



Richmond upon
Thames College

Policy Name:	Student Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2018-19
Policy Number/Version No:	1
Effective Date:	September 2018
Review Date:	August 2019
Policy Responsibility:	Deputy Principal Curriculum and Quality
Approved By:	CMT
For Action By:	All College staff
For Information to:	All College staff, students and parents/guardians

1 INTRODUCTION

This policy outlines the approach taken by Richmond upon Thames College to encourage excellent attendance and punctuality, in order to help improve student retention and achievements rates. It also covers the specific monitoring of attendance for students in receipt of bursary.

This policy applies to full-time and part time FE and HE students. Separate arrangements apply to students enrolled on apprenticeships.

Students are expected to establish and maintain excellent attendance and punctuality at all College classes and other learning activities which are part of their timetable. At Richmond upon Thames College the expectation is that attendance and punctuality is 100%.

Good punctuality demonstrates that students are committed and are keen to learn and progress.

2 PROCESS

Attendance monitoring and setting expectations is vital in the first 6 weeks to encourage good behaviours and identify 'at risk' students, agree support and set targets. (*see Appendix 1*).

Punctuality will be monitored and if there is cause for concern the issue will be addressed with the students by their Tutor. Targets for improvement will be agreed with the students.

Students are expected to:

- Attend all lessons on their timetable and arrive before the start of the lesson properly equipped and prepared
- **Always** inform RuTC in advance of any unavoidable absences (*Appendix 4*). This can be done by using the dedicated text number (07860023868) or email (attend@rutc.ac.uk). This must be followed up by providing the evidence or documentation required
- Regularly monitor their own levels of attendance on the Student Portal and set targets for improvement
- Understand the expectations of attendance, and the consequences of poor attendance in relation to their progress, achievement, employability and as outlined in this policy
- Arrange doctors and other appointments out of College hours
- Not have work commitments that clash with their College timetable; any absence for work will be unauthorised by the college (except where it is agreed work experience)
- Make arrangements to catch up on any work missed during their absence with support as required
- Follow the College Punctuality Process - see (*Appendix 2*)

Unavoidable Absences (See Appendix 4)

At Richmond upon Thames College we recognise that there are rare occasions when students may not be able to attend because of circumstances **completely** out of their control. These unavoidable situations are dealt with on an individual basis.

The following unavoidable absences will be marked as authorised by Attendance, once they are in receipt of the required evidence. Proof will be required (*template forms – see Appendix 3*).

- Serious illness, recovery from operation or recuperation after illness
- Known medical condition which has been disclosed to the College
- Hospital appointments
- Jury Service
- Court appearances, Probation or YOT appointments
- Job interview
- Attendance at HE open days (up to two per academic year) or interviews
- Funerals of relative or close friend
- Recognised religious holidays
- Practical driving test
- Participation in significant extra curricula activities
- Large scale transport disruption, as acknowledged by the college

These reasons for absence are not acceptable and will not be authorised, and therefore will be marked as O in the register which will affect the overall attendance percentage:

- Isolated illnesses (headache/cold etc.) will be noted on Pro-Monitor but not authorised on the register
- Regular transport delays
- Routine dentist, doctor or optician appointments (proof still required).
- Holidays.
- Work.
- Leisure activities.
- Birthdays or similar celebrations.
- Driving lessons or Theory test
- Shopping.
- Babysitting or looking after siblings.
- Waiting at home for arrival of delivery/service

The above is not an exhaustive list. The College reserves the right to decide what is and is not an acceptable reason for absence. In doing so we will consider what a reasonable employer would be prepared to accept.

Where a student aged 16-18 is absent or late to a lesson without explanation, the parent/guardian will be sent an SMS message at 20:00 on the same day, informing them of their child's absence and/or lateness. Registers must be completed accurately by the close of lessons that day to allow this to happen.

Where a parent has requested not to be contacted, as there is a known health or personal reason for the absence, Attendance will flag this on Pro-solution to stop the messages.

Care Responsibilities

The College recognises that care responsibilities for dependent children, relatives or disabled parents may affect a student's ability to attend College. Where a student has Young Carer status this should be declared at enrolment, or as soon as the status is known, so support can be offered. The College will take these responsibilities into account when agreeing an authorised absence provided there is advance warning; however, if attendance falls below 80% the situation will be reviewed to minimise the impact on their study.

