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## Portadown College Attendance Policy

### Rationale

At Portadown College we recognise the strong link between school attendance and academic attainment. Whilst understanding that full attendance is not always possible due to particular circumstances, we recognise that promoting and supporting high levels of attendance are integral to securing student success and preparing young people for the responsibilities of life beyond College.

### The Responsibilities of Students

We expect our students to:

- (i) Maintain attendance of at least 95% throughout the academic year.
- (ii) Arrive to College in time for Assembly at 9:00am (or whatever alternative arrangement is in place) and Morning Registration.
- (iii) Follow College procedures when **late for school** or **requesting permission to leave College during the school day**:

#### **Late for School**

- Students arriving after 9:00am and before 9:10am should enter by the main doors and sign the Lates file.
- Students arriving after 9:10am are required to sign the Late Register in the Office. If late arrival is due to an appointment, the student should provide a note signed by a parent/carer for the Office Staff on arrival in College.
- Any student late more than three times, and without an acceptable reason, will be placed in an after school Friday detention.

#### **Permission to leave College during the School Day**

- Any student seeking to leave College during the school day must hand in a note signed by a parent/carer to a member of the SLT before 9:15am.
  - Notes must be signed by a parent or carer.
  - Notes signed by students, even those over eighteen years of age, are not acceptable.
  - Any departure from College without seeking permission from a member of the SLT will be regarded as an unauthorised absence.
- (iv) Provide a note from his/her parent/carer to the Group Tutor on the first day back after absence explaining the reason for absence if there has not been a response to the 'Truancy Call' text sent on the day(s) of absence. If a note has not been produced one week after the first day back following absence, the student will be placed in a Tuesday lunchtime detention.
  - (v) Provide a note from his/her parent/carer to the Group Tutor to inform College of planned absence during term time.

## **The Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

We expect our parents/carers to:

- (i) Support the College in ensuring that their child attends College regularly and is punctual.
- (ii) Arrange, as far as possible, routine medical or dental appointments outside of College hours.
- (iii) Plan family holidays outside of term time.
- (iv) Be familiar with College policy and procedures regarding attendance and punctuality.
- (v) Respond to Truancy Call texts regarding the reason for absence or provide their child with notes required to explain all absences.
- (vi) Communicate with the relevant member of staff where pastoral issues may impact on their child's attendance or punctuality.
- (vii) Support the College when sanctions are imposed as a result of breach of this policy.

## **The Responsibilities of College Staff**

We expect our staff to:

- Ensure that all students are clear about the policies and procedures regarding student attendance and punctuality.
- Apply the procedures fairly and consistently.

### Administrative staff:

- Record reasons for student absence (provided through parental notes and/or Truancy Call text responses) on the School Information Management System.
- Liaise with Year Heads, Group Tutors or class teachers over any queries relating to students' attendance.
- Process weekly EMA payments and termly bonuses.
- Liaise with Pastoral Vice-Principal regarding queries over any EMA issues.

### Group Tutors:

- Record attendance accurately at AM registration using the C2k Lesson Monitor system.
- Ensure that notes explaining unplanned absences are collected from students and forwarded promptly to the Office within one week of return to school and liaise with relevant Year Heads accordingly.
- Monitor attendance records and inform the Year Head of any concerns.
- In the case of planned absences from school, provide students with a *Holiday Absence From School (Term Time) form* on receipt of a written request from parent/carers and inform Year Head accordingly.

### Class Teachers:

- Record attendance accurately for each period using the C2k Lesson Monitor system.
- Encourage punctuality and liaise with Year Heads where issues arise.
- Liaise with relevant Year Heads where patterns of student absence from particular classes and/or subjects emerge.
- Inform administrative staff at least 24 hours in advance when taking students out during the school day for educational visits/sporting fixtures

### Year Heads:

- Communicate with parents/carers by telephone where unplanned absence extends beyond three days.
- Monitor student attendance rates/patterns and liaise with home and the Vice Principal (Pastoral) where concerns occur.

### Vice Principal (Pastoral):

- Maintain an overview of student attendance by liaising closely with Year Heads and SLT to secure whole school attendance of at least 95%.
- Liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer in cases where a student's attendance falls to 85% or below.

