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Attendance Policy

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Implementation: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

2.0 AIMS

Syon Manor College is committed to providing a full, effective and efficient education to all pupils (The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7) and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Our college aims to meet its obligations with regards to college attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled in line with their preparation for adulthood targets
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their young person of compulsory education age to attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

For a young person to reach their full educational achievement a high level of college attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all young person. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. This policy contains within it the procedures that the college will use to meet its attendance targets

3.0 LEGISLATION & GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school and college attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on college attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern college attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 •

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The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the college census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4.0 COLLEGE PROCEDURES

Any young person who is absent from college at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of college). Only the Head of College or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of college at 09.00. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. college transport was delayed, independent traveling issues. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Syon Manor College
A.M. register 9.00 am; closes at 9.30 am P.M. register 12:50 pm; closes at 1.00 pm

Pupils arriving after the start of college but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

5.0 AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

First Day Absence

Parents/Carers will be expected to contact the college office and leave a message stating the name of the pupil and reason for absence. If a call has not been received by 9.30am an administrator will contact the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence and record it on ISAMS. This information will then be relayed to the person responsible for each class register, to record as required and recoded. The Assistant Headteacher will also be notified daily of any absences.

Where a pupil does not present for college as expected, and contact with home has not been successful, the college will use all available contacts to ascertain their whereabouts and safety. If all communication attempts have been attempted and staff are unaware of any circumstances requiring an absence, the college may conduct a home visit and if concerns persist may call the local authority and/or the police.

Absence notes

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Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period and scanned/noted on ISAMS.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the college has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the college may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the college is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Timeline of College Action for Low Attendance

Each Young person's attendance can be summarised as:

95% +	Excellent attendance. This will support all aspects of your young person's progress in college. This will give them a good start in life and encourages a positive work ethic. Your young person's attendance is at or above the college target. Keep striving for 100%.
90% - 94%	Good effort. This attendance rate is moving towards the target of 95%. Improved attendance will benefit your young person both academically and socially. Your young person's attendance is almost at the college target.

BELOW 90%	A pupil whose attendance is below 90% is defined as a 'persistent absentee' by the Department for Education. 1) Absence is now a concern and will significantly affecting your young person's attainment and progress. You will receive an initial letter of concern and be invited in to meet with their Mentor to establish whether we can offer you any additional support to improve your young person's attendance. 2) If attendance does not improve in the next month or falls even further within the academic year, a second letter inviting you to meet with the Assistant Headteacher will be sent. At this second meeting, an attendance target will be set across an agreed timescale which will be monitored by the Mentor and SLT. 3) If there is still no improvement or the attendance rate falls further within the academic year, a referral for external support may be made. At this point the Local Authority may also be made aware. We may contact you to arrange a home visit. Medical reasons for absence – If your young person has an ongoing medical condition that means they are unable to attend college, we apply their attendance figure with this knowledge. Therefore, discretion may be applied to the process above.
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Where pupils have been identified with specific medical or therapeutic needs who have a high level of absence, they will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly contact with parents/carers to correctly authorise absences.
- Working with the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these pupils and the college.
- Provide home visits where appropriate.
- Recognise that some pupils are not 'available for learning' and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our college. This could include Distance Learning platforms such as Teams or Zoom.
- Recognise that these pupils may still be eligible for rewards for attendance with medical absences not applied to their overall percentage for the purpose of rewards.

A Welcome Back

All pupils are made to feel welcome upon return to college following significant periods of absence. It is important to recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning a return to college, this should **include:**

- Ensuring that the pupil is helped to adjust to college's daily routine.
- Catching up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Sensitivity to the individual needs and circumstances of returning pupils:

- Involve/inform all staff in any return to college process.
- Provide opportunities for counselling and feedback.
- Consider peer support and mentoring as appropriate.
- Involve parents as far as possible.
- Agree timescale for review of reintegration plan.
- Include Young person's Services Social Workers, parents and pupil in return to college plan if appropriate.

