Student Attendance and Punctuality Strategy, Policy and Procedures 2024-25

Overall responsibility:	Principal
Implementation:	Quality Office
Date issued:	July 2024
Date for review:	June 2025

Endorsed and approved by Policy & Strategy Group   Date: July 2024

Pat Brennan-Barrett   Principal

Contents

1. Strategy Purpose and Context

The key to good attendance and punctuality is creating a sense of belonging in a caring, supportive learning environment. We know that good attendance is one of the major components of student success and, as such, the college has an expectation of 100% attendance with a minimum attendance target of 90%. It is widely acknowledged that many factors can contribute to poor student attendance. In some cases, support may be required to ensure this attendance is achievable for students and this needs to be fully explored. This strategy and associated procedures aims to establish a corporate plan to ensure attendance improves to at least 90%.

The implementation of the Attendance and Punctuality Strategy at the start of a new course is crucial to set high standards which should be maintained throughout the year, as we believe: -

- Anything you allow, becomes established.
- Anything you challenge is established as unacceptable.

Creating a sense of belonging to students and peers, teachers and the wider college community positively affects motivation, engagement, attendance and punctuality.

2. Strategy and Procedures Statement

This strategy and procedure document details how the attendance of all students and apprentices will be monitored and supported in order to:

- Identify those who do not attend college, individual classes, work placement, progress reviews, tutorials, PEEP activity and any other learning activity (online or face to face), to enable them to access support as necessary to enable them to continue their programme of study and achieve their qualification(s) or apprenticeship.

- Provide appropriate evidence for external bodies such as the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and various bursary schemes.

- Ensure that students and apprentices are supported to attend enabling them to make the best possible progress and achieve at the highest levels of which they are capable.

- Prepare students and apprentices for life after college by instilling the importance of attendance and punctuality as vital habits for the world of work.

Northampton College recognises the critical importance of attendance and punctuality in enabling students and apprentices to progress well in their learning and helping them to develop good employability skills. The College will monitor all students' and apprentices' attendance and punctuality and, where appropriate, initiate appropriate support to improve their attendance.

3. Responsibilities and Expectations

3.1 Managers

The Assistant Principals and Director of Work Based Learning at Northampton College supported by the Vice Principal 16-18 Curriculum and Student Progress and the Vice Principal Skills, Adult Curriculum and Student Support, are responsible for the management of this policy

Attendance and punctuality rates across all provision types at the College will be reported to the Senior Management Team through the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience forum where appropriate actions will be taken to manage attendance across the College

Timetabling

It is the curriculum manager's responsibility to ensure that timetables are sensible with no large breaks. Poor timetabling can significantly affect student attendance and motivation to come to college. The first lesson of the day should be a taught lesson with teacher input and engaging activities. It should not be an independent learning session.

Plan:

> 1. Timetable and register surgeries to be set up to ensure data is cleansed and correct. There will be 3 or 4 one hour drop in sessions per week for the first half term.

> 2. Use of the V mark on registers (neutral) can be used where a student is legitimately exonerated such as recent timetable change. This needs to be validated by the curriculum manager.

Monitoring of Attendance

All curriculum managers, course co-ordinators, teachers, academic coaches and EDEs are responsible for monitoring student and apprentice attendance and punctuality. The attendance of students and apprentices deemed to be 'at risk' of non-completion and students and apprentices with particular risk factors due to their background or specific learning needs will in particular be monitored closely and actioned rapidly. Pro-Monitor provides staff with instant attendance and punctuality data which should be reviewed regularly along with monitoring student progress to targets.

Plan:

1. Students below 85% to be identified and reviewed at morning team meetings. On the day phone calls will be made to students/parents & guardians by Academic Coach, Admin or Teaching staff. (Timely completion of registers is therefore critical if this process is to be successful).
2. Curriculum Managers to meet with students below 75% to review individual circumstances and action appropriate intervention.
3. Curriculum Managers to have a weekly meeting with Admin and Academic Coaches to prioritise attendance concerns and determine intervention. Where Maths and English or A Levels are a concern, the Maths and English and A Level Development and Quality Managers should be included in communications.
4. Curriculum Managers to have regular updates with Maths and English and A Level Development and Quality Managers to review students who are cause for concern.
5. Register completion will be monitored weekly at CQSE with curriculum managers being tasked in ensuring that all registers are completed in a timely manner.

