



Student Attendance Policy

Quality & Curriculum Committee:
Corporation Approval:
Review Date:

November 2008
December 2008
Annual



Student Attendance Policy

1. Policy statement

The Common Inspection Framework highlights regular attendance and punctuality as key elements in learners' ability to achieve. It recommends that procedures be put in place for the early recognition of poor punctuality and non-attendance and taking appropriate action. Good attendance and punctuality are part of BHASVIC's drive to improve retention and achievement and its strategy to raise standards generally.

2. Policy scope

This policy applies to all students and will be implemented by all teachers and tutors, aided by the Attendance Team and the Student Services Team. The specific expectations regarding student attendance are set out in the booklet entitled 'Attendance Procedures - what to do if you are absent from College' (appendix 1), a copy of which is given to all students and their parents at the start of each year, and is also available on the VLE and on the parents' information area of the BHASVIC website.

3. Policy aims

This policy aims to assist all students to take responsibility for their full and prompt attendance at College, which will enhance their learning experience, develop their personal skills and promote retention, achievement and progression.

Specifically, the College aims to:

- Promote good student attendance.
- Support students who are experiencing genuine difficulties in attending College.
- Publish and implement strategies to raise overall attendance and punctuality which are understood by all students, staff and parents/carers.
- Publish and implement attendance and punctuality monitoring procedures which are understood by all students, staff and parents/carers.

The College will do this by:

- Monitoring student attendance and punctuality for all scheduled commitments¹.
- Discouraging students from taking unauthorised absence at any time, and making clear to students and parents the implications of doing so.
- Ensuring that there are effective procedures in place to deal with unauthorised or prolonged absence and poor punctuality.
- Identifying 'at risk' students quickly and taking appropriate action.
- Emphasising to students that good attendance and punctuality is a courtesy to fellow students as well as to staff and that poor punctuality can adversely affect the learning of all students.

¹ For example, lessons, tutorials, subject reviews, subject extensions, trips, sports fixtures, rehearsals, performances.

4. Policy details:

Our expectation is that students have 100% attendance and are punctual to all their scheduled commitments.

4.1. Punctuality

- If a student is late to a lesson or tutorial, the teacher must use the appropriate late mark in the register (appendix 2 and 3) and record the number of minutes that the student is late.
- If a student is more than 10 minutes late, this constitutes an absence for EMA purposes.
- Teachers must ensure that they finish their lessons five minutes before the start of the next lesson so that students can arrive at their next lesson on time (appendix 4).

4.2. Absence

- Students should not miss a scheduled commitment unless they have followed the correct procedure for absence (appendix 1).
- It is the student's responsibility to communicate effectively with the College in respect of all absences and to arrange to catch up with any work they have missed.
- Failure to do so without a valid reason may result in a student being asked to pay a contribution towards the costs of their examinations or other forms of assessment, and/or may result in them being asked to leave the College.

4.3. Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

- EMA payments are made to students in accordance with government guidelines.
- Details of what the College considers to be acceptable reasons for absence, and the procedures that students should follow are set out in the booklet entitled 'What to do if you are absent from College' (appendix 1).
- Reasons for withholding an EMA payment are given in the booklet 'How to make sure you get your EMA payment' (appendix 5).

4.4. Dealing with poor attendance and punctuality

- The College will contact the parents/carers of all students whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern.
- The College aims to contact the parents/carers of all students who are absent without prior notification, to inform them of the absence.
- Students whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern will be set clear and appropriate targets for improvement, and will be supported to achieve these targets.
- Normally, students whose attendance falls below 90% by the time examination or assessment entries are made will be required to pay a contribution towards the cost of assessment.
- The College will continue to be sympathetic in the case of unavoidable absence² and in these cases, is committed to offering support to address problems.

5. Monitoring and review of policy and procedures

This policy and related procedures will be reviewed every three years or more frequently if necessary.

² Unavoidable absences for reasons such as a close family bereavement, religious festivals, College trips, university visits or a prolonged absence caused, for example, by long term ill-health.

Appendix 1

Attendance procedures for students: 'What to do if I am absent from College'.

Please note that if you receive EMA, additional conditions apply.

All absence remains unauthorised unless the College is satisfied that the absence was unavoidable **and** also meets its criteria for authorised absence. It is a student's responsibility to communicate effectively with the College in respect of all absences and failure to do so without a valid reason will be a disciplinary matter.