6.0 EYES ON AFTER 3

The 'Eyes on After 3' procedure is an enhanced attendance and safeguarding process designed to ensure that the college establishes the welfare of a student who has been absent for three consecutive days. Given the additional needs and potential vulnerabilities of students attending Syon Manor College, the college recognises that attendance concerns may require a more proactive response. The purpose of this process is to establish 'eyes on' the student, wherever possible, and to identify any barriers, welfare concerns or safeguarding issues that may be contributing to the absence.

The following procedure will apply:

Day 1–2 – Initial absence procedures

- The college's usual first-day absence and attendance procedures will be followed.

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- The reason for absence should be recorded accurately.
- Appropriate contact with parents/carers should be maintained in accordance with the Attendance Policy.
- Any safeguarding or welfare concerns identified during this period must be escalated immediately and should not be deferred until Day 3.

Day 3 – Video call / ‘Eyes on’ check

Where a student has been absent for three consecutive days, the DSL or a member of the Leadership team will make a video call to the home to establish contact and, where possible, see the student.

The purpose of the video call is to:

- Establish that the student is safe and well.
- Confirm the reason for the continued absence.
- Establish whether there are any barriers preventing attendance.
- Identify whether additional support is required.
- Where possible, obtain ‘eyes on’ confirmation of the student.

Where the video call is answered and the student is seen on the call, a home visit will not normally be required on Day 4.

Where:

- the video call is not answered;
- contact cannot be established;
- the parent/carer is unable to facilitate the call; or
- the student cannot be seen,

a home visit will be conducted on Day 4.

Day 4 – Home visit

Where the student could not be seen or contact could not be established on Day 3, a home visit will be undertaken on Day 4.

The purpose of the visit is to establish the student’s welfare; understand the circumstances surrounding their absence and identify any support or intervention that may be required.

The outcome of the visit must be recorded in accordance with the college’s recording and documentation procedures.

Day 7 – Further ‘Eyes on’ home visit

If the student has not returned to college by the seventh consecutive day of absence, a further home visit will be conducted.

This applies regardless of whether the student was seen during the Day 3 video call or during a previous home visit.

The visit should:

- Establish the student’s current welfare and circumstances.
- Confirm the ongoing reason for absence.

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- Identify any changes or emerging concerns.
- Consider barriers to returning to college.
- Identify whether additional safeguarding, attendance or multi-agency intervention is required.
- Agree appropriate next steps with the student, parent/carers and relevant college staff.

Day 10 – Local Authority notification

If the student remains absent and has not returned to college by the tenth consecutive day of absence, the relevant Local Authority will be informed in accordance with the college's attendance and safeguarding responsibilities.

The college will provide relevant information regarding:

- The student's attendance and absence history.
- Attempts to contact the student and family.
- The outcome of any video call.
- The outcome of any home visits.
- Any identified welfare or safeguarding concerns.
- Support or interventions already offered.
- Any further action considered necessary.

Following notification to the Local Authority, the 'Eyes on After 3' process will begin again, with the college continuing to monitor the student's welfare and attendance and repeating the appropriate actions from Day 3 onwards until the student returns to college or alternative arrangements are formally agreed.

Safeguarding override

The 'Eyes on After 3' process is a minimum attendance and welfare procedure and does not replace professional safeguarding judgement.

Where there are immediate or significant concerns about a student's safety or welfare, staff must not wait until Day 3, Day 7 or Day 10 before acting. The college's safeguarding procedures must be followed and concerns escalated immediately where appropriate.

Consideration should be given to students with additional vulnerabilities, complex needs, communication difficulties, medical needs, known safeguarding concerns or a history of persistent or prolonged absence. In such circumstances, the DSL or another appropriate member of the safeguarding team may determine that contact, a welfare check, a home visit or referral to an external agency is required at an earlier stage.

7.0 ATTENDANCE MONITORING

Medical or dental appointments

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It is the statutory duty of every parent/guardian to ensure that their young person attends college regularly and on time, (Section 444(1) Education Act 1996).

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment may be counted as an authorised absence if advance notice has been given or evidence provided. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of college hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of college for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. See below for information relating to whether the college can authorise such absences.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent initially, using the appropriate code. This will then be changed to Late and a time recorded on their arrival.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Families are not encouraged to take their young person out of college for family holidays or trips abroad during term time. Any absence request in term time will be reviewed by the Head of College and only approved in exceptional circumstances. Should absence for leave be authorised, this would still be counted as an overall reduction in the percentage figure for the pupil for that month.

