

# Attendance Policy

Part 1:

## a) Attendance – General

Attendance at lessons is a basic requirement of learning. Students are expected to attend all timetabled lessons, including Tutor periods. Where a student is absent without good reason i.e. the absence is unauthorised, students will be subject to sanctions outlined in the College's Concern Policy. Students are expected to contact the college on each and every day that they are absent, whatever the reason.

All absences will be considered to be unauthorised, unless there is a valid reason. It is the responsibility of the student to ask for absences to be authorised. **Holidays are always classed as unauthorised absences.**

The college recognises that there are sometimes good reasons for an absence, and these can be authorised in certain cases. Part 2 of this document describes what is meant by an authorised and unauthorised absence.

Absences can be authorised either:

- In advance, where the claimed reason for absence is known beforehand or;
- On the day of absence, unless exceptionally there is a good reason why this could not be done.

A form requesting that an absence be authorised can be obtained from the IMA & Attendance Officer, Michelle Payne, in the Student Services Centre.

## b) Attendance and Itchen Maintenance Award (IMA)

Punctuality is a key aspect of attendance. It also prepares students for life outside college. Students are expected to attend all lessons on time. It is College policy that students who arrive at a lesson more than five minutes after start time are marked in as late. If a student arrives at a lesson more than ten minutes late they may be marked as very late. This absence will be unauthorised and may affect their Itchen Maintenance Award (IMA). Students should always strive to attend all lessons, even if they are very late.

## c) Attendance Behaviour and Attainment

By attending a lesson a student undertakes to engage in that lesson and show appropriate behaviour that allows them, and others, to learn. Failure to engage or behave appropriately will affect progress towards learning goals, and may also affect eligibility for IMA.

d) Attendance and Itchen Maintenance Award (IMA)

Please note that IMA is not paid for a week in which there is an unauthorised absence (unless at the discretion of the IMA & Attendance Officer).

IMA is intended to cover costs resulting from attendance at college. Sickness is not a reason for absence that can be authorised automatically. Where a student is absent through sickness in a week, IMA will not be paid.

All cases will be judged on their individual merits, and all decisions regarding payment will be based on this policy. If the decision is made to withhold a weekly payment, students will be informed by email. A student has the right of appeal if they disagree with a decision to withhold payment. In the first instance they should see the IMA & Attendance Officer, Michelle Payne, from the Student Services Centre. If they disagree, they can appeal to the Student Services. If they disagree, they can appeal to the Student Services Manager, Ginny Wythe. A form for this can be obtained from the college's Student Services Centre.

**Please note:** *students in receipt of IMA should note that eligibility for payment is based on both attendance and progress towards learning goals. Failure to complete tasks set for independent study such as homework prevents progress being made and may result in payments being withheld.*

e) Attendance, Examinations and Progression

It is college policy that students who fail to achieve at least 90% attendance in a course may be asked to pay for their own exam entry fees and registration fees, and may be unable to progress to the next level or year of a course.

The college reserves the right to ask for confirmation of the reason for any absence. This may be in the form of a Doctor's or Parent's note, depending on circumstance. The IMA & Attendance Officer will determine the nature of the evidence required in consultation with the Student Services Manager and the student's Tutor Team Manager.

Part 2:

a) Reasons for absence that would tend to be acceptable:

- A medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside of school or college hours
- A particular need to look after a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities. However, where such responsibilities are regularly interrupting attendance patterns, the college will be unable to authorise absences, and will need to explore solutions personally with the student
- A religious holiday

- A visit to a University, either to attend an open day or for interview; or a career-related interview
- An appointment with a member of the Student Services Team or referred external agency representative (although these should normally be scheduled to avoid disruption to studies)
- A work experience placement which is an integral part of a course, and for which the student does not receive a wage
- Participating in a significant extra-curricular activity not organised by the college, such as drama; music; sport or volunteering. Authorised absence will only be granted where the activity reflects a significant level of personal achievement (for example, taking part in regional or national event); or for some other one-off event. Authorised absences under this criterion will only be granted occasionally; where a pattern of frequent participation in such activities is proposed, there is a need to explore solutions personally with the student
- Participating in an activity organised by the college
- Attendance at a probation meeting
- Attendance at a funeral
- Severe disruption to a student's mode of transport (for example, where a student commutes by rail and a rail strike means there is no practical way of getting to school or college)
- A driving test
- A school or college representatives' meeting (e.g. Governors' meeting).

This list is not intended to be exhaustive, and decisions will take into account such things as: the inherent reasonableness of any case; the number of absences taken by any one individual; repetitions of the same excuse; and whether the excuse is back up with evidence.

b) Reasons for absence that are NOT acceptable:

- Holidays
- Part or full time work which is not part of the student's programme of study
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings
- Shopping
- Driving lessons.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

Part 3:

a) Absences which cannot be foreseen in advance

Where an absence genuinely could not be foreseen in advance, the student should nevertheless make arrangements to tell the college as soon as possible on the day in question that they will be missing classes. Where a student fails to do this, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. The only exception to this principle is where the student can

supply a strong reason why they failed to contact the college. This might be because an event has been particularly disturbing or unpleasant, or because there has been a genuine practical barrier.

The following are examples of reasons for absence that would tend to be acceptable, provided that the school or college has been notified on the day:

- An emergency situation involving a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities. Sudden severe illness would be an example. However, while such cases will be treated sympathetically on a one-off basis, they are not acceptable as regular grounds for authorising absence.
- Transport problems, where these were not known about in advance, and where there is no alternative means to hand. **Consultation has suggested that it is reasonable to expect students to walk up to three miles if they do not have a relevant disability.**

Part 4:

a) Study Leave

Students will receive their weekly payment during any periods of authorised study leave before examinations until they have sat their final examination. Where there is no final examination the published date for the end of the course will be used to determine when payments cease.

Part 5:

a) Student Code of Conduct

Students at Itchen College are treated like adults and our expectations are the same as those that an employee would have to meet if they wanted to keep their employment. The student code of conduct is an addition to this policy; please refer to full Student Code of Conduct leaflet.