Reward

Rewarding good attendance and punctuality is as important as imposing sanctions. Expectations around attendance and punctuality are set with students from the outset at induction stage so that good attendance and punctuality becomes part of the culture of the college and students

understand that this is a key employability skill. Students should understand that continuing poor attendance, with no legitimate reason, could lead to disciplinary and/or withdrawal from the programme.

Plan:

1. Certificates to recognise 100% attendance across all activity (vocational, English, maths, digital skills, tutorials and other learning activities) for each half term will be sent to all 16–18-year-old students on a study programme centrally by MIS under guidance of the Quality Office. Attendance is reset at the start of each half term to enable all students to demonstrate improvements in their attendance. Certificates for adults and apprentices will be sent following confirmation by the appropriate Curriculum Manager / Apprentice Delivery Manager.
2. Certificates for students who have demonstrated significant efforts in improving their attendance across all aspects of their study programme (vocational, English, maths, digital skills, tutorials and other learning activities), apprenticeship or course or have overcome significant adversity to attend learning activities. Nominations for awards will be collected from teams by the Quality Office half termly who will co-ordinate the sending of certificates.
3. Other curriculum or school based activities and incentives to encourage attendance, for example attendance clubs and prize draws. Practice to be shared through management meetings.

3.2 Delivery Staff

To ensure consistency of approach and quality of delivery, teaching staff are expected to challenge every absence by doing the following:

1. Be in the classroom 5-10 mins before the start of the lesson to welcome students
2. Lessons to be well organised, start promptly with activities that engage all learners immediately and enable them to make good progress.
3. Resources should be inclusive and of good quality.
4. All registers should be marked within the first 10 mins of the lesson using the ProSolution register system and submitted at the end of the lesson. Registers should be completed for all teaching and assessment sessions, including theory, practicals, visits, support and progress sessions and progress reviews whether face to face or online.
5. Students who are late for any learning activity should not be refused entry to the classroom / study area, they should be settled into activity as quickly as possible, and their lateness discussed at an appropriate opportunity.
6. Late students should be recorded as late (L) in the register with the number of minutes late being recorded.
7. 'Cause for Concern' regarding unauthorised absence or lateness should be recorded in ProMonitor and shared with students through ProPortal.
8. Parents, carers, support workers and employers should be informed of non-attendance or where students or apprentices are continuously late to classes. For students with an EHCP, their SAVS practitioner should be kept informed at all times and where any student who is known to be a child in care, the Designated Person for Looked After Children should be informed.

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3.3 Students and Apprentices

Students and apprentices are expected to take responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality, they are expected to attend all timetabled, scheduled and study programme activities and reviews (i.e. 100% attendance). .

Students and apprentices are expected to be punctual for all learning activities and be ready to learn. Students and apprentices should be aware that they are expected to arrive at each lesson at least 5 minutes before the start time except where lessons are back to back when they will arrive on time.

If a student or apprentice is unable to attend any timetabled activity, they should contact the College as soon as practicable, usually before the start of the activity - see the Acceptable notified absence' section.

Students are encouraged to talk about anything that may have an impact on their being able to attend or be punctual to lessons and other learning activities with a trusted member of staff such as their tutor, academic coach or support worker. This will enable support to be put in place to encourage and support attendance and punctuality.

3.4 Parents, Carers and Employers

Parents, Guardians, Carers and Employers are expected to be fully supportive of Northampton College with regard to attendance and punctuality for all study programme and apprenticeship components (academic / vocational / English / maths / work experience / progress reviews) and to support students and apprentices to follow Northampton College's policy and procedures in the reporting of absence.

