

Attendance Policy: Supporting & Responding to Attendance

1. Introduction

1.1 William Morris Sixth Form has a clear set of expectations: attend all lessons punctually, behave respectfully and commit fully to learning. These expectations allow us, as an institution, to work collaboratively with our students so that they are able to make the most of their **learning** opportunities in order to **achieve** their potential and be **empowered** to make a positive difference to the world around them.

1.2 William Morris Sixth Form treats student attendance as a central aspect of Behaviour for Learning (BfL). The first expectation of behaviour for learning is that students attend all lessons punctually and maintain good attendance (96% or above) for the academic year, as it is understood that good attendance is necessary to support students' development socially, emotionally and cognitively. This policy is therefore informed by the same guiding principles that can be found in the Understanding, Supporting and Responding to Behaviour Policy.

1.3 William Morris Sixth Form adopts a whole-sixth form approach to supporting and responding to attendance. We recognise that good attendance is inseparable from safeguarding, the well-being of students/staff and all other aspects of learning. Therefore, if students are unable to maintain good attendance, supportive interventions are put in place to ensure our core values are upheld for those students willing to engage with us.

1.4 It is important however, to recognise that some students may not be willing or able to engage with the support on offer and therefore decisions must be made about the most appropriate course of action for the student involved. As a post-16 provider, students choose to take up a place with us, and are required to meet our expectations to maintain this place.

1.5 On occasion, students may not be able to maintain good attendance due to a medical condition or their fitness for study is under review. In such instances, reasonable adjustments surrounding attendance are put in place (see Fitness For Study Policy).

1.6 This policy aims to provide:

- staff, students and parents and carers with a clear set of expectations for attendance at WMSF;
- a clear framework for working with students, parents and carers and other staff members in order to support students to achieve these expectations;
- a series of interventions for reviewing, supporting and improving the attendance of students at WMSF;
- guidelines for students with persistent absenteeism which impacts their academic progress

1.7 Associated Policies, Procedures and Protocols:

- Understanding, Supporting and Responding to Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Fitness for Study Policy
- Bursary Policy

2. Scope

2.1 The Supporting & Responding to Attendance Policy applies predominantly to 16 – 19 year-old students who are funded via the Educational Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

2.2 Specific accountabilities of parties are:

- The Principal holds ultimate accountability to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students that supports good attendance
- The Vice Principals & Assistant Principals have responsibility to ensure that procedures and processes are in place to support good attendance and to improve attendance where it is below the expected levels so that students can be successful on their study programmes

- All staff members have responsibility for applying the procedures and processes to support good behaviour have responsibility for applying processes and procedures associated with supporting good attendance

3. Supporting Good Attendance

3.1 William Morris Sixth Form expects students to achieve 96% attendance over the course of an academic year, which allows for students to have a reasonable amount of absence for illness, medical appointments, religious observance and progression activities such as educational visits.

3.2 Good attendance is supported via clear reporting procedures, transparent access to attendance data for students as well as parents/carers and timely interventions based on the available attendance data.

3.3 Accurate recording of attendance is necessary for the following reasons:

- It allows for robust safeguarding procedures to be followed
- Attendance recording is a legal requirement for all maintained schools.
- It enables us to act early to address patterns of absence to ensure students have good attendance in order to reach their full potential
- Parents/carers can be notified about the attendance of the young person in their care in order to support good attendance and outcomes.

3.4 It is the Personal Tutor's and Subject Teacher's responsibility to record student attendance to lessons and the registration must be taken during the first 15 minutes of the lesson start time.

3.5 Personal Tutors and Subject Teachers are required to input one of the following codes.

Code	Description	Additional information
/	Student is present	
L	Student is present, but was late to the lesson	Where a student is late, the minutes late are to be added.

