



Name of Policy

Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedure

Purposes

To ensure that every student attends the maximum number of classes possible to afford each student the opportunity to meet his/her potential.

Author / Job Title

Deputy Principal

Equality Assessment By Whom

Ann Bailey, Quality Assurance Manager

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1

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Approved by

	Date
Senior Manager	
SMT	July 2007
Corporation	

Related policies or procedures or parent policy if applicable

Groups/bodies consulted in the development of the policy



Student Attendance & Punctuality Policy and Procedure

Rationale

It is Macclesfield College's (MC) and the Learning Zone Sixth Form College's (LZ6) aim to ensure that every student attends the maximum number of classes possible to afford each student the opportunity to meet his/her potential. Good attendance and punctuality help towards academic attainment and preparation for the expectations of adult and working life. **Consequently, MC/LZ6 has a student attendance target of 90% for all scheduled classes including Tutorials and, where required, Key/Functional Skills.**

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to:

1. Create a culture in which high levels of attendance and punctuality are the accepted norm
2. Raise student awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and to take responsibility for their own attendance and punctuality
3. Effectively monitor attendance and punctuality
4. Ensure mechanisms are in place to reward good attendance and punctuality and to follow up poor attendance and punctuality in an effective manner

Distribution of Student Attendance & Punctuality Policy and Procedure

During induction the policy and procedure will be explained to all students.

The entire Student Attendance & Punctuality Policy and Procedure is posted on the MC/LZ6 websites (www.macclesfield.ac.uk or www.learningzone.ac.uk/lz6). Parents/carers of students under the age of 18 will be provided with details of how to access the policy and procedure in an introductory letter.

This policy and procedure will be explained to all new staff at induction and details of how to access it through the websites will also be explained.

Definition of Attendance

Student attendance is defined as participation in a programme of educational activities arranged by MC/LZ6. In addition to actual attendance within the campus, this encompasses a range of other activities within the category of authorised absence such as:

- Work experience
- Educational visits
- Day and residential visits to outdoor centres
- Debates, sports, musical or theatrical productions arranged by or in conjunction with MC/LZ6
- Study leave
- Receiving tuition via outreach teaching services

Only an enrolled student may attend MC/LZ6 classes. All enrolled students are issued a receipt at enrolment which will need to be presented to the teacher/lecturer at the first session. Any attendees without a receipt shall be asked to go to Reception to enrol. All enrolled students will be identified on the course e-register. Any staff using paper attendance registers are to note the receipt number in the column provided.

Definition of Withdrawal

Withdrawal is defined as:

- Withdrawn by student, parent/carer if approval has been given by the School/College
- If the student is funded by the Further Education Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and is not intending to return following an absence period of four consecutive weeks
- Permanently excluded from MC/LZ6 following a disciplinary procedure

If the student is withdrawing, a withdrawal form must be completed promptly with a reason for withdrawal and signed by the Head/Deputy Head of School, to be forwarded to MIS. A student's withdrawal date is the date of their last attendance.

Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

For each student, the register of attendance must include:

- Name and date of birth
- ALL attendances, absences, lateness, or early departures during any timetabled day, in whole or in part, authorised or unauthorised
- Appropriate coding to identify the nature of the absence
- Dates of closures, for all or parts of the day, of scheduled classes due to exceptional circumstances, including, but not limited to, adverse weather conditions, heating problems, lack of water or fuel, or destruction or damage to a campus building
- Date a student withdraws, completes or is transferred from the class (on e-registers the register comment box should be used)

Attendance shall be recorded for each class period of scheduled instruction (including instructional or supervised study activities). The attendance register, in either electronic or paper format, is an auditable document. Failure by a teacher/lecturer to provide a true, accurate and complete register promptly may result in disciplinary proceedings. Registers are to be marked during the class and preferably within 15 minutes of the beginning of the class.

When additional information is received from a student during a student/staff meeting that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance record, such corrections are to be made immediately. Notice of any changes are to be sent to the relevant MIS member of staff.

The following is the procedure for maintaining the attendance registers.

Indicate if a student is/has been

Present	with	/
Review Week	with	@
Authorised Absence (Other)	with	C
Staff Development Week	with	D
Excluded	with	E
Family Holiday (Not Authorised)	with	G
Family Holiday (Authorised)	with	H
Illness	with	I
Interview	with	J

Completed	with	K
Late	with	L
Medical/Dental Appointment	with	M
No reason yet provided for absence	with	N
Absence (Unauthorised)	with	O

Approved Enrichment Activity	with	P
Student Withdrawn	with	Q
Religious Observation	with	R
Study Leave	with	S
Transferred From	with	T
Educational Visit	with	V
Work Experience	with	W
Examination	with	X
Enforced closure	with	Y

Reasons for Absence

Unauthorised Absence

The category of unauthorised absence includes absence deriving from reasons such as:

- Illness (some different conditions apply with respect to Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs)). Mark as I – Illness.
- Unexplained absence
- Truancy (unauthorised absence for any period as a result of premeditated or spontaneous action on the part of student, parent/carer or both)
- Most family holidays during term time (see below).

Family Holidays during Term Time

The majority of family holidays taken during term time shall be categorised as unauthorised absence. However, it is acceptable, under exceptional circumstances, to authorise a family holiday during term time. Such circumstances may include:

- A family holiday judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events.

