



Truro and Penwith College Attendance and Punctuality Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The Truro and Penwith College Attendance and Punctuality Policy aims to promote professional working standards and demonstrate full commitment to study through personal engagement, organisational skills, self-discipline, and respect for others. Students are expected to work hard and take responsibility for their own learning. Full attendance and good punctuality play an important part in achieving this. The college prides itself on fostering a culture of high expectations and will make the most of opportunities to recognise and reward high levels of attendance and punctuality across all courses.

Truro and Penwith College is required to record, monitor, and track attendance for auditable, funding purposes and attendance and punctuality play an important part of a student's record. The College recognises the correlation between high levels of attendance, student retention, achievement, and success. Any class, lecture or activity missed, regardless of cause, reduces the opportunity for learning and may adversely affect student achievement and outcomes. Poor punctuality and lateness have an impact on the understanding of the lesson and is detrimental to the learning of others. Every student will be supported to complete work to the very best of their ability, so that they can achieve their personal best. Supporting attendance is the responsibility of all staff.

Unless explicitly stated as a requirement of the course(s) or in extreme circumstances, the College does not offer on-line, remote or hybrid teaching programmes and all regular teaching is delivered in college. In extreme circumstances (for example, Government directives, severe weather, or operational disruption) hybrid sessions may be offered for defined, short periods.

2. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

It is taken as given that, when a person chooses to enrol at Truro and Penwith College, they are doing so to achieve meaningful qualifications/outcomes through exemplary levels of prompt attendance and engagement.

We aim for all students to achieve 100% attendance and will investigate the circumstances of those who fall below our minimum target threshold and or three unnotified absences across their full programme of study. Part time employment and/or external commitments must be organised outside of college hours. Glossary of terms and examples of absences can be found in Appendix A.

The purpose of this Policy is to support attendance, and explore every available method of retaining students. It will help ensure that student attendance and punctuality is consistently managed across college and recognised by all as an integral part of student personal development in order to successfully prepare our learners for adulthood.

In the application of our student attendance policy, the College reserves the right to consider each student's unique circumstances. While consistent attendance is expected, we recognise that individual situations may require a tailored approach. As such, the stages and outcomes of this policy will be applied with discretion by relevant staff, ensuring that each student's needs and challenges are thoughtfully assessed to support their educational success.

AUTOMATED TEXT SERVICE AND COLLEGE PORTAL

All full-time learners

Will receive a text message after if they are recorded as an unauthorised absence for any timetabled session. This will prompt any latecomers to get to lesson quickly or report their reason for absence.

Under 18s

Parent/carer must report genuine absence for learners via the college portal or the specified reporting line. If after 15 minutes their child/ward's reason for absence has not been updated and they have not arrived at their session, a text will be sent to their primary next of kin to advise of their absence. Once a learner turns 18, automated texts will continue to be sent to the primary next of kin for the remainder of that academic year, unless the learner specifically opts out of this.

Over 18s / students living independently

Must self-report absence via the College Portal or the specified reporting line before 9:15 am on the day of absence.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

All Students are expected to:

- Attend all timetabled sessions which make up the programme of study.
- Arrive at the start of the sessions promptly, properly equipped, and ready to learn.
- Return promptly after any timetabled or allocated break.
- Catch up on work missed during any period of absence.
- Arrange appointments, driving lessons, and any other non-emergency commitments during personal time.
- Not take holiday leave during term-time
- Ensure that any part-time work and/or external commitments are undertaken outside the College programme and do not clash with timetabled sessions.
- Report any unavoidable absence or lateness via the college portal or specified number in advance or at the start of the college day.
- Wherever possible, communicate with staff regarding reasons for absence so that we can work with you to improve things.
- Engage with strategies/support mechanisms put in place to support attendance.

All Parents/carers are expected to:

- Report absence for learners via the college portal or the specified reporting line.
- Support their young person to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Not organise holiday leave during term-time.
- Support the college when addressing concerns regarding areas of low attendance/poor punctuality for their young person.
- Encourage and support their young person to take action to catch up on missed work/activities.
- Liaise with college staff if there are any reasons for absence that may require additional support/consideration.
- Use parent portal to keep up to date with their young person's attendance.

All Teaching Staff are expected to:

- Be in the classroom promptly, prepared, and ready to start their lesson on time.
- Provide an early engagement activity at the start of the lesson to promote punctuality.
- Register students promptly, checking that all students have swiped-in, and this matches the number of learners in the teaching space.
- Ensure that all attendance is recorded accurately.
- Staff are expected to keep their own records of attendance and punctuality for all learners.
- Challenge individual lateness appropriately at a suitable point after accommodating inclusion in the lesson.
- Follow the Student Attendance System and take appropriate action at each relevant stage.
- Record all relevant actions on Attendance Tracking promptly.
- Ensure learners have access to missed lesson materials e.g. through SharePoint and monitor learner's engagement with 'catch-up' activities.

