

**Attendance Policy 2021-2022**

**Revised 1st March 2022**

**This policy has been updated March 2022 in light of the new Covid-19 guidance/procedures re attendance from Lancashire County Council.**

**UNITY COLLEGE ATTENDANCE POLICY**

It is fundamental that regular college attendance is essential if children and young people are to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress and leads to underachievement and low attainment.

**Mission statement**

Unity College seeks to ensure that all its students receive an education which maximises opportunities for each student to realise their full potential.

Unity College will encourage good attendance for all students by offering a welcoming, safe and caring environment where each member of the college community feels valued and secure.

**Aims**

At Unity College we will

* Promote a culture across the college which identifies the importance of regular attendance and punctuality and strive to improve the overall % attendance of students.
* Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the college including students, parents, teachers and governors.
* Develop positive and consistent communication between home and college.
* Provide support, advice and guidance to students and parents.
* Implement a system of rewards and incentives for improved and outstanding attendance.
* Promote effective partnership between college, LEA and all other appropriate services and agencies.
* Develop a procedural framework which defines roles and responsibilities and gives guidance on attendance issues.
* Recognise the individual needs of the student when planning reintegration following a significant period of absence or when implementing in-college support for those students with deteriorating attendance.
* Challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to good attendance and punctuality.
* Refer to the LEA for the issue of Penalty Notices and/or Prosecution in cases where attendance/punctuality does not show considerable improvement.

**Covid-19 Expectations of Attendance (Lancashire County Council)**

***The DfE have now indicated that:***

* *From the start of the autumn term 2020 attendance in college is mandatory and the usual rules on attendance apply.*
* *Schools/Colleges should now record attendance and follow up absence in the usual way.*
* *The duty on parents to ensure the regular attendance of children of compulsory school age is no longer disapplied.*
* *The ability to issue sanctions such as penalty notices is no longer disapplied.*

***The recording of attendance***

*Attendance registers will be marked in line with the DfE statutory guidance and as detailed in our main Whole College Attendance Policy. During this academic year, there will be the use of an additional code X and code 7.*

*This will be used to record situations when students are:*

* *Going for a PCR*
* *Covid related illness*

*The X code does not count as present or absent on the student’s attendance record. Code 7 counts as an illness.*

*Students testing positive for Covid 19 will be marked as a code 7 in the college attendance register. This is an authorised absence.*

***Sanctions for failure to attend school regularly***

*The DfE have indicated that sanctions will now be used to address non-attendance at college. As a college, we will continue to offer as much support as is reasonable to prevent the need for such an approach. However, when needed legal interventions as detailed on page 6 of the Whole College Attendance Policy will be used.*

***Leave requests***

*The usual college policy applies which requires a request in advance of leave. Parents should also consider the consequences of potential quarantine on college attendance.*

***Students who should not attend college***

*Students who display symptoms of Covid 19 or test positive should refer to the college website for the most up to date information and advice.*

**UNITY COLLEGE ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Parents**

Parents will be sent a letter at the beginning of the college year which will detail their role and responsibilities with regard to attendance.

Parents should;

* Ensure their children attend regularly and on time.
* Contact college on first day of absence.
* Not arrange holidays in term time as this will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher. All requests for leave of absence for a holiday should be made in writing to the Headteacher prior to booking the holiday (Pro-forma available on college website if required).
* Contact college as early as possible when concerns with attendance become apparent.
* Support the college when agreed interventions/action plans are put in place.

**Students**

 All students will be encouraged to

* Attend college regularly and punctually.
* Attend all lessons punctually.
* Endeavour to achieve 100% attendance each week to achieve 1 Reward Point.
* Aim to meet the college attendance target of 97%+.

Time will be devoted to Attendance issues every week during PD Sessions. All students should know their % attendance and have a target to work towards.

**PD Tutors / Teaching staff**

 All staff are responsible for promoting and encouraging good attendance and punctuality and should

* Register students promptly and accurately on SIMs every lesson.
* Follow procedures with regards to registering students.
* Deal with students who are late to college or to lessons according to guidance set out in staff handbook (also see section on Punctuality).
* Encourage good attendance/punctuality within their PD group and lessons.
* Set aside time in PD sessions to monitor and discuss attendance issues.
* Ensure students in PD group are aware of their % attendance and have a target to work towards. Reward any improvements.
* Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for students.
* Provide a sympathetic response to students’ concerns and refer them to the appropriate person if they are unable to deal with concerns themselves.

**Attendance Team**

 The Attendance team will:

* Monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the college.
* Manage the first day absence contact system including home visits where necessary.
* Establish procedures to deal with students with poor attendance.
* Generate all attendance data required by SLT.
* Track specific target groups and initiate support where needed.
* Identify students causing concern by computer data analysis on a half term basis i.e. those students below 90% will receive a letter of concern to parents in first instance.
* Invite parents to a meeting if no improvement is seen during the first few weeks after letter of concern sent.
* Display attendance information on allocated noticeboards and TV screens.
* Set up a rewards system for improved and excellent attendance / punctuality.
* Promote the importance of Attendance/Punctuality via House assemblies, House and Attendance noticeboards and notices in PD rooms.
* Circulate and file all paperwork regarding attendance to the appropriate staff.
* Communicate with parents on a regular basis regarding attendance, punctuality and related issues and invite into college for discussion when necessary.
* Liaise with the Deputy Headteacher regarding in-college support e.g. ILR, amended timetables, alternative curriculum etc.
* Work in partnership with external agencies to support students.
* Deal with admin issues relating to attendance and punctuality.
* Be involved with transition work from Year 6 to 7
* Collate evidence and refer to LEA when no improvement is forthcoming with a view to the instigation of warnings, penalty notices and/ or court proceedings in line with LEA procedures.
* Do home visits when appropriate.
* Monitor PA students and initiate procedures to encourage improvement, including informing parents if their child has fallen or is likely to fall into this category.

**REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

* Statutory Registration will take place at the beginning of period 1 and period 5.
* Registration procedures are to be found in the staff handbook.
* Students who are late should sign in at the Attendance Pod.
* Lists of registration symbols are available for staff on request.
* Staff will register every lesson using SIMs.
* Students arriving after the register has closed, without good reason, will be coded as ‘U’. This is an unauthorised absence and may incur a penalty notice.

**PENALTY NOTICES/PROSECUTION (see flow chart)**

* Unity College will request that the Local Authority issue penalty notices in respect of unauthorised absence including any leave of absence where permission has been denied by the Headteacher once the criteria is met.
* Penalty notices will also be considered for persistent and excessive lateness to college. (‘U’ code).
* Referral for Penalty Notice will be after a period of monitoring (except in the case of holidays where there is no monitoring period) and where a student has shown no consistent improvement despite meetings with parents and home visits. Parents will be given a period of time to improve – any unauthorised absence during this period may result in a referral to the Court Officer once the criteria is met.

If attendance is below 65% a referral for prosecution will be made rather than a penalty notice referral.

* Unpaid penalty notices will automatically lead to prosecution.
* The criteria for a penalty notices is currently 10 or more unauthorised sessions in one term or 14 unauthorised sessions over two consecutive terms.

**CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)**

Where children are absent due to moving area with no forwarding college, or their whereabouts is unknown, we will notify the Children Missing Education Team (CME Team).

**PUNCTUALITY**

* Each day, if a student is late for college, an automated text message facility will be sent to parents and or guardians to inform them of their students' lateness.
* Each Monday PD tutors will be given a list of students with 2 or more late marks from the previous week. They should arrange appropriate detentions and inform parents as necessary.
* Students with two late marks will be given a 15-minute detention. Students with three or more late marks will be given a 30 Minute detention. These detentions are the responsibility of the PD tutor.
* If they do not attend this detention further sanctions will apply.
* If punctuality does not improve over a given period parents will be invited to a meeting in College and further sanctions put in place.
* Lateness to lessons should be dealt with by subject staff. (This may be by arranging for the time to be made up or by ensuring that the students catch up on missed work).

**LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME/EXTENDED LEAVE**

Leave taken during term time will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised leave totalling 10 or more sessions in one term or 14 sessions over two consecutive terms will incur a Penalty Notice. All requests for leave of absence should be made in writing to the Headteacher and in the case of requests for holidays this should be done prior to booking the holiday. There is also a Proforma for requests for leave of absence on the college website.

**REWARDS/INCENTIVES**

Whole College Reward System

* At the end of each week all students with 100% attendance for that week will receive 1 Reward Point as part of the Whole College Reward System.
* Students will receive points for behaviour, academic achievements, progress and contributions to college community.
* Student will work towards Bronze (75 points), Silver (150 points, Gold (250 points) and the ULTIMATE LUNCH FAST PASS (500 points).
* Each reward will receive a blazer badge and students will be entered in a termly reward draw.
* Each house will have a separate draw and prizes will be a monetary voucher - Bronze £5, Silver £10 and Gold £15. Vouchers can be used to buy Love to Shop vouchers or used to pay for college trips and Y11 Prom.

Attendance League

* At the end of each week the best attending PD in each house are given house points, 10 points for the best attending PD overall, 5 points for the second-best attending PD, 3 points for the third best attending PD and 1 point for the fourth best attending PD.
* The PDs with the best attendance from the week will receive their house trophy for the week and they are placed into a draw for a chance to win a ‘Winners Breakfast’

Certificates and Prizes

* Each year students are awarded with a Gold, Silver or Bronze certificate for attendance above 97%.
* Students who receive a Gold award for 100% will also receive a 100% attendance badge.
* Attendance and Punctuality will be considered with regards to students going on College trips, becoming a prefect, attending Prom etc

**SYSTEMS FOR DEALING WITH ATTENDANCE ISSUES**

* Every half term the attendance team will identify a target group of students (below 90%) and initiate the following system;
1. First letter of concern to parents. If no improvement within a few weeks, parents to be invited to a meeting.
2. At this point no further absence for illness will be authorised without evidence of medical intervention.
3. An attendance contract may be agreed at this meeting.
4. Little or no improvement after the meeting will result in referral to the Court Officer for the consideration of Penalty Notice or Prosecution once the criteria is met.
5. Further meetings with parents may take place during the referral process. Representatives from LCC or the College Governors may be present at these meetings.
* At Parental meetings, difficulties are identified and measures discussed to encourage improvement. Parental and legal responsibilities are also discussed along with the implications of continued poor attendance on academic and social development. An Attendance/Parent contract may be drawn up.
* Following parental meetings, the Attendance Team may do home visits if there is still no improvement.
* The Attendance team will inform all relevant staff of actions taken which relate to students in their PD group/House.
* Internal truancy is dealt with initially by the PD tutor using an attendance report card (as detailed in staff handbook) and then referred to the Attendance Strategy Manager if there is no improvement.
* First day absence contact is made by the Attendance Team.
* Reasons for absence of targeted students will be monitored and referrals made to external agencies when appropriate.
* Representatives from the Attendance team will attend Support meetings weekly.
* Where a student is absent for a period of time and no contact has been made or received from their parent/guardian, we will consider contacting the police to carry out a welfare check.

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