## **Procedures for Improving Low Attendance:**

### **Years 11 and 12**

- (i) If a pattern of absence is detected or if the attendance rate falls **below 92%**, except where the absence is clearly the result of illness or a valid reason has been provided, the Year Head will interview the student to establish the reason(s) for absences. An attendance target for a 2-week period will be agreed and the parent/carer will be informed by telephone. Should this attendance target not be met, the Vice Principal (Pastoral) will write to the parent/carer to inform them of concerns regarding attendance.
- (ii) If a pattern of absence continues or attendance rate falls to **88%** or below, except in cases where the absence is clearly the result of illness or a valid reason has been provided, the Vice Principal (Pastoral) will meet the parent/carer to discuss strategies to improve attendance rates.
- (iii) In the highly unlikely event that (i) or (ii) above do not address the situation, the Vice Principal (Pastoral) will liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer. In cases where attendance falls to **85% or below**, it is highly likely College will make a formal referral to the Educational Welfare Service in seeking to support the student and his/her parent/carer regarding good attendance.

### **Sixth Form**

Sixth Form students have signed the Sixth Form Agreement and are therefore subject to the procedures outlined below.

- (i) If a pattern of absence is detected or if the attendance rate falls **below 92%**, except where the absence is clearly the result of illness or a valid reason has been provided, the Year Head will interview the student to establish the reason(s) for absences. An attendance target for a 2-week period will be agreed and the parent/carer will be informed by telephone. Should this attendance target not be met, the Vice Principal (Pastoral) will write to the parent/carer to inform them of concerns regarding attendance.
- (ii) If a pattern of absence continues or attendance rate falls to **88%** or below, except in cases where the absence is clearly the result of illness or a valid reason has been provided, the Vice Principal (Pastoral) will meet the parent/carer to discuss strategies to improve attendance rates. The student will also be present at this meeting.
- (iii) In the highly unlikely event that (i) or (ii) above do not address the situation, an interview with the parent/carer and Principal will take place. At this stage, the student may have his/her Sixth Form place withdrawn.

Those Sixth Form students entitled to receive EMA should be aware that full attendance is required for the weekly EMA payments as per EMA Learning Agreement Part 1. Authorised absences as detailed in the Learning Agreement will not affect payments but notes or a response to the Truancy Call text **must** be supplied within three days of absence.

### **Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance:**

We strive to promote good attendance through the following:

- (i) Presentations by guest speakers (including local employers) to highlight to students the importance of good attendance at school and in their future career.
- (ii) Attendance reviews within the PD curriculum
- (iii) An attendance competition which rewards the top attending registration group, students with the highest attendance rates and those students who have demonstrated a significant improvement in their attendance rate in Year 11.
- (iv) Use of 'Truancy Call' text alert system to inform parents by 11am each morning if their son/daughter is not present in school.

### **College Attendance Target:**

**95%**

*This policy was approved by the Board of Governors on 19 November 2015.  
Amendments to this policy were approved by the Board of Governors on 20 June 2019*

## APPENDIX 1

Attendance percentages can be misleading:

100% Attendance	0 Days missed
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed

For some parents, **90%** may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss:

- **half a school day per week;**
- or **19 days of school** during the academic year - that's nearly **4 school weeks**.

**APPENDIX 2**

*Copies of the forms below can be downloaded from the Parents section (policies and documents) of the College website*

[www.portadowncollege.com](http://www.portadowncollege.com)

**RETURNING TO COLLEGE AFTER ABSENCE FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_ (NAME OF STUDENT) REG GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

My son/daughter was absent from College on the following date(s): \_\_\_\_\_. This was due to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

*This form or a note explaining absence should be given to the Group Tutor on the first day the student returns to College. If a response has been made to a Truancy Call text, no note is required.*

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**PERMISSION TO LEAVE COLLEGE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY FORM**

\_\_\_\_\_ (NAME OF STUDENT) REG GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

Please excuse my son/daughter from College on:

Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm to \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm.

This is due to: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

*This form or a note explaining absence should be given to a member of the SLT **before 9:15am on the day of the planned absence.***

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