Students will advise the College of any Absence/Lateness using the following methods:

16-18 year olds

- Text the 24hr absence line before 10am (07860023868) on **each** day of absence, unless a Doctor's Certificate has been submitted.
- Email Attend@rutc.ac.uk
- Go to 1D17 (Student Information) and complete a Self-Certification of Absence form (*Appendix 1*)

Students must provide details of name, I.D number, Tutor and the reason for absence, and how long they expect to be absent. Students must also attach/submit the relevant evidence to support absences, where applicable.

If under 18 they will need to obtain a doctor's certificate/fit note for any illness lasting more than a week.

Known conditions: Students must advise and discuss with their Tutor, Curriculum Manager and/or Student Services, any pre-existing or on-going medical conditions. Evidence of this must be provided to Student Information. With agreement, the information will be shared on a need to know basis so the College can provide support.

If students need to go home, they must go to Student Information in 1D17 where their absence will be recorded.

Actions in cases of unauthorised absence, poor attendance and punctuality

- Teaching staff are responsible for monitoring attendance in their modules. If a student misses two lessons within a two-week period, teachers will contact the student and parent/carer (if 16 -19) either by phone or email via Portal. This will be recorded on Portal for future reference.
- Tutors must monitor the overall attendance of their group at the start of each tutorial. If the student is under 18 and there is no known reason for absence the tutor will contact the student and parent/carer if attendance is below 90%. Notice should be paid to the pattern of absence e.g. particular subjects/modules to identify potential issues. The reasons for absence must be explored and any support required and ways to catch up on missed work discussed with the teaching staff and Curriculum Manager. SMART Targets will be agreed with the student and monitored to evaluate impact. The implications of poor attendance should be highlighted. Where there is a health, welfare or safeguarding reason for the absence a referral should be made to the appropriate Student Services member of staff (Welfare and Engagement Adviser, Student Services Officer, Safeguarding and Equality Officer, Counsellor).

- If there are concerns about the attendance of students who are Looked After Young People/Care Leavers/safeguarding issues this should also be reported to the Designated Teacher for the Virtual School (Safeguarding & Equalities Officer) due to the potential impact on their PEP and outcomes.
- If a student's level of attendance remains unacceptable (under 90%), the Curriculum Manager should be notified, they will move to the First Stage Disciplinary, a meeting with their parent/carer will be arranged and they will be put on a 'Warning contract'. It is important that where appropriate parents/guardian are involved in addressing issues of attendance and punctuality. Parents are able to access information relating to this via the Parent Portal.
- The student will move along the Three Stage Disciplinary Procedure if they do not improve their attendance. The Third stage is a final disciplinary and may result in permanent exclusion.
- The College reserves the right to start the Stage Three Disciplinary Process as per the Student Disciplinary Process, and ultimately withdraw students, from a programme of study at any point throughout the year if absences are excessive and it is judged not possible for the student to catch up on missed teaching and learning or achieve the assessment outcomes of the course.
- If students do not attend the College for at least 4 continuous weeks and have not informed the College of any reason for absence they will automatically be withdrawn from their programme of study.
- Appeals against exclusion may be referred to the Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality within one week.

Bursary payments for 16-18 year olds

The Student Attendance and Punctuality policy applies to all students whether or not in receipt of a Bursary. Full Discretionary Bursary payments will be paid if students weekly attendance is 90% or above (Including unavoidable absences). Students will be paid the Bursary on a pro-rata basis if attendance falls below 90%. This is to avoid situations where full non-payment would give financial reasons for further non-attendance.

The payment of Bursary will take into account individual student circumstances and the decision to pay a portion of the Bursary may be considered with consultation between the Student Services Officer and the Tutor.

If the student disputes the stopped payment(s) they must talk to the Student Service Officer who will investigate and inform student and Tutor of the outcome.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, they can appeal in writing to the Student Services Manager within one week of the decision. Students must provide full details of dates and reasons for absence and explain why they think the Bursary should be paid. Student Services Manager will consider the appeal and respond within five working days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Student Services Manager is final.

The conditions of the Bursary payments may be subject to review during the academic year.