4. Acceptable notified absence

Students and apprentices are expected to attend all timetabled activities (i.e., 100% attendance) including vocational and English and maths lessons plus individual and group support and progress sessions, progress reviews, targeted enrichment activities, work placements and trips and visits.

Acceptable notified absence (recorded as agreed absence in the register) is a planned absence which has been discussed with and authorised by an academic coach, teacher, EDE or manager. Evidence of the below may be required for a notified absence to be approved. Examples of legitimate notified absences may include:

- A medical appointment, which could not be arranged outside College hours
- Occasional care for a person for whom the student / apprentice has a definite caring responsibility.
- A recognised religious holiday.
- Visit to a University to attend an open day/interview: or a career related interview.
- Appointment with a Careers Advisor (should normally avoid disruption to studies).
- Occasional approved extra-curricular activity giving significant personal achievement, including field trips and visits.
- Activities related to areas of study, sports fixtures and expeditions.
- Attendance at a funeral.
- Attendance at a probation meeting.
- Severe disruption to transport, e.g., rail strike.
- A driving test.
- A College representatives' meeting.

- Assessments with the Additional Learning Support Team e.g. exam access arrangements, dyslexia screens etc.
- EHCP Annual Review meetings.
- Home Office related meetings e.g. relating to immigration status.
- An absence where a student / apprentice explains their absence retrospectively for example, an accident, a late hospital appointment or a domestic crisis. The student should inform their academic coach / a teacher immediately upon their return to College.

Unacceptable absence is defined as any absence which is unexplained or where classes are missed regularly in any other pattern which teachers or EDEs consider detrimental to the successful completion of the programme of study. Any unauthorised absence may impact on bursary payments. Examples of unacceptable absences.

- Holidays
- Part or full-time work which is not part of the student's programme of work
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting siblings
- Shopping
- Driving lessons
- Lateness exceeding 15 minutes

If a student or apprentice is unable to attend any timetabled or study programme activity, they should:

- Send a text to 07860 022 842, ideally before 9.15am
- Texts should be in the format: SICK <space> Learner ID e.g. SICK ABC12345678
- A response will be sent from Northampton College to say that the text has been received or the ID was not recognised. If the format of the text is not valid, the student will be asked to resubmit in the correct format
- If the text is valid, a 'notified sick' (N) mark will be recorded on any registers the student has for that day only. (Text required every day of sickness.) Apprentices should also:
  - Inform their employer
  - Notify their EDE before any planned visit
  - Note that absence and lateness from timetabled lessons (including functional skills) will be reported to employers within 24 hours of notification

Note that:

- The 'N' register mark can be overwritten by the tutor should the student turn up later.
- The reason for absence should also be recorded on ProMonitor in the 'Comments' section.
- Tutors will monitor 'notified sickness' and follow it up with students with appropriate actions.
- The notification system has been set to ignore more than three texts sent from the same phone with different student IDs. This assumes there may be up to three family members who could all be affected by sickness at any time. More than that would imply the texts are not genuine.

The text notification system is the preferred method of reporting sickness or absence. Alternative methods of informing of absence are for students to:

- Inform their course co-ordinator or EDE in writing / by email
- Telephone the absence helpline on:
  - Booth Lane: 01604 734300

- o Daventry: 01604 736275
- o Lower Mounts: 01604 736331

If a student / apprentice has significant health and / or wellbeing issues that impact their attendance or punctuality, they are encouraged to contact their academic coach, EDE or the Student Services team for support. The Fitness to Study Policy & Procedure may be applied in some circumstances. If a student / apprentice may benefit from learning support, the student / apprentice, academic coach or EDE should contact the Learning Support Team.

Students / Apprentices who miss scheduled classes or other activities may be required to attend extra sessions to enable them to get back on track with their studies. Such additional study will be at the discretion of the Curriculum Manager for the area or the EDE.

Repeated unauthorised absence from any aspect of a Study Programme may result in bursary payments being withheld. Intervention and / or disciplinary action may be taken, and action taken up to and including removal from their programme of study.

