

# ATTENDANCE & ENGAGEMENT POLICY

2024/25

Date of Issue:	September 2024
Version	4.0
Date of Review:	July 2025
Contact:	Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality
Approved by	SLT
Available:	Intranet/Website



# 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 learners 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 Personal Tutor stating their reason for absence.
- 3.2 Students are expected to provide a reasonable reason for the absence. Follow up conversations may take place require 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 exams missed due to absence.

**3.4** It is the student's responsibility to catch-up missed sessions. Staff are not required provide additional support to students who do not attend learning activities.

## **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 parents/guardians. All contact must be recorded on ProMonitor, whether successful or successful.

**4.3** Any time off from unexpected absences should be made up either by attending additional engagement sessions or completing work remotely which will be agreed with by the tutor, this is so 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 appropriate registers will need to be revisited.

**4.5** If attendance falls below 95% a cause for concern and the disciplinary process is to be followed, and an action plan arranged, which will be agreed between the tutor and the student. Parents/guardians must be notified, and all actions should be updated onto 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 other staff with responsibility for student wellbeing.

## **6 PRAISE, REWARD AND RECOGNITION**

- 6.1** Waltham Forest College sets high expectations for staff and learners alike. It is important to recognize 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 learners 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 learners 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 Director (DD) and Director of Curriculum (DoC)
  - Termly incentive competitions and top group attendance rewards
- 6.5** Each department is to have an outline of their incentive to celebrate which is to be approved by HoD and DoC, this is then shared with marketing and the learners on programme to make WFC a great place to learn, and for learners to feel truly part of #TeamForest.

## **7 PUNCTUALITY**

- 7.1** Good punctuality is reflective of a learner'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 learners 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 learner disciplinary process will kick in. Please refer to behaviour policy for 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 learners and highlight it during tutorials/one to ones so there is a record, after reminding the learner once of the procedure and continued lateness a note on Promonitor is to be made
  - Repeated lateness will result in the start of the learner disciplinary procedure being followed.
  - Dependant on the stage of the disciplinary process the learner 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 learner disciplinary process and flow chart).

- 7.4** If a learner 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** 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 learner being suspended or withdrawn.

## **8 ATTENDANCE**

- 8.1** Good attendance is essential to ensure that effective teaching is taking place and staff are not continuously refocusing learners that have been absent without explanation. Learners 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 learners 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 learner disciplinary process is to be followed, and an action plan arranged, agreed between the tutor and learner which will be updated on ProMonitor.
- 8.4** The College policy on attendance is: If a learner is expecting to be absent, they must phone, email or message on Teams the course tutor and their lecturers before their session has started. (Not after the lessons have commenced, otherwise this will be logged as unauthorised).
- 8.5** **Process:** Learners 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 (9.00am) on the day of absence. Messages must not be passed to other learners as this will constitute as an unauthorised absence.

Learners 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
- 8.6** Learners 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 that failure to follow this process will result in the learner disciplinary process commencing.
- 8.7** Learners 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 learner disciplinary process. This must be recorded on Pro Monitor.

- 8.8 Learners that continue to be absent without contacting the college learner will again, continue the learner disciplinary procedure and relevant interventions and actions followed.
- 8.9 Dependant on the stage of the disciplinary process the learner is on, the result of this could be suspension only following a meeting with the Assistant Principal of Curriculum, and once all interventions have been exhausted. (see learner 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 learner being withdrawn.
- 8.10 If a learner 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.
- 8.11 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 learner 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.
- 8.12 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.
- 9.2 **Induction:** At induction, students will learn 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.
- 9.5 **At Risk Parents Evening:** for any learners in breach of this probation period or demonstrating poor attendance and punctuality, parents/carers/guardians will be invited to an 'At Risk' Parent evening within the first half-term, where concerns will be discussed to allow the learner to make improvements before a decision of withdrawing from programme

## 10 LEARNERS WITH EDUCATIONAL HEALTH CARE PLANS

- 10.1 If a learner 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.

- 10.2** Any meetings held with the learner will require a member of the ALS team in attendance, and where a learner 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 learner is at risk of being withdrawn, to ensure the learner 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 learner 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 of Curriculum, and once all interventions have been exhausted. (see learner 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.
- 11.4** If a parent or student feels that the College has not implemented the Student Attendance and Engagement Policy correctly then they have a right of appeal to:

The Education and Skills Funding Agency or any other relevant organisation in order to make a complaint about the college. A copy of the Department for Education policy is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency/about/complaints-procedure>

Adult learners should appeal to the GLA via their website: [Guidance for learner complaints | London City Hall](#)

Students on Higher Education courses can refer their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator at: <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>

## APPENDIX A: Policy Thresholds

Learners Attendance	Action	Monitor
100%	<p>Learners 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.</p> <p><b>Parent/Guardian/Next of Kin to be informed by calling, emailing or writing to them. Notes made on pro monitor.</b></p>	Curriculum Staff
< 95%	<p>Attendance concern is logged on ProMonitor by the learner's tutor. (This applies to individual aspects of the study programme e.g. if overall is 97%, but attendance to maths is 87%, the learner should have a concern for maths logged on ProMonitor). Action plan for catching up on hours or work to be made.</p> <p><b>Parent/Guardian/Next if Kin to be informed by calling, emailing or writing to them. Notes made on pro monitor.</b></p>	<p>Tutor for concern being logged onto Pro Monitor.</p> <p>Curriculum Head Monitoring</p>
< 90%	<p>Learner will have an additional concern logged. Depending on the number of occasions this has occurred, the disciplinary process will be followed accordingly.</p> <p>The link between achievement and attendance will be reiterated and learners 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).</p> <p><b>Parent/Guardian/Next of Kin to be informed by calling, emailing or writing to them. Notes made on pro monitor.</b></p>	<p>Tutor for concern being logged onto Pro Monitor.</p> <p>Curriculum Head Monitoring</p>
< 85%	<p>Learner 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).</p> <p>Depending on the number of concerns issued disciplinary process will be followed accordingly.</p> <p><b>Parent/Guardian/Next of Kin to be informed by calling, emailing or writing to them. Notes made on pro monitor.</b></p>	<p>Tutor for C4C</p> <p>Curriculum Head/Deputy meeting</p>

Learners Attendance	Action	Monitor
2 weeks consecutive non-attendance	<p>Study programme and vulnerable adults only. If the learner 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 learner, Next of Kins and any affiliated professionals. If unsuccessful, members of 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.</p> <p><b>2 weeks absence letter to be sent</b> to all learners who have not attended for 2 consecutive weeks, for 16–18-year-olds, letter to be sent to Next of Kin.</p>	Curriculum Heads/Deputy and BeSafe team
4 weeks consecutive non-attendance	<p>Learners 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.</p> <p><b>4 weeks absence letter to be sent</b> to all learners who have not attended for 4 consecutive weeks, for 16–18-year-olds, letter to be sent to Next of Kin.</p>	Curriculum Heads informing Assistant Principals of Curriculum and SS
5 weeks consecutive non-attendance	<p>If no contact has been made after 4-week absent letter, a final <b>7-day notice of withdrawal letter</b> to be sent out to attempt to re-engage the learner.</p> <p>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 Next of Kin.</p> <p>Following the letter being sent (7days from the date of the letter) learner will be withdrawn with a letter sent to confirm the learner is no longer enrolled at Waltham Forest College.</p>	Curriculum Heads informing Assistant Principals of Curriculum and SS