Absence **cannot** be authorised for family holidays booked in term time for any of the following reasons:

- The availability of cheap holidays
- The availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced during MC/LZ6 holidays
- Holidays which overlap at the beginning or end of term
- Parental difficulty obtaining leave (with local judgement applied in cases where evidence is provided by the employer that it cannot accommodate leave during MC/LZ6 holidays without serious consequences).

The decision on recording absence as authorised or unauthorised will be based on whether the MC/LZ6 has given prior agreement to the absence or not, using the criteria outlined above. Where prior agreement has not been sought, the absence will be automatically classed as unauthorised.

Illness

This would include any time where a student is off ill, with proof of illness such as a parental letter or medical certificate. Students are required to telephone MC/LZ6 before 9.00 am on the first morning of illness. On their return, students are required to provide proof of illness either with a parental letter or medical certificate.

For students claiming EMA payments, parental letters or medical certificates must be provided by the end of the week in which the absence occurred. Failure to do so will result in the EMA payment being withheld.

Illness where an appropriate level of educational provision is being provided shall be re-categorised as attendance. For example, where work is assigned to students who are unable to attend owing to illness. Illness where no such provision is provided will continue to be categorised as unauthorised absence.

Authorised Absence

The category of authorised absence includes absence deriving from reasons such as:

- Specialist medical and dental treatment *
- Bereavement
- Short-term, exceptional domestic circumstances (see below)
- Religious observance *
- Meetings prior to and in court *
- Attendance at or in connection with a children's hearing or care review *
- Weddings of immediate family *
- Agreed debates, sports, musical or theatrical productions arranged by or in conjunction with MC/LZ6 *
- Sanctioned extended absence in relation to children of travelling families.*
- Extended leave with parental consent (see below)
- Unforeseeable transport problems, where there is no practical alternative
- Interviews and visits relating to higher education
- Suspension

* these events will be considered authorised absence when the student has applied for authorisation in advance. Evidence may be required.

Short-Term, Exceptional Domestic Circumstances

Absences related to short-term exceptional domestic circumstances may be either an authorised or unauthorised absence. Authorised absence under this heading covers situations such as:

- The period immediately after an accident or illness
- A period of serious or critical illness of a close relative
- A domestic crisis which causes serious disruption to the family home, causing temporary relocation.

MC/LZ6 would wish to ensure that all students do not miss out on their entitlement to an education, and all possible support will be provided for the long-term educational needs of students with care responsibilities. If a student is unable to attend due to such responsibilities, MC/LZ6 would wish to provide additional support services, through learner support funds, to support the student and to ensure that their absence from education will not be long-term. Where such arrangements are in place, this will be categorised as authorised absence. However, where additional services have not been accessed and care responsibilities become long-term, the absence shall be categorised as unauthorised absence.

Extended Leave with Parental Consent

Whereas most family holidays will be recorded as unauthorised absence (see above), extended leave with parental consent will not be considered the same as a family holiday. Extended leave with parental consent is to be recorded as authorised absence and includes circumstances such as:

- Extended overseas educational trips not organised by MC/LZ6
- Short-term parental placement abroad
- Family returning to their country of origin (to care for a relative or for cultural reasons, for example)

- Leave in relation to the children of travelling families.

Absence Control Strategies

Independent research has shown that the single most effective tool in improving attendance is the implementation of same-day contact. A first day response to non-attendance emphasises to students and parents/carers that unauthorised absence is taken seriously and will be challenged.

Action by MC/LZ6 staff will include:

- First day of absence contact
- Providing attendance reports to parents/carers
- Writing to parents/carers to ensure they are aware of an emerging attendance problem
- Arranging meetings in MC/LZ6 with parents/carers to discuss attendance and associated problems
- Lateness strategies
- Use of the student disciplinary procedure
- Raising awareness of the implications of poor attendance through:
 - Induction
 - Tutorials
 - The Learner Entitlement Statement
- Acknowledging good or improved attendance

MC/LZ6 will maintain a system of specific strategies to identify and address attendance and punctuality problems in their early stages. For example, when a student does not attend a class or unauthorised absence results in a written disciplinary referral, the Personal Tutor will meet with the student to remind them about the Attendance & Punctuality Policy and Procedure, explain the consequences of unauthorised absence, and stress the importance of class attendance. This meeting will also ascertain the reason for the absence. Subsequently, the parent/carer shall receive a copy of the written disciplinary referral, informing the parent of the absence and any disciplinary action taken.

Students whose attendance and/or progress in their course is deemed to be unsatisfactory by the Head of LZ6 (including failure to submit prescribed coursework), may be refused permission to submit and/or sit their examinations and may be required to repeat part or all of their course. In serious cases a student's course may be terminated. In such a situation there will be the opportunity of an appeal through the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

A student who does not achieve by the planned end date because of unsatisfactory attendance and/or failure to meet coursework targets may be charged any additional awarding body registration fees and re-sit fees. A student who fails to attend an examination may be charged the re-sit fee to attend the same examination in a later series.

Absence during term may lead to a reduction of monies paid through EMAs, learner support funds or other such funds. **No student who is following a full-time course in LZ6 will be expected to undertake full-time employment for any period during term time, or part-time employment of more than 9 hours per week during term time.**

Appeals

Any appeals will be made to the Head of LZ6 in the first instance. Where the student is challenging the number of recorded absences, they must provide evidence of attendance on the disputed occasions. Similarly, evidence must be provided of any extenuating circumstances which the student wishes to be considered.

If the appeal is successful, the attendance register will be changed to reflect the outcome of the appeal process.

LZ6 Student Attendance & Punctuality Policy and Procedure

LZ6 Management Committee

July 2007

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