If a student / apprentice is absent for more than three weeks with no contact with the College, they may be considered to have withdrawn and could be removed from their programme of study. In these cases, the College may write to the student / apprentice / employer to confirm their withdrawal from the course.

5. Punctuality and Readiness to Learn

Students and apprentices are expected to be punctual for all classes and timetabled / scheduled activities whether these are face to face or online. Students and apprentices are expected to be ready to learn by:

- Removing all outside clothing: i.e., hat/hood/coat/scarf & placing safely where they will not cause a trip hazard.
- Being properly prepared for classes, bringing the equipment they will need including their college laptop or Chromebook which should be fully charged, pen, notepad, calculator, and any other equipment specified by teachers.
- Putting anything else in bags, including mobile phones (on silent) and other devices & placing under the desk or at the back of the room, where it will not cause a trip hazard.
- If a student has no bag, phones should be placed on the desk at the front of the classroom.
- Drinks - bottled water only allowed on desks. No eating during class. At the discretion of the teacher and in-line with appropriate health and safety measures, students working in computer suites and/or practical laboratories or workshops may not be allowed any drinks in their working area for health and safety reasons.

A student / apprentice is late if they enter the class after the published 'start' time on the timetable.

- If a student / apprentice is late, they should enter the room/ area quietly and ensure that the member of staff is aware of their presence. They should explain to the member of staff at an appropriate moment the reason for their lateness.
- Persistent lateness to lessons may lead to the Student Behaviour and Intervention Policy being applied.

6. MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

The following attendance marks are commonly used in the electronic register system, other marks may be used e.g. if students are attending exams, interviews etc.:

Mark	Meaning	Value
/	Present	Positive
R	Present – Remote Lesson	Positive
O	Absent	Negative
N (Ñ)	Notified Absence (SMS)	Negative
A	Agreed Absence (see 'Attendance / Absence' section)	Neutral
L	Late (5 mins after start)	Positive
X	Left class early	Positive
Z	Late – arrived in second half	Positive
V	Absent from lesson but attending other scheduled learning activity (e.g., exam, trip etc)	Neutral
P	Work placement	Neutral
S	Study Leave (SMS)	Neutral

- If a student / Apprentice is marked as an unauthorised absence, this should be followed up by the academic coach or EDE. If the student is under 18 (aged 25 for students with an EHCP with the consent of the student) then parents/ guardians/ carers should be contacted and kept involved throughout the process. Note that ProSolution will send automated e mails to the parents / guardians / carers of under 18 students (aged 25 for students with an EHCP with the consent of the student) informing them of absence. Employers should be informed where apprentices are marked as unauthorised absence. For students with an EHCP, their SAVS practitioner should be kept informed at all times and where any student who is known to be a child in care, the Designated Person for Looked After Children should be informed.

- Any absence and any action taken as a result (e.g., contacting student / apprentice, contacting parents / guardians / carers / employers) should be recorded in the 'Comments' section of ProMonitor using the Comment type of 'Absence Notification' and the Comment reason of 'Cause for Concern'.

- If a student or apprentice's attendance falls below 90% or they have more than 3 'Cause for Concerns' (typically) relating to absence or punctuality to study in the first half term of the academic year or in a two week period, they will be referred for a Stage 1 – Support and Intervention meeting under the Behaviour and Intervention Policy initially followed more formal action if non-attendance and lateness without reason persists.

7. Appendices:

Appendix 1: EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Appendix 2: DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Appendix 3: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Appendix 1: EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

This form should be used by managers and policy authors within their area of responsibility to carry out Equality & Diversity Impact Assessments (E&DIAs) in relation to protected characteristics, specifically: Age, Sex, Disability, Gender reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Pregnancy & Maternity and Marriage & Civil Partnership.

The word 'policy' is taken to include strategies, policies, procedures and guidance notes; formal and informal, internal and external.

The Impact Assessment may be carried out on any policy, service, function or plan you are engaged in, or are about to commence. All policies should be clearly stated. However, in reality, some policies are built into everyday procedures and customs, therefore not all policies are open to inspection and review. Any assessment of a policy should include these customs and practices as well as the formal written policy. 'Functions' means your duties and powers and includes internal and external functions, including service delivery.

