



“Inspiring learning, developing character, building futures”

## Student Support Policies and Procedures

### Student attendance policy

*Aim: To clarify the expectations in terms of student attendance/punctuality and the procedures to report absences*

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## 1. Rationale

Excellent attendance is seen as central to outstanding academic performance and pastoral care. At Blackpool Sixth we expect all students to have 100% attendance and punctuality. Research shows poor attendance and punctuality has a seriously detrimental effect on student outcomes including results and progression to their next steps. This policy is designed to clarify expectations and establish common practice.

## 2. Introduction

Students are expected to attend all lessons on time. A register will be taken electronically using the college's online registration system, EMRIS, at the beginning of every session, including 6Xtra and 6Advance.

Students will be marked late ('L' in the register) if they arrive after the start of the lessons, and with a 'N' in the register if they arrive more than 5 minutes late. 'N' register marks will count as an absence for students on the bursary scheme.

It is recognised that there may be rare occasions where a student may miss lessons due to genuine illness or other extenuating circumstances. In such circumstances, students must follow the absence procedures below or the procedures in the special leave policy.

Persistent failure to:

- follow the absence notification procedures;
- maintain regular contact with the college during any period of sickness absence;
- submit evidence of absence in a timely manner;

may be formally investigated in accordance with the college's positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures.

If the college has reason to believe that a student has reported that they are sick, when in fact they are not sick or there are apparent patterns in the student's absence (e.g. sickness absence repeatedly on a Friday or Monday, or before or after a period of leave), this may also be formally investigated in accordance with the college's positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures. Please note: This policy does not cover the following absences that are covered in the "Special leave policy":

- Holidays in term time
- Compassionate leave
- Study leave for college examinations
- Other special leave e.g. weddings (more than 1 day), graduations (more than 1 day), religious holidays and extra-curricular representation

Please see the "Special leave policy" for full details.

The college will observe the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 which protects individuals from unfavourable treatment related to a disability. A disability is defined as "a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term negative effect on a person's ability to do normal day to day activities". The college will make reasonable adjustments to a disabled student's arrangements through the "Fitness to study policy".

Throughout this policy the term *immediate relative* includes parents, grandparents, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law. The college will also consider

applications for leave in the case of individuals treated as immediate relatives but not included in the above.

### **3. Absence procedures**

At Blackpool Sixth, we expect students to let their pastoral mentor and subject teachers know in advance if they are going to be absent from classes due to a scheduled appointment.

For unforeseen absences, we expect students, or their parent/carer, to email the student's pastoral mentor or telephone 01253 394911 before 09.15am on the first day of absence.

Communication must include the student's full name, a brief reason for absence and expected return date. This will be recorded on EMRIS.

Students should also email their subject teachers to get details of any work missed.

In normal circumstances during a period of absence, we expect students to maintain daily email contact with their pastoral mentors and subject teachers to ensure the student is able to maintain learning. If the student, parent/carer does not maintain contact, they can expect to receive a phone call from the college.

#### Authorised absences – if college is notified in advance and appropriate evidence provided

- a hospital appointment or course of medical treatment that cannot be arranged outside college hours (usually up to one day)
- an orthodontist appointment (usually up to half day)
- visit to university to attend an open day/interview or a career-related interview or audition (usually up to one day)
- attendance at a wedding of an immediate relative (usually up to one day)
- attendance at a graduation, or similar ceremony, of an immediate relative (usually up to one day)
- attendance at a funeral of an immediate relative (usually up to one day)
- an external public examination. For example a practical driving test or performing arts examination (usually up to half day)
- attendance at court or an appointment with a legal adviser (usually up to one day)

#### Examples of unacceptable reasons for absence

- unauthorised holidays in term time.
- part or full-time work that is not part of the student's programme of study
- routine medical appointments (e.g. doctor, optician, physiotherapist and dental appointments) which can be made outside college commitments
- birthdays or similar celebrations
- babysitting younger siblings
- driving lessons
- driving theory test

Whatever the reason for absence, it is the student's responsibility to complete work missed as quickly as possible. Staff will support individuals following a period of absence to help students get back on track. However, if students do not take active steps to catch up on missed work, they may face disciplinary action in line with the positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures.

Students who feel unwell whilst in college should report to the Link or the Focus Centre where they will be asked to sit quietly whilst members of staff contact parent(s)/carer(s) to decide whether or not it is appropriate to let them go home. If symptoms persist and students are permitted to leave, they will be marked absent for any sessions missed. Students who go home ill without reporting to the Link or the Focus Centre will be marked as an unknown absence and may face disciplinary action.

Student illness, unless supported by a doctor's note, will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

#### Long-term sickness/medical conditions

The college will make reasonable adjustments to support a student to maintain learning during periods of long-term sickness or medical conditions through the Fitness to Study procedures.

#### **4. Attendance monitoring**

Missing education, particularly repeatedly, can have a significant impact on students' success and also act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks. Early intervention is necessary to identify and address any underlying issues.

The college monitors student attendance through registers at every lesson and responds to poor or irregular attendance as follows:

- a) Subject teachers will follow up absences from lessons to check the reason for absence.
- b) Pastoral Mentors will monitor overall attendance of their pastoral mentor cohort daily and follow up any students who have missed a full day and the reason for absence is not known within 24 hours. This follow up may involve contact with parents/carers, if appropriate.
- c) Pastoral Mentors will check attendance on a weekly basis to identify any patterns of absence or lateness.

#### **5. Dealing with poor attendance and punctuality**

Staff at college will contact the parents/carers of all students whose attendance or punctuality is causing concern.

- a) 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. This is likely to be via an intervention from their teachers and/or pastoral mentor
- b) Disciplinary action may be taken in line with the positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures.
- c) A student may be deemed to have left college if they have not attended classes for four consecutive weeks for any reason. This will be confirmed by a letter sent to the student and their parent(s)/carer(s).

#### **6. Other related policies**

- Positive behaviour policy and disciplinary procedures
- Special leave policy - students
- Fitness to study policy
- Bursary policy
- Student bereavement policy and procedures
- Safeguarding and child protection policy