



# **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

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## Introduction

Liberty College is committed to providing high quality education and training, supporting young people to succeed in the workplace. The purpose of this policy and procedure is to give clear instruction and guidance on how to work with young people to help them stay engaged and maximise their learning opportunities.

Liberty College expects learners to attend regularly in order to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It can also place learners at risk. It is accepted that a proportion of the learner population will be absent on any one day, for legitimate reasons, but unauthorised absence is unacceptable.

Liberty College is committed to encouraging all its learners to attend regularly: absence affects not only the individual learner but can also adversely influence the pace and scope of teaching and learning in a class.

Liberty College sees the measuring of attendance rates as a key task and we believe that the goal of regular attendance should be pursued both in relation to individual learners and the College as a whole. It is part of the College's responsibility to support attendance and to take seriously any problems which lead to non-attendance.

Liberty College will set high expectations for the learner's attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions, and we strive for 100% attendance from all our learners. The Department for Education has an 85% attendance benchmark for vulnerable young people. An individual attendance of above 85% is expected from all learners not experiencing a major medical condition. If a learner struggles with attendance due to severe anxiety or reasons relating to their EHCP, we will set up an individualised timetable where the planned hours for the course may not be realistically achieved.

Liberty College supports learners to understand the importance of good time keeping and attendance as part of their journey into adulthood and the links with gaining and maintaining employment.

Liberty College will work in partnership with learners and their families/carers to make sure they attend regularly and are punctual, by way of identifying support in a co-produced way.

Liberty College will monitor attendance and take action to improve attendance and punctuality where necessary. Failure to maintain good attendance will be dealt with according to the guidelines in this policy. We expect to be given a good reason, backed up with evidence, for all absences. Employers value attendance and punctuality highly and we endeavour to embed this in the ethos of our college.

Liberty College recognises the influence of an engaging and enjoyable curriculum on promoting good attendance and maintains that the College ethos and holistic approach also has a significant impact on learner attendance. Coupled with effective follow up of absences, this will deter a significant number of potential absentees.

A record of lateness is maintained to record the time of arrival of learners late to college and their reason for being late. If a learner arrives after registration has closed without satisfactory explanation, this may result in an unauthorised absence being recorded.

## Attendance Statement

Liberty College's attendance statement is as follows:

At Liberty we expect full attendance from our learners. If they are too unwell to attend College the learner must inform us by 9:00am on each day of absence by calling the office number on 01843 446906, or by emailing [adminteam@libertygrouppltd.co.uk](mailto:adminteam@libertygrouppltd.co.uk). If the learner is unable to contact us themselves, a parent/carer should contact us. We ask you to do this so we know our learners are safe.

Although staff will encourage learners to attend College whenever possible, they are not permitted to enforce attendance should a learner feel too poorly or refuse to attend. However, persistent unauthorised absences will be monitored closely and followed up in line with our contractual responsibilities to Local Authorities and the Education Skills funding Agency.

If a learner becomes ill whilst at College and it is agreed by staff and the learner that they should go home, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to collect the learner in a timely manner.

## Implementation of Policy

Liberty College will ensure that:

- Learners are registered accurately at the start of each session using the agreed system of recording;
- The College will set attendance targets for absence which will be reviewed at least termly;
- Individual learners will be given individual attendance targets where appropriate and progress towards the achievements these targets will reviewed;
- Learners will be contacted regarding their own absence in order to promote independence (where appropriate, depending on the learners needs);
- Parents/carers will be contacted when the contact with the learner has been unsuccessful or is not appropriate or where reasons for absence are unknown or unacceptable;
- A daily call system of phoning will form an integral part of the College's monitoring of attendance and contact with learners and parents/carers;
- Learner's attendance and lateness will be measured, improvement plans will be implemented and contact made with parents/carers as appropriate;
- A system that identifies tiers of non-attendance assists in identifying the intervention required for both learners and parents/carers;
- The SLT will be informed of all attendance related issues;
- Vulnerable learners with specific problems will be supported with regard to their attendance achievements;
- In addition to registers, the College uses an electronic signing in system to monitor learners in the building;
- Appropriate resources are available to ensure the policy is implemented.

The College will review the policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This policy will be developed and implemented throughout the College.