Foreseeable absences

- Complete a **Planned Absence Slip** and present it to Reception with evidence of the reason (eg your appointment card or letter) at least 24 hours before the event.
- We **will** authorise: hospital appointments; orthodontist appointments; driving tests; religious festivals; emergency doctor's appointments; university open days and interviews. Authorisation will not be made until official paperwork is received (eg an appointment letter/card).
- **We will authorise these if we know in advance, but we cannot do so retrospectively.**
- We **will not** authorise: holidays in term time; routine doctor's appointments; dental appointments; driving lessons.
- If in doubt ask your Senior Tutor **before** you miss a scheduled commitment.

What to do if you are ill

Up to 5 days: Either phone the **absence hotline**, 01273 559966, or send a **text** message to 07624 802745, or **e-mail** us at outofcollege@bhasvic.ac.uk. You must contact the College every day that you are going to be absent. On your return, bring in a note explaining the reason for absence, signed by a parent, and complete a '**Return to College**' form and hand it in to Reception within a day of your return. If you do not live with your parents or a carer, your Senior Tutor should sign the form.

After 5 days: You will need a doctor's certificate for absence.

What to do if you are taken ill during the day

Sign out at Reception. On your return to College, bring in a letter signed by a parent, complete a '**Return to College**' form and take the form to Reception. If you do not live with your parents or a carer, your Senior Tutor should sign the form.

Trips, Visits and Sports Fixtures

Taking part in educational trips and visits organised by the College counts as authorised absence, which is notified to the Attendance Team by the member of staff responsible for the event.

Other reasons for absence

The authorisation of absence for **any other reason** will be at the discretion of the College. You should not assume that absence will be authorised; if in doubt, discuss this with your Senior Tutor.

Timetable problems

If your timetable is not right because you have changed a subject or groups or there is an error on your timetable, **it is your responsibility to ensure that the change is completed formally with your Senior Tutor**. You should not assume the problem has been sorted out until you have a new timetable from the Information Office in room 11.

Appendix 2

Attendance code list for BHASVIC registers

Attended or did not need to attend

/	Present
C	Concession from this lesson
E	College Exam
T	College Trip
W	Study leave
\$	Attendance not required for this lesson (staff training, reading week, etc)

Authorised Absence (we have received written confirmation)

A	Authorised
B	The absence has been authorised with a note but EMA payment will not be made as it is the fourth or more absence this term.
D	Authorised by Senior Tutor for personal reasons
I	Medical/Dental Appointment
R	Religious observance

Late

L	Student attended the lesson but arrived late
Z	Student attended the lesson, but arrived after the register closed

Unauthorised Absence – these are our main concerns as we do not have any formal, written confirmation of the absence (or the reason given is not acceptable). A telephone conversation does not formally authorise the absence.
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F	Student did not attend one-to-one meeting with tutor
K	Student did not take part in the lesson (no kit)
N	Absence notified, but the reason is unacceptable
P	Phone notification but no letter authorising the absence
O	Reason unknown, waiting for notification
Q	BHASVIC queried the absence, but still no note to authorise it
S	Student signed out at reception, but still no note to authorise the absence
U	Unauthorised absence- reason unknown
V	Holiday

Other

?	Register has not yet been completed electronically
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Appendix 3

Instructions to teachers for dealing with lateness:

- Teachers should follow the detailed instructions for completing their registers which are provided in the Absence Management Procedures document. This is available on BHASVIC Central.
- If a student is late to a lesson, the teacher must use the appropriate late mark in the register (see above) and record the number of minutes that the student is late.
- However, if a student arrives at their first timetabled lesson of the day after the register has been sent, and the reason for lateness is due to problems with public transport or unexpected traffic problems, they can get a '**late form**' from Reception. They should take this to their lesson and ask their teacher to sign it and return it to Reception. If the teacher doesn't accept the reason the student gives, the student can take the form to the Attendance Team in room 10, who can check with the local bus/train companies if the service was running late.
- If the teacher is satisfied by the explanation given by the student for lateness, they can enter them as 'L' but not enter the number of minutes. If they are not satisfied, the teacher will record the number of minutes missed.
- If a student is more than 10 minutes late, this constitutes an absence for EMA purposes.

