Policy

November 2024

Attendance Policy

Including Managing Absences and Students Who Go Missing

This document relates to	
Shaftesbury Nash College	✓

Author: Martin Bentham
Directorate: Education

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1. General Principles

1.1 Basis for this Policy

At Shaftesbury Nash College we recognise that there are clear links between good attendance and students' progress and attainment. We also recognise the important link between good attendance and our safeguarding responsibilities. We are also very clear that punctuality and attendance are key to good life and employability skills. Therefore, we foster a culture where good attendance and punctuality across the college day is expected.

Attendance means being physically present at the Shaftesbury Nash College site or at another off-site location if timetabled to be elsewhere as part of their curriculum and learning.

1.2 Safeguarding

The general principle underpinning this policy is that Shaftesbury Nash College acts to ensure that it knows the whereabouts of all students who are registered as attending the college during college hours. We also recognise, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, that poor and unexplained absences can be an early safeguarding indicator and are alert to these so take appropriate action to safeguard and ensure the welfare of any students not attending without a properly authorised reason.

In terms of broader safeguarding, this policy supplements the College's other safeguarding policies and practices and should be read in conjunction with those documents as well as our Missing from Education and Absconding Policy.

2. Policy

2.1 Time Scales for Arrival and Registration at Nash College

- Attendance registers are taken twice a day: between 9.00-9.25am and again between 1.00-1.25pm.
- Arrival time at Nash College is between 8.45-9.00am.
- Students are expected to be at their timetabled location, such as their classroom between 9.00-9.15am for their morning tutorial.
- College staff, led by each class lecturer, will take the attendance register before 9.25am.
- Lecturers are expected to 'close' their class register at 9.25am and teaching to commence at 9.30am

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- Where amendments are needed to the daily attendance register, for example, where a student has not been present by 9.25am and so is marked as being absent but who then arrives at 10.00am, the lecturer must amend that student's register before 4.30pm that day, that is before the end of the College day.
- Afternoon registers are taken by following the same principles and the afternoon register will 'close' at 1.25pm each day.

2.2 Basic Principles

- We aim for and encourage 100% attendance for all students.
- However, we also recognise that there can be many barriers to attending: therefore, we have a benchmark of 85% attendance which we expect all students to achieve*.
- The College takes a daily register of all students' attendance.
- Any absence(s) on the registers will be followed up (see below).
- Any student who arrives late, after 9.15am, must report via Reception and the class lecturer will ensure the register is updated.
- Where a student regularly arrives late due to transport issues, the College will liaise with the relevant Local Authority or transporting personnel to rectify this issue.
- An agreed 'action plan' with appropriate interventions will be put in place for any student whose attendance falls below 85%: this plan may include parents, carers, College staff and/or external professionals from joint agencies.
- Many of our students are unable to maintain high levels of attendance, for example 85% or higher, due to their health and/or additional needs – where these absences are genuine we will not penalise students for their attendance levels.
- Parents and/or carers of all students are expected to sign up to these principles, including not booking holidays or day trips during term time.

*2.3 Students Whose Attendance Falls Below 85%

- Senior Leaders will review attendance on a weekly basis with particular attention to any student whose attendance is below 85%.
- An informal meeting/discussion will be arranged with the College Principal, or other Senior Leader as directed by the Principal, to understand issues surrounding attendance. The student, as well as their parents and/or carers, may be invited to this discussion to consider appropriate support.
- If attendance has not improved a further meeting will be arranged to ascertain difficulties with attendance and strategies to improve attendance.
- At every stage the College will actively consider and implement appropriate interventions aimed at supporting improved attendance.

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2.4 Authorising Absence from Nash College: Advice for Parents and Carers

- Holidays should not be taken in term time and will normally be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- However, we do recognise that there are sometimes exceptional and reasonable adjustments to this expectation and the College does make provision for parents to request an authorised absence (see Appendix A).
- Nevertheless, absences in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Any absences which collectively exceed 15 days per academic year may jeopardise the funded placement at Shaftesbury Nash College.
- The student or advocate should make any requests for absence in writing in advance to the College Principal.
- Permission to be absent is made entirely at the Head of College's discretion.

2.5 Unplanned / Unforeseen Student Absences

In the event of a student having an unplanned / unforeseen absence that does not have a properly authorised reason (e.g. a medical appointment), we will pursue the following procedure. The College will call:

- the legal parent or guardian listed on the College's contact details of that student to verify the reason for their absence. The College will verify the reason for their absence which will be recorded in the register accordingly.

- If the legal parent or guardian is not available or does not answer a phone call will be made to any other 'family contact' listed on that student's record (repeated attempts to make contact will also continue).

- If there is no response from any of the student's listed family contacts the College may contact any listed professional or other agency connected to that student such as Social Care.

- If contact can still not be made and the appropriate welfare check cannot be verified the College may consider conducting a home visit or requesting a safe and welfare check from the police.

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2.6 Roles and Responsibilities

Lecturers (Assistant Lecturers in the absence of the Lecturer)

Lecturers are to complete and save the register on the College's MIS system twice each day: the AM register for the morning session and the PM register for the afternoon session. Each register must be completed and saved at the earliest possible and practical time.

MIS / Data Manager

They will regularly check the registers have been completed and correctly coded for all students on-role for both daily sessions each College day and notify lecturers of any amendments required.

SLT (Deputy Heads of College)

They will discuss, with lecturers, any individual student attendance issues / unique cases requiring authorisation, and approve relevant exceptions whilst notifying the MIS / Data Manager of the same – via email.

They are also responsible for scrutinising student attendance records for those who have a current / historical attendance rate that falls below the College's minimum benchmark of 85%, liaising with the lecturer to discuss strategies to remedy the situation.

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Policy Ownership

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Attendance Policy	1.2

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Approved by	Signature	Date
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Appendix A: Student Holiday Request Form

Dear Parent/Carer

REQUEST FOR TERM TIME HOLIDAY LEAVE
To be completed in advance of the proposed holiday/absence from College

Research shows that non-attendance to education has a negative impact upon student progress and achievement.

We ask all parents/carers to avoid booking holidays during term-time; we do however recognise that some families prefer to take holidays during term times and that this happens for a variety of reasons. Therefore, this Request Form allows parents/carers to make requests for a student to be absent from college for a defined period and for a specific reason. This process allows us to monitor student attendance from a safeguarding point of view and to ensure that our registers accurately reflect any absences but also to plan staffing ratio in the classroom.

Please note: any absence requests pre-authorised by the Head of College will be marked on the College Registers as an **'Authorised Absences'.** Any absence requests taken during term time without a signed pre-authorisation request will be marked as **"Unauthorised".**

Parent to complete:

Name of Student:	Class/Lecturer:
Purpose of absence:	
Reason for absence during term time:	

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Proposed start date of absence:	Date of return:
Total number of days of absence being requested: (not including weekends & Bank Holidays)	------------ days
Signed: Print name:	Date:

Office to complete:

Number of days' absence requested:	
Percentage of attendance YTD	
Has holiday during term time been requested previously? If so, when?	
Absence Approved/Absence Not Approved (please circle)	
Head of College's reason for approval/reason for not approving absence Signed:	Date: