

Great Oaks College Attendance Policy

Person Responsible: Head of College

Date of Policy: January 2021

Next Review Due: January 2024

Introduction

At Great Oaks College we recognise that regular and consistent student attendance is essential to our students making progress in their academic, physical and emotional development. It is the parent/Carer's responsibility to ensure that their young people attend college regularly. We also recognise our responsibility as a college to monitor student's attendance effectively and that this is part of our duty under the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on local authorities to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young person and students.

At Great Oaks College, we also recognise that our students' additional medical needs do impact from time to time, on their ability to attend college and that some student's attendance rates may be lower than other students.

We also recognise that some of our students display challenging behaviour which makes it more difficult for parents to ensure their regular attendance. At Great Oaks we always seek to support parents and to work with health and social care professionals to support families. It remains however parental/Carer responsibility to ensure their young person attends college regularly.

The effect of student absence on welfare and learning

Any absence affects a young person's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Reporting absence from college

It is the parent/Carer's responsibility to report student absence and the reasons for that absence by telephoning the college on the first day they are absent. Parents/Carers should then keep the college up to date with the details of any continued absence. If a parent fails to report absence directly to the college then college will contact parents on the day of absence to ask for information. This will normally be carried out by the admin team.

Monitoring attendance

When the registers have been taken in the morning, the morning receptionist will cross reference with telephone calls from families. A phone call will be made by the morning receptionist to families who have not reported a reason why their young person is not in college. A written record is kept of all messages phoned into college.

Student attendance is discussed with parents/Carers formally at annual review meetings.

Regular late arrival of students is also considered to be absence.

Student's attendance is recorded using *REMS* by the administrative officer. Attendance information will be reviewed at the end of each month at the student causing concern (SCC) meeting.

Attendance causing concern

The College admin officer will investigate where a student's attendance has fallen below an acceptable level for that student. This will take into account each student's individual health of which the college has been made aware. In usual circumstances this is where a student's attendance falls below 90% and there is no clearly identified medical reason for this.

Where student's attendance is causing concern and is below the attendance expected for them, parents will be sent an absence letter. That student's attendance will be reviewed after four weeks.

The admin officer will produce a summary of attendance actions taken for the students causing concern meeting.

The meeting will decide on an appropriate action for instance;

- 2nd letter will be sent including a four-week attendance target with another review date
- An attendance meeting to be set up between the parents/carers, the student and the appropriate senior leader

Where students do not attend college regularly and parents do not keep us fully informed of the reasons for student absence in line with their medical needs the college has a duty to consider this as a safeguarding issue and report it to the appropriate authorities.

If a young person ceases to attend regularly then Great Oaks College may withdraw their place at the college. EFA funding is withdrawn if a student is absent for three consecutive weeks without authorisation.

Absence from college for reasons other than their medical needs or illness

Parents are informed of their duty to ensure that their young person attends college regularly. They are asked not to book any other events during college term time that will result in them being absent from college, and in particular are asked not to book holidays during term time.

If there are unavoidable reasons for absence other than meeting a young person's medical needs, then parents need to write to the Head Teacher requesting permission. The Head Teacher may decide whether there are exceptional reasons for which a student needs to be absent, however it is highly unlikely that any holiday would be considered to be an exceptional reason. The parents will receive a reply in writing either giving or not giving permission for the absence.

Where permission has not been given for absence the student's absence is 'unauthorised'

College refusal

Great Oaks College students are adults. If a student is refusing to attend their College Course they are communicating clearly their choice.

College staff will provide advice to students and their families or carers to maintain a College Placement and will refer to and liaise with relevant agencies able to work towards consistent college attendance.

If, despite all possible support having been provided, a student continues to refuse to attend it will be assumed that the student is expressing their preference not to continue a programme of study, and support will be provided to the family to seek an alternate provision.



Template 1

College Letterhead

Date.....

Dear Parent/Carer,

Name of young person.....

DOB

Attendance.....%

I am writing to you about your young person's college attendance. As I am sure you are aware regular attendance is important so that students can maximise their educational opportunities. I note from the college register; your young person's attendance is below 95%.

College will continue to monitor your young person's attendance and if there is no significant improvement further correspondence will follow.

Please contact the college office if you have any queries regarding this letter.

Yours faithfully

Head Teacher

Date.....

Dear Parent/Carer,

Name of young person.....

DOB.....

Attendance %.....

Further to my previous letter dated, I am writing to express my ongoing concerns regarding.....'s level of college attendance.

College are now setting a % attendance target which we will review on

College can only authorise an absence when medical evidence is provided. We do not expect a medical certificate from your GP, however the legal burden is with the parent to provide: a date stamped appointment card / appointment letter, a label from any prescribed medication for the absence to be authorised.

If your young person's attendance does not improve and absences are not authorised you will be invited to a college meeting. We may consider terminating the college placement if attendance does not improve.

Yours faithfully,

Head Teacher



Template 3

College Letterhead

Date.....

Dear Parent/Carer,

Name of young person.....

DOB.....

Attendance %.....

Further to my previous letters, I am writing to express my ongoing concerns regarding..... 's college attendance. I would therefore like to invite you to a meeting in college with Mr/Mrs.....onat.....

This meeting will give us an opportunity to discuss ways that we can support you in improving your young person's attendance. We are now considering terminating the college placement if attendance does not improve.

I would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance, however, if this appointment is not suitable please contact the college office to arrange an alternative time.

Yours faithfully,

Head Teacher