All Tutors are expected to:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality of all tutees on a weekly basis.
- Meet with and discuss any unauthorised absences and high levels of notified absence with individual students.
- Maintain regular contact with next of kin where appropriate.
- Record actions taken on Attendance Tracking with expected improvements and required outcomes with clear targets and timescales in conjunction with the attendance contracts.
- Celebrate and praise good attendance and punctuality at every opportunity and, where possible, link this to positive employability skills.

All Programme Team Leaders (or designated Deputy Team Leaders/staff with delegated responsibility) are expected to:

- Monitor attendance and punctuality of groups in their curriculum area, who are on the relevant stage of the attendance system on a weekly basis.
- Discuss the low attendance and poor punctuality issues of individuals or groups with tutors or lecturers.
- Meet with and discuss persistent underperformance of attendance and punctuality with students and next of kin where appropriate.
- Apply stage 'pauses' in exceptional circumstances and monitor these pauses.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE SYSTEM

Where there is initial concern regarding attendance and/or punctuality concern, teaching staff are expected to challenge the behaviour informally, sensitively, constructively and record on tracking. Staff are expected to take a non-judgemental and 'professionally curious' approach. Learners are expected to reflect on their actions, act on advice, and take steps to avoid any repeat of the attendance/punctuality concern, wherever possible and appropriate.

For reasons of safeguarding, if a learner is not in college for a sustained period without notice of absence or contact, then contact will be made by the PTL/DTL or the safeguarding team. If we receive no response from the learner or next of kin after attempts by phone, in person or letter, then, if the learner is under 18, the Multi-Agency Referral Unit (MARU) will be notified by the Safeguarding team, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will agree further action, including withdrawal.

Attendance Stage 1 (1A) – Attendance Concern

To be issued for 3 unnotified absence on a single component of study. Email notification will be sent to the student, next of kin and tutor. Should the College subsequently receive notification of absence, the learner may be removed from stage 1.

Attendance Stage 2 (2A) - Tutor Attendance Management

An additional 6 unnotified absences (9 in total) across the learner's whole programme of study, or if the learner's attendance falls below 80%. Email notification of Stage 2 Attendance sent to the learner, next of kin and tutor.

From the date the learner enters Stage 2, a time period of 3 college weeks is set with a minimum expected attendance target of 90%. The learner will meet with their tutor to discuss a personal plan for meeting this target, with all details of the plan added to the learner's Attendance Tracking.

Outcome 1: Stage 2 Attendance Contract met.

- The learner maintains an attendance above 90% across their whole programme of study over the 3-week period.
 - The student leaves Stage 2 and returns to Stage 1.

Outcome 2: Stage 2 Attendance Contract not met.

- The learner's attendance is below 90% for the 3-week period or...
 - 3 non-notified absences record in the 3-week period and...
 - If the learner has only been at Stage 2 once before, Stage 2 is repeated again.
 - If the learner has been on Stage 2 and not achieved the Attendance Contract a second time, they will move to Stage 3.

Attendance Stage 3 (3A) – PTL/DTL Attendance Management

Not achieving Stage 2 for the 2nd time will move the learner to Stage 3 where their attendance will be directly monitored by the Programme Team Leader or Deputy Team Leader of their designated curriculum department. The learner, next of kin, PTL/DTLs will be notified by email that the learner has entered Stage 3.

From the date the learner enters Stage 3, a period of 3 college weeks is set with a minimum expected attendance target of 90%. The learner will meet with their PTL/DTL to continue to develop the learner's personal plan for meeting this target, with all details of the plan added to the learner's Attendance Tracking.

Outcome 1: Stage 3 Attendance Contract met.

- The learner maintains an attendance above 90% across their whole programme of study over the 3-week period.
 - The student leaves Stage 3 and returns to the attendance watchlist.

Outcome 2: Stage 3 Attendance Contract not met.

- The learner's attendance is below 90% for the 3-week period or...
 - 3 non-notified absences record in the 3-week period and...

- If the learner has only been at Stage 3 once before, Stage 3 is repeated again.
- If the learner has been on Stage 3 and not achieved for a second time, they will move to Stage 4.

Attendance Stage 4 (4A) – Attendance Panel

If the learner does not meet the Stage 3 contract (or is moved directly to Stage 4) their attendance will be directly monitored by a member of the Operational Management Team. The learner, next of kin, tutor, PTL/DTL and designated member of OMT will be notified by email.

Parent / carers will be invited to attend an attendance panel meeting, along with any other parties where appropriate and in agreement with the college (such as Student Services). The outcome of the attendance panel decision will be relayed to parent / carers within 48 hours.