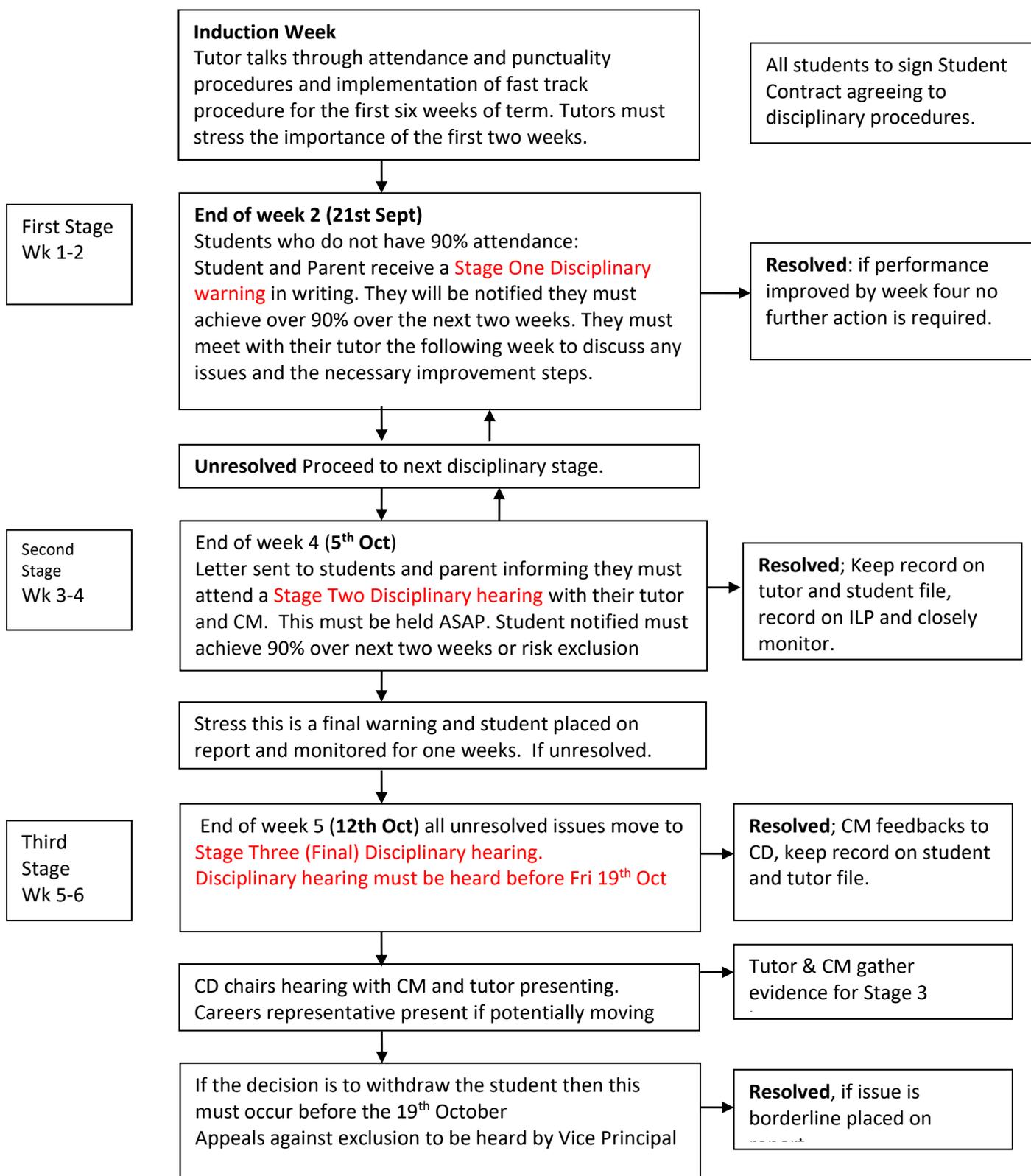
Related policies:

Student Disciplinary Procedure

Appendix 1: SIX WEEK ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY PROCESS

First six weeks of term (Sept 2018)

Good attendance (over 90%) in the first half of the Autumn term is essential. It reflects an attitude to learning and ensures the student receives important information, is well prepared for learning and establishes good study and employability habits. Due to this the monitoring and addressing of issues related to attendance and punctuality is a priority. The following process should be followed by all tutors:



First Stage
Wk 1-2

Second Stage
Wk 3-4

Third Stage
Wk 5-6

This six week procedure can be implemented at any time of the year for all students whose attendance is below 90%

EVERY MINUTE MATTERS:

PUNCTUALITY PROCESS FOR STUDENTS 2018-19

This process has been designed to support students in attending every lesson on time, recognising that the beginnings of lessons are crucial for learning to be effective. It has been established following feedback from both teaching staff and students.