N	Student is not present	
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- 3.6 Students or parents/carers are required to notify the Attendance Officer of any planned absences in advance of the date by completing a planned absence form.
- 3.7 Students or parents/carers are required to notify the Attendance Officer of unplanned absences on the morning of the absence so that staff can be notified.
- 3.8 The Attendance Officer will update registers with the appropriate registration code as required by the Department of Education (DfE). See Appendix A for the most commonly used codes and how they impact a student's overall attendance.
- 3.9 Parents/carers will be notified each time the young person in their care is absent from a lesson and/or the day where they have been registered with an N code (meaning no explanation for their absence has been provided or the reason provided is not valid).
- 3.10 Where students have not informed the sixth form of their reason for absence for two consecutive days, the Personal Tutor will contact the parent/carer to check on the welfare of the student and to promote the attendance expectations and procedures.
- 3.11 Bursary payments are linked to attendance, and are reviewed monthly (see Bursary Policy).
- 3.12 All new students and their parents/carers are required to sign a learner agreement to ensure they are fully aware of the sixth form's expectations around attendance and their agreement to adhere to them. If students are unable to demonstrate they are able to meet these expectations during the

sixth form's induction period they will forfeit their placement with immediate effect.

Good attendance is promoted through a culture of high expectations and high support. All students not meeting the sixth form's expectations around attendance are challenged and where additional support is required, this is put in place by internal and/or external support systems. It is also supported through competitions between Houses over the course of the academic year.

- 3.13 Calendared events throughout the year, including rewards assemblies, Learner Review Days and Parents'/Carers' Evenings are aimed at supporting good attendance.

4. Responding to attendance and punctuality concerns

4.1 Attendance and punctuality concerns must be challenged at the earliest possible time by staff members and it is everyone's responsibility to do so. This must be carried out with the student directly by speaking to the student and reinforcing the sixth form's expectations. This should follow the model outlines in the Understanding, Supporting & Responding to Behaviour Policy, Section 5.

4.2 Parents/carers must be notified where there are persistent attendance and punctuality concerns or noticeable patterns, and this is logged on Edulink so the concern is visible to the student, their parents/carers and other staff members. This is the responsibility to the staff member identifying the concern. For example, if a student is persistently late to their GCSE English lesson, it is the responsibility of the teacher to challenge this and log it on Edulink.

4.3 It is reasonable that low-level behaviour for learning issues be dealt with by the teacher as part of their professional responsibility. Where there are concerns regarding the ability of a teacher to carry out this duty, it is the Curriculum Area Leaders or Subject Leader's responsibility to support the member of staff in their team and to ensure the appropriate training is carried out.

6. Responding to behaviour for learning at a whole-sixth form level

6.1 Throughout the academic year, there are frequent and regular data entry points that capture both academic progress and indicators of a student's behaviour for learning. The data generated is used to identify those students who may need additional support in order to meet the sixth form's expectations.

6.2 The data analysed includes:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Behaviour logs
- Attitude to learning scores

6.3 Students who have demonstrated they are exceeding the sixth form's expectations for attendance, for example, having above 96%, will have their achievements logged on Edulink. Where this is consistent, their parents will be sent electronic letters of commendation from the Leadership Team and recognition will be given in half-termly assemblies.

6.4 All students who are not meeting the sixth form's expectations will be placed on a Behaviour for Learning stage. This operates as a process of escalation from 1 - 3, so that if a student continues to not meet the sixth form's expectations, they will be escalated to the next stage.

6.5 Example behaviours that would warrant a student being placed on Stage 1: Behaviour for Learning;

- Below 92% attendance overall or below 80% attendance in one or more subjects in a data collection period.
- Persistent lateness – over 100 minutes or 10 instances of lateness in one data collection period.
- Internal truanting or missing extended periods of lessons without a valid reason.

6.6 Stages are issued at leadership level at each data entry point. This is communicated with the student and their parents/carers via an electronic letter sent home through Edulink and a Behaviour Log added to the student's Edulink.

6.7 In order to ensure students are appropriately supported to meet the sixth form's expectations, a member of staff is assigned depending on the level of need.

- High need: Senior Leadership Team
- Medium need: Middle Leadership Pastoral Team
- Low need: Personal Tutors

Examples of support that are likely put in place include, regular meetings with their assigned member of staff to set achievable targets, parent/carer meetings, referral to counselling, signposting to external support.

6.8 Where there are any safeguarding concerns that emerge as a reason for not being able to meet the sixth form's expectations, these are reported on My Concern or directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

6.9 If a student continues to demonstrate they are unable to meet the sixth form's expectations of attendance after being placed on a Stage 3 and they are unable to make a success of their courses despite ongoing support, they will be issued with an internal exclusion, or supported to find an alternative provision that better suits their needs.