Outcome 1: A referral is made to Stage 5 SMT Attendance Management contract (one attempt).

Outcome 2: The learner is withdrawn from college.

Attendance Stage 5 (5A) – A&B Attendance Management

Monitoring of Stage 5 attendance is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team. The learner is permitted a final attempt at maintaining attendance above 90% for 3 college weeks.

Outcome 1: Attendance Contract met, returning the student to Stage 3 (no further attempts at Stage 3 permitted).

Outcome 2: Attendance Contract not met returning the student to Stage 4 (allowed on only the first occasion).

Outcome 3: Student is withdrawn.

All stages of the Student Attendance System can be followed whether or not a learner and/or parent/carer is able to attend meetings. Where a learner and/or parent/carer is not able to attend, then a written account of targets and actions will be provided.

4. UNAVOIDABLE ABSENCE AND LATENESS

- Each case of valid or unavoidable absence is different and will be treated individually.
- Unavoidable medical, financial, or social care appointments should be notified in advance.
- Unexplained or unreported absences will be followed up by the attendance system initially, and necessary staff if persistent absence patterns exist.
- Actions, expected improvements, and contracts under the Student Attendance system will be carried out.

- Four consecutive weeks of unexplained non-attendance will result in withdrawal in line with Education and Skills Funding Agency Regulations

Motivational and positive language should be used to ensure that students understand the importance of attendance and punctuality to all aspects of their study programme.

However, if the student continues to show no improvement as a result of the above actions, then they will be deemed to have broken the Student Code of Conduct and will continue to receive interventions under the Student Attendance system at Stage 4, conducted by one of the college Operational Management Team. This stage potentially results in the withdrawal of the course offer or an attendance contract with the Senior Management Team. Failure to meet this contract will result in the withdrawal of course from Truro and Penwith College.

Such permitted withdrawals are different to withdrawals under the Fitness to Study Policy which have significant, substantiated medical or mental health conditions underpinning the College's decision.

The Permitted Withdrawal has the same technical status as an Exclusion but avoids added negative connotations for often complex lives going forward. If a parent/carer, or external agency, refuses the option of Permitted Withdrawal, Truro and Penwith College reserve the right to exclude the student if circumstances warrant.

Truro and Penwith College recognises that some learners may have mitigating factors which mean it is difficult to achieve these high levels of attendance consistently e.g. due to complex health needs requiring significant input from health professionals, some learners with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities, young carers etc. In these cases, the College will work to adjust and make arrangements wherever possible to meet the needs of these learners, while also considering the course requirements. For example, applying a pause to stages where a learner has scheduled surgery or phased/adapted timetable. These will be considered through our reasonable adjustments panel (see SEND policy and reasonable adjustments policy) led by a member of SMT.

In these instances, the intention is always to maximise attendance wherever possible to enable learners to achieve the intended outcomes for their course and future. In cases where low attendance and engagement with in-person lessons impacts on the ability to achieve the course aims and guided learning hours it may be that fitness to study, alternative providers, re-starts or course changes are considered.

APPEAL AGAINST STAGE 5 OUTCOMES

In the case of **withdrawal of college course**, the student will have the right of appeal to the Principal. An Appeal may be made when the student believes the procedure has not been correctly applied or that the decision is disproportionate or unjust.

The Appeal must be in writing and lodged with the Principal's Secretary, within five days of the date of receipt of the letter of recommendation. It should state the grounds and particulars of the substance of the Appeal. If an Appeal is lodged within the time allowed, the Principal will review the process and consider the available evidence. If there are flaws in the process or outcome, or ambiguity in the decision reached, an interview with the Principal may be required.

The student will be given at least five days' notice of the date, place and time of any interview and of their right to be accompanied by a parent/carer or appropriate support worker.

In either event, the decision by the Principal will be final and confirmed in writing to the student within fourteen days of the Appeal, copied to parents/carers.

COMPLAINTS

Complaints about the Attendance and Punctuality Policy, or the way in which it was applied, should be made in accordance with the Truro and Penwith Complaints Policy, a copy of which is available from Programme Team Administrators or Senior Secretaries at Truro and Penwith College.

Appendix A

- Unnotified absences – Where a student is not present in the lesson and no notification has been received by the college.
- Notified absences – Where a parent/carer has notified the college that a student will be absent from a lesson or lessons.
- Notified authorised absences – Where a parent/carer has notified the College that a student will be absent from a lesson and the absence is authorised. For example; medical appointments, health appointments, university visit, compassionate circumstances and other individual circumstances that the college deem to be beneficial to the learner's journey.
- Notified unauthorised absences - An absence which although, the College has been notified of the reason for absence, will still result in a negative attendance mark being recorded for the student. i.e. holidays taken in term time.
- It is the colleges discretion to determine authorised absences resulting in a removal or change of stage/pause within the system.