Learner Attendance Policy

Author	Assistant Principal – Learner Culture
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Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment	Y
Health and wellbeing implications considered	Y

Version	Date	Description	Amended/Reviewed by
1.0	15/03/2024	Learner Attendance Policy	Principal & CEO and Assistant Principal Learner Culture
2.0	21/01/26	Minor amendments have been made to clauses 1.iii, 3.iv, 3.v, 3.vi and 4.iv to correct typographical errors and improve clarity of wording. These amendments do not alter the scope, intent, or substantive content of the policy.	Assistant Principal Learner Culture

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1. Scope and purpose

i.   This policy has been developed as part of St David's College's commitment to realise the potential of all in our community, as encompassed in our mission:
"A Catholic College for the community seeking to discover and realise the full potential of all, in an atmosphere of love, service and respect inspired by Christ."

ii.   This policy seeks to support learners to achieve their full potential by encouraging their full participation in college life so they can progress successfully both academically and spiritually.

iii.   As a college, we are committed to removing barriers to learning and will work with learners to promote their inclusion in all that the college has to offer.

iv.   We recognise the profound impact of trauma and adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on individuals' wellbeing and development. We are committed to adopting a trauma-informed approach in our policies and practices to create a safe, supportive, and healing environment for all.

v.   The college follows the All-Wales Child Safeguarding Procedures in relation to specific and identifiable wellbeing issues that prevent learners from accessing their education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

vi.   This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:
- Learner Dignity Policy
- Attendance Procedure
- Fitness to Study Policy
- All-Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedure

2. General principles

i.   All learners are provided with a nurturing, caring, and safe environment by all college staff in line with St David's College's Catholic ethos. College staff ensure learners and themselves abide by the College Charter: Truth, Spirit, Service, Courage.

ii. All learners should take responsibility for their individual absence reporting and punctuality. Learners should understand the expectation that they work towards the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality, with 100% as an aspirational goal, and that they are respectful to staff and the college environment. Learners should understand the impact of non-attendance and poor punctuality through Induction Sessions and the Pastoral Reflection programme.

iii. All learners are provided with a timetable of teaching and learning sessions via the college's MIS system. Learners can access their attendance through the college's MIS system.

iv. Learners who do not contact the college prior to their absence will receive an automated email sent by the subject teacher of the lesson that is missed.

v.   Recurrent absences without contact with the college will result in contact being made by the college.

3. Promoting excellent attendance

i.   All learners are expected to attend all teaching and learning sessions. Learners are expected to arrive to lessons on time, stay for the duration and not leave during or before the end of the lesson.

ii. All learners agree to the College expectations, our standards and attendance expectations during induction. All subject hours are made clear to students at enrolment and induction. This includes attendance at Advanced Skills, Pastoral and Spiritual Reflection lessons.

iii. All learners, parents, and carers have access to attendance data on colleges MIS system. Attendance data is live and can be monitored by parents and carers. All queries regarding attendance should be raised with the Pastoral Tutor at the earliest opportunity.

iv. All absences are to be reported through the colleges MIS system or through contact with the learner's pastoral tutor. In the instance of being over 18, self-reporting is acceptable. Evidence of reasons for absence needs to be provided where possible (e.g., hospital letter etc.). Reasons for absence should be reported on the first day of absence.

v.   All absences should be reported by parent/guardian before 9:00am on the day of the absence.

vi.   Learners in receipt of EMA (Education Maintenance Allowance) will need to adhere to the expectations in this policy as well as their learner agreement. To receive EMA all learners must have their absences authorised with evidence passed to the pastoral tutor.

4. Absence management

i.   All staff monitor attendance of students and will take reasonable steps to seek to improve absence and lateness. Learners are automatically emailed by subject staff if their respective lesson is missed.

ii.   Where a learner is displaying a pattern of missed lessons, the attendance officer will contact the parent or guardian to discuss the issue and seek clarification.

iii.   Where a learner's attendance, lesson engagement, or pattern of missed lessons indicates a cause for concern, the pastoral tutor will contact the parent or guardian to discuss the issue and seek clarification.

iv.   Absences due to sickness of more than five continuous days, or three or more instances in any four-week period, will require evidence of medical support or evidence of seeking medical guidance. Where absences continue due to sickness, Pastoral Tutors will meet with the learner and their parent or guardian, where appropriate, to identify appropriate avenues of support.

v.   Continued unauthorised absence for 4 or more weeks without any contact with learner or next of kin will result in learner being withdrawn from college and a referral for a welfare check will be made.

vi.   Continued recurrent, unauthorised absences or lateness after staff communicate a concern to learner and/or next of kin could lead to a learner being asked to leave due to falling behind on curriculum or lack of engagement.

vii.   Where sickness absence is having a demonstrable impact on a learner's engagement or there is a continued absence of over 4 weeks or recurrent absence over a period of 4 weeks due to sickness, pastoral tutors will invite the learner and their parent or guardian to a Health and Additional Support meeting as outlined in the Fitness to Study policy, with the aim to provide appropriate support to improve attendance.

viii. If a learner is known to children's services, or the child protection register, is looked after or if the college is aware of any safeguarding issues, the College's Safeguarding Manager may take the appropriate action to determine the safety of the learner.

5. Supporting learners with low attendance

i. Where attendance issues are due to mitigating circumstances, learners are expected to communicate this with their pastoral tutors. Tutors can offer pastoral support through one-to-one sessions, wellbeing support and financial support through student services.

ii. Learners identified as having well-being, mental health or need additional learning support by a subject teacher or pastoral tutor will be supported via a Health and Additional Support Plan by the tutor after communication with guardian.

iii. The college may invoke its safeguarding procedures where there is continuous, unexplained absence or limited communication with the learner or parents or where the college is concerned the absence suggests the learner is not safe and at risk of harm.

6. Punctuality

i. 'Late' is defined as any duration of time after the indicated start time. All learners expected to arrive before the indicated start time and sustain 100% punctuality.

ii. When teachers note a pattern of lateness or repeated instances of lateness where learner engagement is impacted, a meeting will be arranged through the pastoral tutor and/or attendance officer and student to explore reasons for lateness with the aim or improving punctuality.

iii. All staff will record poor punctuality on colleges MIS system.

iv. Learners who are late are expected to join their lessons at the earliest opportunity, avoiding disruption of their teacher or other learners. They should discuss their lateness with their teacher at the appropriate time.

v. Learners should inform their teachers if they know they will be late in advance of their lesson.

vi. Learner that are late to lesson are dealt with using the college's Punctuality Protocol.

7. Roles and responsibilities

i. **Learners**

Are responsible for ensuring they attend all their timetabled lessons punctually and that they communicate effectively with the college any absence or lateness. They should monitor their own attendance through the colleges MIS System.

ii. **Parents / Guardians**

Are responsible for ensuring their child attends college punctually and communicates with college on matters relating to their absence. They are responsible for monitoring their child's attendance through the colleges MIS system. They are responsible for authorising any attendance through the colleges MIS system or the pastoral tutor.

iii. **Subject teachers**

Are responsible for completing lesson registers fully and accurately at the beginning of the lesson. Subject teachers are expected to review the attendance for their subject and make judgements on trends in data and undertake appropriate actions with learners, colleagues and parents where required. Subject teachers are to raise recurrent unauthorised attendances with the pastoral tutor to make contact home.

iv. **Pastoral tutors**

Are responsible for completing lesson registers fully and accurately at the beginning of the lesson. Pastoral tutors are expected to review the attendance for their learners across all of their subjects and make judgements on trends in data and undertake appropriate actions with learners, colleagues and parents where required. Where necessary, tutors are to arrange meeting with parents/guardians to discuss next steps.

v. **Learner Formation Lead and Deans**

Are responsible for the strategic management of attendance across the college. They will scrutinise the data on a weekly basis, monitor trends and patterns across cohort of learners, and evaluate interventions for their impact and effectiveness and direct resources for the best possible outcome. They will work with the pastoral tutors and attendance officer to ensure all absences are followed up. They will lead on meetings with serious attendance concerns or Fitness to Study meetings.

vi.   **Learning Area Leads**

Are responsible for the attendance in their areas and use reports to monitor attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis, follow up with relevant subject staff and report to the Deans.

vii.   **Student services manager**

Is responsible for administration of attendance data, as well as authorising any absence for any learner in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance.

viii.   **Attendance Officer (In-Day Partial)**

The In-Day Partial Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring lesson-by-lesson attendance across the College and addressing in-day partial absence or truancy. They will focus on early intervention through timely conversations with learners, building positive relationships, and reinforcing high expectations for attendance and punctuality. Where concerns persist, the Officer will contact parents/carers, escalate issues appropriately to the pastoral tutors where necessary.

ix.   **Senior Leadership Team**

Are responsible for providing strategic oversight and leadership of attendance across the college. SLT will ensure that robust policies, procedures and systems are in place to monitor attendance effectively and support early intervention. They will review attendance trends at whole-college level, ensure that appropriate resources are allocated, and hold curriculum and support areas accountable for maintaining high attendance standards. SLT will also report attendance performance to governors and ensure compliance with external requirements and funding expectations.

8. Attendance initiatives

i.   The college will work to raise the awareness of college attendance, promote good attendance and tackle unauthorised absence.

ii.   The college will undertake initiatives at the direction of the senior leadership team to promote good attendance and tackle poor punctuality.

iii.   The effectiveness of attendance initiatives will be monitored by Senior Leadership Team and reviewed as part of the college's quality assurance and self-evaluation processes.