For 9.00am lessons:

- Latecomers will be admitted for the first 15 minutes only

For all lessons from 10.10am:

- Latecomers will be admitted for the first 10 minutes only

1. If you arrive late to a lesson (but before the cut-off), get involved with the learning as calmly and quietly as you can, making sure that the learning of other students is not disturbed. Explanations and apologies for lateness must happen at an appropriate point in the lesson with no disruption to other learners
2. If you are late to class 3 times, a Stage One verbal warning will be given (see Disciplinary Process). If lateness continues, the Disciplinary Process will be followed
3. If you arrive after the cut-off for a lesson, you should go to the LRC or a suitable learning space to work
4. If you have double/block lessons, you should wait until the next lesson starts before entering
5. You should make up any minutes of lost learning time due to lateness in your own time: it is *your* responsibility to find out what you need to catch up on from other students (or Moodle, where appropriate)

Please note:

- Poor attendance to class will be addressed through the Disciplinary Process
- Parents/guardians will be alerted by text at the end of the day when students are marked absent on the register

The punctuality process will be in place from Monday 24th September 2017.

Appendix 3: STUDENT SELF-CERTIFICATION OF ABSENCE

SECTION 1 (To be completed by student)

Name _____ ID Number _____

First day of absence:

Last day of absence:

Personal Tutor:

Course:

Are you receiving a College bursary? _____ Yes/No

Classes missed	Date and time	Teacher

I was/will be unable to attend the sessions listed above because

SECTION 2 (To be completed by Attendance Officer)

This absence is authorised/unauthorised. Added to Pro-monitor

The absence was not authorised for the following reason.

Signature:

Date:

Attendance: Absence Query Form

Student Name:	
Student ID:	
Today's Date:	

Reason for Absence	✓	Date of Absence	Morning Absence Time of appt.	Afternoon Absence Time of appt.	All day Absence (Y/N)
Dentist Appointment					
Doctor's Appointment					
Hospital Appointment					
Off sick					
Driving – Practical/Theory Test					
Jury Service					
Court Appearance, Probation or YOT appointments					
Job Interview					
University Interview					
University Open Day					
Bereavement/Funeral					
Public Transport delays/Cancellations					

Please provide details/reason of your absence in the below box, if it is not listed in the above table:

Office Use Only:

Evidence of absence seen:

Entered on Pro Monitor:

Appendix 4

Unavoidable reason for absence	Evidence Required
Serious Illness, recovery from operation or recuperation after illness	Hospital card/doctor's letter.
Known Medical condition e.g. mental health condition such as anxiety, depression; asthma; Crohn's disease; disability	This must be disclosed to the College along with the submission of medical evidence to support the diagnosis. Once provided this can be flagged on Pro-monitor
Hospital Appointments	Confirmation of Appointment letters, Appointment cards, Email or Text reminders
Jury service	Official letter of notification is required in advance
Attendance at probation/YOT meeting or court	This will be authorised as long as official documentation is submitted as evidence
University visit /HE interview/	Must be notified in advance with letter/email inviting student to the appointment
Job interview	Evidence of the interview is required e.g. letter, email
Attendance at family funeral	Will be authorised if notified in advance with letter from parent/guardian if under 19
Recognised religious holiday	Must be notified in advance
Practical Driving test	Official appointment letter/email
Participation in significant extra curricula activities.	Email from member of staff organising activity
Large scale transport disruption, as acknowledged by the College	This will be clarified and a decision made by the College
Care of a family member where the student has formal caring responsibility	This absence must be notified in advance.
Absence as a consequence of disability or other equality reason	This will be authorised if it meets the requirements of legislation and is a reasonable adjustment