Policy Details	
What is the policy?	Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedures
Is it new or existing?	Existing
Department	Quality
Policy Author (postholder title, name)	Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Author of Equality Analysis	Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning and Assessment
Date of completion	June 2023

Aim and Objectives
Briefly describe the aims and objectives of the policy
This policy and procedure detail how the attendance of students will be monitored in order to identify those who do not attend college or individual classes to enable them to access support and to provide appropriate evidence for external bodies such as the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and various bursary schemes.

Policy Assessment
Consider whether your policy might have an impact on various groups identified within the categories listed below and explain why you have reached this conclusion.
Please tick (√) the identified level of impact (positive, negative, or no impact) and provide details of your findings.

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	No Impact	Findings
Race			✓	
Religion and/or belief			✓	
Sex (Gender)			✓	
Gender Identity			✓	
Disability			✓	
Age			✓	
Sexual orientation			✓	
Marriage and/or civil partnership			✓	
Pregnancy and/or maternity (including surrogacy and adoption)			✓	
Other identified group (e.g. carers)			✓	

Action Planning		
How do you intend to mitigate or eliminate any negative impact identified?	If a positive impact is identified, how do you intend to promote or develop this opportunity?	Where negative impact has been identified, can it be justified? If so, explain how.
N/A	N/A	N/A

Monitor and Review
How will you monitor the impact of your policy once it has been put into effect?
The policy will be monitored through feedback from services users gathered via:

Names and position of Impact Assessment Team (min of 3 preferably from areas across the College):	
Name	Position
Mark Owen	Assistant Principal – Student Services
Hilary Letts	Quality Improvement Lead
Carol Meadows	Director of MIS

Equality Analysis Sign-Off Signature and Date:	Jenny Thorpe
Review Date:	16/6/24

Appendix 2: DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Data Protection Impact Assessment

Does this Policy
- require the collection and use of data in addition that normally collected by the College?

Yes / No (if Yes complete Assessment point number 1)
- require the sharing of data with partners?

Yes / No (if Yes complete Assessment point number 2)

1. Is additional data being collected? If so please detail:

No

Is data collected personal and/or sensitive?

N/a

How will you collect, use, store and delete data?

N/a

2. Will you be sharing data with anyone? Please detail what data, with who and confirm a **Data Sharing Agreement** is in place

No

Describe the purposes of the processing / sharing: What are the benefits of the processing/ sharing – for you, and more broadly?

N/a

Consider how to consult with relevant stakeholders: describe when and how you will seek individuals' views – or justify why it is not appropriate to do so.

N/a

Describe compliance and proportionality measures, in particular:
What is your lawful basis for processing?

N/a

How will you ensure data quality and data minimisation?

N/a

What information will you give individuals?

N/a

Please attach a Risk Assessment if there are significant risks to data protection

Signed by Data Protection Officer

Name: Julian Wood

Date:

Appendix 3: COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

TITLE OF COLLEGE POLICY: Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedures	DATE APPROVED BY Policy & Strategy Group or Corporation **Date:**

AUDIENCE (select appropriate with √)					
Managers	✓	Curriculum teams	✓	Business Support teams	
All staff	✓	Suppliers		Partners	
Other - Students	✓				

CHANNEL (select appropriate with √)					
Policy & Strategy Team (PST) Meeting	✓	Quality Improvement Network (QIN) Meeting	✓	Marketing team NC Update Intranet Website	
Individual team Document Library Noticeboards Team meeting Email	✓	Suppliers e.g. Letter or email Meeting		Partners e.g. Letter or email Meeting	
College Management Team (CMT) Meeting	✓	JCNC e.g. Meeting Email		CORPORATION e.g. Meeting Email	

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN ACTIVATED BY:		
Name: Jenny Thorpe Department: Quality	Job title: Assistant Principal – Teaching, Learning and Quality	Date: 16/6/23