## Role of Staff

The Assistant Head of College will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the attendance system, in collaboration with the Admissions and Attendance Administrator. They are responsible for:

- ensuring every learner has access to full-time education;
- promoting good attendance, reduce absence/lateness and persistent absence;
- monitoring patterns of absence/lateness and respond accordingly to rectify any problems;
- entering learners on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which they start college
- ensuring that all admissions are recorded and that the attendance system is kept up to date;
- following up absences to:
  - ascertain the reason;
  - ensure the learner is safe;
  - identify if authorised or not;
  - ascertain the correct code to use.
- providing guidance and support to all staff;
- providing training for all staff on induction and when the need arises;
- keeping up to date with new developments and resources;
- reviewing and monitoring attendance by:
  - Working closely with the Admin Team to monitor attendance;
  - Exporting attendance reports twice termly to discuss with the SLT;
  - Setting actions twice termly for staff to help improve attendance.
- monitoring attendance regularly and discuss reduced timetable for vulnerable learners with the SLT;
- informing parents of their duty to ensure that their children attend college regularly;
- setting action targets for to all staff to help with attendance monitoring;
- half termly, provide attendance report to the Head of College and Advisory Board;
- involving the Youth Participation Group in:
  - determining this policy with the Head of College;
  - discussing improvements to this policy during the college year;
  - organising surveys to gauge the thoughts of all learners;
  - reviewing the effectiveness of this policy with the Head of College.
- annually report to the Head of College on the success and development of this policy.

Tutors will:

- understand that accurate registers form part of the college's safeguarding procedure;
- ensure the attendance register is taken at the beginning of each session;
- notify SLT of a learner who has not returned to lesson after a break;
- ensure that learners complete Return To Work forms when they return from absence;
- ensure that learners complete Late forms when they are late and these are given to the Attendance Officer;
- give achievements points for each AM and PM session attended on time and for any improvements in attendance and punctuality;
- complete the 'Learner Wages Calculator' with learners in lessons and during reviews so they can see the impact of lateness and absence when they enter the workplace.

- bring to the attention of the Senior Leadership Team any irregularities in learner attendance;
- complete actions set by Senior Leadership Team to monitor attendance.

## Role of Learners

Learners will be expected to:

- Attend regularly and punctually;
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absence;
- Monitor their own attendance and ensure that this is as good as possible;
- Complete Return To Work forms with their tutor when they return from absence;
- Complete a Late Form with a member of staff when they are late;
- Catch up with any work missed as soon as possible, staying for session 6 or working during their breaks;
- Sign themselves in and out of the building at reception using the signing in system;
- Inform the Liberty College every day of absence, by telephone or email;
- Discuss planned absences with the college in advance (e.g. special occasions and appointments) and complete an Absence Request Form, handing this form and any evidence to their tutor;
- During lengthy absences maintain regular contact with the college so that we can provide support.

## Role of Parents

Parents will:

- ensure regular and punctual attendance;
- notify college of absence if the learner is unable to notify us themselves;
- work with the college to improve attendance and punctuality for their child including attending attendance related meetings and Attendance Clinics.

## Attendance Registers

We have in place an electronic attendance register system that:

- records learner attendance at the start of every lesson
- on each occasion records whether every learner is:
  - present;
  - attending an approved educational activity;
  - absent; or,
  - late;
  - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances;

All unexplained or unreported absences will be followed up to:

- ascertain the reason;
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- identify whether the absence is approved or not.

Every year we publish individual learner reports which include the following information about attendance:

- overall attendance;
- the percentage of sessions missed through authorised absence;
- the percentage of sessions missed through unauthorised absence;

All attendance registers will be retained for a minimum of three years.

### Attendance Codes

Code	Meaning
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Education of site (no Dual reg)
C	Other authorised
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before register closed)
M	Medical/dentist appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after register closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances or school closure
X	Non-compulsory school age not expected to attend
Z	Pupil not on admission register

## Absence Reporting Procedure

At Liberty, we prepare our learners for the workplace, and we therefore expect learners to report their own absence in the same way they would for a job or apprenticeship.

If a learner is too unwell to attend College, the learner must inform us by 9:00am on each day of absence by calling the office number on 01843 446906, or by emailing [adminteam@libertygrouppltd.co.uk](mailto:adminteam@libertygrouppltd.co.uk). If the learner is unable to contact us themselves, a parent/carer should contact us. Messages can be left on the absence reporting line if the office is closed.

If no reason for an absence has been received on the day of absence, a text message or email will be sent or contact by telephone will be made. If the College still receives no response, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. In some circumstances a home visit will be carried out.

