and NOK are aware of the situation and have time to make improvements.
- 10.4** If agreed actions are not met and there is consistent breach of policy the student disciplinary process will continue to be followed and the result of this could be suspension and withdrawal from programme, following a meeting with the Assistant Principal, and once all interventions have been exhausted. (see student disciplinary policy).
- 10.5** Any outcomes and stages will be fully documented on Pro Monitor and communicated to all parties in writing within 5 days of the meeting.

11 APPEALS PROCEDURE

- 11.1** If a student wishes to appeal the outcome of the suspension outcome, they need to write to the Deputy Principal of Curriculum and Quality addressed to the Executive Coordinator within 10 days of the date of the letter. The letter needs to outline the reasons why they are appealing and supply new additional evidence to support their appeal against the decision made.
- 11.2** A member of the Senior Leadership Team will be appointed to review the appeal, assess the new evidence provided, and make a final decision regarding the outcome of the appeal.
- 11.3** If there is substantial new evidence to support an appeal meeting going ahead, this will be arranged, otherwise appeals will be responded to within 14 working days of receipt of the appeal with the outcome. This decision is final.

APPENDIX A: Policy Thresholds

Students Attendance	Action	Monitor
100%	Students recognised with certificate of attendance (must include all elements of study programme inc. English and/or maths where applicable). Curriculum incentives for attendance (prize draw, trip, vouchers etc.) relevant to each curriculum area and termly. Parent/Guardian/NoK to be informed by calling, emailing or writing to them. Notes made on pro monitor.	Curriculum Staff
< 95%	Attendance concern is logged on ProMonitor by the student's tutor. (This applies to individual aspects of the study programme e.g. if overall is 97%, but attendance to maths is 87%, the student should have a concern for maths logged on ProMonitor). Action plan for catching up on hours or work to be made. Parent/Guardian/NoK to be informed by calling, emailing or writing to them. Notes made on pro monitor.	Tutor for concern being logged onto Pro Monitor. Curriculum Head Monitoring
< 90%	Student will have an additional concern logged. Depending on the number of occasions this has occurred, the disciplinary process will be followed accordingly. The link between achievement and attendance will be reiterated and students will be advised that they are at risk of withdrawal. Targets for attendance are set. (Again, this applies to all individual aspects of the study programme). Parent/Guardian/NoK to be informed by calling, emailing or writing to them. Notes made on pro monitor.	Tutor for concern being logged onto Pro Monitor. Curriculum Head Monitoring
< 85%	Student is at extreme risk of withdrawal and should be placed onto an attendance action plan. (Again, this applies to all individual aspects of the study programme). Depending on the number of concerns issued disciplinary process will be followed accordingly. Parent/Guardian/NoK to be informed by calling, emailing or writing to them. Notes made on pro monitor.	Tutor for C4C Curriculum Head/Deputy meeting

Students Attendance	Action	Monitor
2 weeks consecutive non-attendance	Study programme and vulnerable adults only. If the student has not attended College for two weeks consecutively, an initial referral to BeSafe is to be made. BeSafe team will be sent a consecutive absence tracker that will include all students who have had 2 weeks consecutive non-attendance. BeSafe team to conduct welfare checks and contact student, NOKs and any affiliated professionals. If unsuccessful, members to the BeSafe team will conduct a scheduled home visit (See home visit policy). If the home visit is unsuccessful, a referral to the Police will be made for them to conduct a welfare visit to the home. 2 weeks absence letter to be sent to all students who have not attended for 2 consecutive weeks, for 16–18-year-olds, letter to be sent to NoK.	Curriculum Heads/Deputy and BeSafe team
4 weeks consecutive non-attendance	Students should be contacted by the curriculum area (tutor, deputy or head). They will be set targets to return to the college. If they fail to attend, they make contact with Be Safe to check on previous referral and if there is no further action/contact they will be processed as a withdrawal. 4 weeks absence letter to be sent to all students who have not attended for 4 consecutive weeks, for 16–18-year-olds, letter to be sent to NoK.	Curriculum Heads informing DoC's and SS
5 weeks consecutive non-attendance	If no contact has been made after 4-week absent letter, a final 7-day notice of withdrawal letter to be sent out to attempt to re-engage the student. 7 days' notice of withdrawal to be sent after 5 consecutive weeks of no attendance. For 16–18-year-olds, letter to be sent to NoK. Following the letter being sent (7days from the date of the letter) student will be withdrawn with a letter sent to confirm the student is no longer enrolled at Waltham Forest College.	Curriculum Heads informing DoC's and SS