Requests for leave of absence during term time should be made to the Head of College in writing. Each request will be judged on a case by case basis.

8.0 YOUNG PERSON ABSENT FROM EDUCATION

DfE Statutory guidance regarding Young person absent from education states that young person absent from education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) later in life.

Syon Manor College takes the following steps:

- All pupils are entered on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the college has agreed that the pupil will attend the college. This register is kept up to date and checked for accuracy, on a monthly basis.
- If a pupil fails to attend the college, the college will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the young person's whereabouts (following the steps listed in the above DfE guidance) and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity **or at the point that 10 consecutive days have been missed.**
- The college monitors pupils' attendance through daily registration. Daily absence is followed up by the college administration team who attempt contact with home to request a reason for absence. The college monitors attendance closely and addresses poor or irregular attendance. The college notifies local authorities of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten college days or more without permission.
- College will work with external agencies including the Local Authority, Participation Teams and Social Care to support families whose young person have missed ten consecutive days of education. Whilst meetings and support are being implemented, the college will keep the young person on roll. If

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engagement with home ceases despite support being offered, or support offered is subsequently declined then college will call an emergency Annual Review to discuss the placement and may consider giving its six-week notice period to end the placement subject to confirmation that the Local Authority are aware.

- College will continue to retain contact with pupils who have left the college to monitor the success of the next placement and to ensure any relevant records are passed on.
- Where a pupil has not returned to college for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from college without authorisation for twenty consecutive college days and when the college and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the young person, with the full knowledge of the local authority responsible for placing the young person with us; and the relevant referrals have been made to the young person's safeguarding team; the college reserves the right to consider terminating the placement by giving six weeks' notice to the Local Authority. At this point the pupil would be removed from the admissions register.
- The college remains committed to working with all agencies to establish the safety of the missing young person even after their removal from the college roll.

Attendance Targets

Our college target is: All pupils attend over 95% of the time.

9.0 THE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each college day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- The original entry
- Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - The date on which the amendment was made.
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

The college uses a Management Information System (iSAMS) for keeping the college attendance records.

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on college attendance:

Code	Definition	Scenario
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I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the college
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the college
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the college
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

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Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	College has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the college
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the college
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	College is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at college after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in college	Pupil of non-compulsory college age is not required to attend or on Part Time Tables
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	College site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the college
#	Planned college closure	Whole or partial college closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Granting approval for term-time absence

Head of college may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with college holidays.
- Visiting a parent/carer who is imprisoned.
- Where an absence is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or young person's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- The wedding of a close family member.

The college considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head of College's discretion. Although, if granted the leave would be authorised, the non-attendance would affect the overall percentage attendance for that young person for that month.

Important Definitions

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- 1 college day = 2 sessions. This means that one day off a week will make a young person's attendance for that week 80%.
- If a young person has 9 days off over the whole year their attendance will be approximately 95% for the year.
- Authorised Absence means an absence has been classified as authorised when a young person is away from college for a legitimate reason and the college has received notification from a parent/carer.
- Authorised absence still affects overall attendance figure and will impact on qualification for reward trips.
- Unauthorised absences mean an absence when a young person is away from college without the permission of the college.

10.0 LEGAL SANCTIONS

Local Authorities can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their young person from college, where the young person is of compulsory college age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Local Authority.

Following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during college hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

11.0 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole college on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Senior Leadership team to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Head of College is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the college, and for monitoring college-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Head of College also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed- penalty notices, where necessary.

The Assistant Head Teacher:

- Monitors attendance data at the college at individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head of College.
- Works with the local authority; Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Arranges home visits when deemed reasonable and in conjunction with parents.
- Advises the Regional Director when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

Mentors are responsible for recording attendance using iSAMS on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the college office.

Administration staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on iSAMS; and will make initial daily contact for those absent without notification.

12.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership team. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

13.0 LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy is linked to our young person protection and safeguarding policy

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