Registers close 10 minutes after a session is due to start (or an individual's agreed start time if they are on a part time timetable). After this time, learners will be marked as late. If a learner is going to be late to college, they should follow the Absence Reporting Procedure. They will be required to complete a Late Form upon their arrival at College.

If a learner has an appointment or needs time off for any other reason, they should complete an Absence Request form and hand it to their tutor along with evidence of the appointment. This will be passed to the SLT who will determine whether the absence will be approved (authorised) or not approved (unauthorised). This is to prepare learners for what may be required in the workplace.

## Absence Monitoring

The Admin Team will follow the procedure below each day:

- Monitor registers;
- Listen to absence calls & voicemails;
- Read emails from learners and parents/carers;
- Make a list of absence learners without an explanation;
- Double check the list before calling learners or parents/carers to establish the whereabouts of absent learners;
- Contact absent learners once registration closes using phone calls, emails and other forms of communication;
- Contact learners if they have not reported their absence;
- Contact parents/carers if unable to contact the learner;
- Contact learners and parents/carers if a learner leaves early without authorisation;
- If unable to make contact with learners and parents/carers then call everyone on the contact list;
- Leave voicemail in all cases;
- Use college intelligence to establish any information about the unexplained absence;
- If still no contact with the learner or parents/carers then repeat the calls throughout the day until contact is made and an explanation is given;
- If still no contact with the learner or parents/carers then a text will be sent to parents informing them of their child's absence and requesting they make contact;
- Contact the key worker if a learner is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the learner's absence;
- Inform the Learning Support Co-Ordinator of any concerns;
- Keep a log of all actions, saving to MIS system and learner's file.
- Ensure registers are kept up to date.



The Admin Team will also do the following as required:

- organise Attendance Clinics between the SLT and parents to discuss attendance concerns;
- organise meetings between the SLT and parents to discuss their application for a term time holiday;
- compile attendance data reports for the Head of College.

## Attendance Benchmarks

Liberty College has implemented the following benchmarks for attendance.

Percentage	Action
90-100%	This is the expected attendance for Liberty Learners and will be rewarded as per the Attendance Rewards section below
85-89%	Tutor monitoring, this means speak with the learner informing them of their attendance and set targets on how they can improve. Targets can be set during learner review meetings or less formally.
70-85%	A call home by the Tutor/TA if no progress, plus monitoring.
60-69%	A letter will be sent home to parent/carer as well as monitored by Tutor, Admin and Attendance Officer. Call home from a member of SLT.
Below 59%	A home visit will be arranged with a member of SLT to discuss and agree support strategies and targets will be put in place. Prior to the home visit, SLT, tutor and class TA will meet to discuss support and targets in place for the learner and suggestions for next steps.
Absent for 2 consecutive weeks	A off-roll warning letter will be posted and emailed to parent/carer.
Absent for 28 college days or more	Off roll, in line with guidance.

All learners whose absence falls into the amber and red categories will be monitored closely and offered additional support on a case-by-case basis.

Attendance Clinics bring together parents/carers and the learner to discuss the issues causing ongoing absence and how they can be overcome, and they are hosted in an informal meeting room to ensure that it feels like a welcoming, supportive environment. A member of Liberty's SLT and a member of the Wellbeing Team will be present at the Clinics. External professionals such as Early Help Workers and Social Workers may also be invited to these Clinics where appropriate. An action plan to improve attendance will be discussed and agreed at the Attendance Clinic.

Attendance Clinics will be offered to learners and parents/carers where the learners' attendance is in the amber or red categories.

## Attendance Rewards

Attendance rewards in place are as follows:

- Learners with 100% attendance in the previous week will be given an achievement point from their Tutor;
- One achievement point will be awarded for attendance for each AM and PM session where a learner attends on time;
- Certificates of Excellence for improved attendance and achieving targets;
- Learners with 100% attendance in the previous term will receive a certificate from the Head of College and will be congratulated in the termly newsletter with their consent;
- Learners with attendance above 91% will receive a Grub Hub voucher valued at £1 for every percent over 90%. E.g., if a learner has 97% for the term, they will receive £7 Grub Hub voucher.
- An email will be sent to parents/carers to inform them if their child has received an attendance related reward.

## Attendance in Previous Setting

The Admissions and Attendance Administrator will endeavour to obtain each learner's attendance percentage from their previous educational setting. Liberty will use this data to compare attendance while at Liberty and measure any improvement or decline. This information will also be used to set improvement targets for learners.