6.10 If the Sixth Form reaches a decision, after consultation with the student and parents/carers (if applicable), that a student should withdraw then this will be actioned. In these situations, the Sixth Form would always assure students and their parents/carers that the best interests of the individual student and their welfare are at the centre of any decisions made.

5. Responding to persistent absenteeism

5.1 Where a student has chronic or persistent absenteeism their case will be referred directly to the Safeguarding Team so that any underlying issues can be addressed as soon as possible.

5.2 Parents/Carers will be routinely notified that the young person in their care has persistent absenteeism.

5.3 Students with persistent absence are required to sign an Attendance Agreement for Persistent Absenteeism and where no improvement is made, parents/carers will also be required to sign an agreement.

5.4 Students with persistent absenteeism that is below 80%, where there is no justifiable reason, may have their study programme amended or may not be entered for their qualifications due to having missed significant amounts of learning.

5.5 Where persistent absence is a result of issues around a student's fitness for study, specific support and reasonable adjustments will be put in place.

5.6 Where a student misses 21 sixth form days consecutively, then in line with statutory guidance, they will be removed from their study programme.

5.7 Where a student's attendance impacts their ability to progress within or beyond the sixth form they will be referred to the Careers Team so they can be supported onto a suitable pathway.

6. Recording & Reporting

6.1 Student attendance is recorded by Personal Tutors and Subject teachers through the taking of an electronic register.

6.2 Where there are patterns in attendance that are causing a concern, such as missing lessons where assessments are sat, these are recorded on Edulink, the sixth form's student, parent/carer, teacher portal.

6.3 Persistent absenteeism or where students are absent for more than two consecutive days without contact is recorded on My Concern, the sixth form's safeguarding portal.

6.4 An attendance risk register is produced every week by the Attendance Officer which includes the attendance of every student in the sixth form.

6.5 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Board of Governors will receive a termly Attendance Report.

Key Documents

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073591/School_attendance_guidance_May-2022.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1161273/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2023_-_statutory_guidance_for_schools_and_colleges.pdf

Appendix A

Code	Description	Additional information
N	Unauthorised absence	This is applied when the Sixth Form has not been notified for the reason for absence, or the reason provided is not valid, such as routine doctors or dental appointments (these should be made during free periods).
I	Illness	Students are permitted to self-certify their illness, however absence for illness still counts within the 4% permitted absence for the year. Where there are persistent or sporadic illness patterns, parental/carer/doctor confirmation will be requested and students may be referred to the Fitness to Study Panel. Ability to self-certify will be restricted.
M	Medical/dental appointments (not	Students are required to provide evidence in advance to the Attendance Officer via the planned absence form.

	routine GP/Dentist appointments)	Where there are persistent or sporadic appointment patterns, parental/carer/doctor confirmation will be requested and students may be referred to the Fitness to Study Panel.
C	Appointments for circumstances other than medical/dental, such as housing or social work appointments.	Students are required to provide evidence in advance to the Attendance Officer via the planned absence form.
R	Religious Observance	Students who have religious holidays outside of the Sixth Form holidays are permitted to have one day per holiday.
W	Work experience	The Attendance Officer is to be notified about any meaningful work experience in advance via the planned absence form (if arranged independently of the Sixth Form). Students are encouraged to arrange work experience during the holidays, however where this is not possible and has been agreed, this will not count against a student's attendance.
V	Educational visit, such as visits to universities or apprenticeship providers	The Attendance Officer is to be notified of educational visits via the planned absence form. These will not count against a student's attendance.
J	Interview (not related to progression)	The Attendance Officer is to be notified via the planned absence form.
Y	Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement	In such instances, a member of the Pastoral Team will contact home to ensure the well-being of the student.

*These codes represent the most common reasons for absence and are not an exhaustive list.

Responsible Staff	Mary Berrisford / Julia Brown
Approving body	Governors
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<i>All policies are available to stakeholders either on the Sixth Form website or upon request from the Sixth Form Office.</i>	