Appendix 4

Start and end times for lessons:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.30-9.35	A	G	F	D	C
9.35-10.40	B	G	E	C	D
10.40-11.00	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
11.00-12.05	C	B	B	F	E
12.05-1.10	D	A	A	E	F
1.10-1.40	A2 Tutorial LUNCH for A1/IP/FP	A2 Tutorial LUNCH for A1/IP/FP	LUNCH	LUNCH/ ENRICHMENT	A2 Tutorial LUNCH for A1/IP/FP
1.40-2.10	A1/IP/FP Tutorial LUNCH for A2	A1/IP/FP Tutorial LUNCH for A2	G 1.40-2.45		A1/IP/FP Tutorial LUNCH for A2
2.10-3.15	E	D	College Afternoon 2.45 – 4.15	A	G
3.15-4.20	F	C		B	

Teachers of 'single lessons' must ensure that they finish their lessons five minutes before the start of the next lesson so that students can arrive at their next lesson on time.

This affects the following lessons:

Period 1 should end at 9.30

Period 3 should end at 12.00

Period 4 should end at 1.05 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays

Period 5 should end at 3.10 on all days except Wednesdays when it ends at 2.45 and Fridays when it ends at 3.15

Appendix 5

Guidelines for students: 'How to make sure you get your EMA payment'

EMA payments are made to help you with the expenses of your course. We can only guarantee your payment if you attend **all** your lessons, tutor periods and, where applicable, work placements. All absence remains unauthorised unless the College is satisfied that the absence was unavoidable **and** that it meets the criteria for authorised absence.

Details of what the College considers to be acceptable reasons for absence, and the procedures that you need to follow to notify the College in such cases, are laid down in the booklet "**What to do if you are absent from College**". You will be given a copy of this by your tutor.

Students should also be aware that failure to comply with other College expectations may also result in loss of EMA

Payment of EMA

Payment decisions are made on a Tuesday at NOON and payments should arrive in your bank account for Friday. You need to submit any documentation relating to your attendance by noon on the Tuesday following your return to college.

Non- payment

You will not receive your EMA payment if you:

- Take holiday in term time (even if this is a family holiday)
- Are more than 10 minutes late for any lesson during the week
- Have any unauthorised absence in a week

If for any reason we have not authorised the payment of your EMA, you will be informed by text message from the EMA Authority and in writing by us.

Limits to Authorised Absence

- In cases of genuine, unavoidable absence, payments can be made if suitable evidence is produced. However, a **maximum of 3 periods** of absence can be authorised in any one term. (For example, this would mean that missing one lesson because you felt unwell would count as one period of absence, as would a three day illness).
- Each period of absence will require separate parental notification. One note cannot cover several periods of absence.
- The longest period which can be authorised for payment within a week is 4 days. It is not possible to authorise payment for a whole week's absence.
- Absences should still be notified in the usual manner if you have already had three or more periods of absence, even if they cannot be authorised.
- There may be **exceptional** circumstances, in which your Senior Tutor may be able to authorise additional absences.

Timetable problems

If your timetable is not right because you have changed a subject or groups or there is an error in your timetable, **it is your responsibility to ensure that the change is completed formally with your Senior Tutor**. You should not assume the problem has been sorted out until you have a new timetable from the Information Office in room 11. If you do not ensure that the change has been completed, you may be marked absent and lose your EMA.

Bonus Payments

EMA bonus payments occur twice a year. The criteria for these bonuses vary from one term to the next, but relate to you demonstrating a commitment to your courses. In order to get the bonus payment you will need to have:

- Attendance of at least 90%
- Full attendance at your exams
- To have completed key college documentation, i.e. Learning agreements, subject reviews, college contracts, and enrolment forms
- Progressed satisfactorily on any Action Plans
- Met coursework deadlines (including draft submission deadlines)
- Satisfactory subject reviews
- Met the College's expectations of student behaviour

In addition, you must not have

- Been fraudulent over notification of absence (including signing out)
- Taken holidays during term time

1st year students should have completed a separate application form for bonus payments at enrolment. All other students who have not yet done this, need to complete application forms and give them to Lauren Shukru, in Room 63c (opposite the Careers Suite).

If you think a mistake has been made

Weekly Payments: If you feel that a decision has been made in error, you must appeal before the end of the week following non-payment or you will lose the payment. This is because we are only allowed to request back dated payments for 2 weeks. In the first instance you should speak to your Senior Tutor.

Bonus Payments: In the first instance you should speak to your Senior Tutor.

If you still feel that there has been an error in refusing you a payment, you can either speak to Nick Herbert (Careers Suite), or to Angus Stroud (Room 111 in College House).

If we discover that we have paid you in error and you should not have received the payment, we will inform the payment body and they will stop a payment in lieu of it.