

WMSF SUPPORTING & RESPONDING TO ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

1.1 The core values of William Morris Sixth Form are to **learn, achieve, empower**. Crucial to all three is that students maintain good attendance over the course of their study programmes.

1.2 William Morris Sixth Form treats student attendance as a central aspect of Behaviour for Learning (BfL). The first expectation of behaviour for learning is that students attend all lessons punctually and maintain good attendance (96% or above) for the academic year, as it is understood that good attendance is necessary to support students' development socially, emotionally and cognitively. This policy is therefore informed by the same guiding principles that can be found in the WMSF Understanding, Supporting and Responding to Behaviour Policy.

1.3 William Morris Sixth Form adopts a whole-sixth form approach to supporting and responding to attendance. We recognise that good attendance is inseparable from safeguarding, the well-being of students/staff and all other aspects of learning. Therefore, if students are unable to maintain good attendance, supportive interventions are put in place to ensure our core values are upheld for those students willing to engage with us.

1.4 It is important however, to recognise that some students may not be willing or able to engage with the support on offer and therefore decisions must be made about the most appropriate course of action for the student involved. As a post-16 provider, students choose to take up a place with us, and are required to meet our expectations to maintain this place.

1.5 On occasion, students may not be able to maintain good attendance due to a medical condition or their fitness for study is under review. In such instances, reasonable adjustments surrounding attendance are put in place (see Fitness For Study Policy).

1.6 This policy aims to provide:

- staff, students and parents and carers with a clear set of expectations for attendance at WMSF;
- a clear framework for working with students, parents and carers and other staff members in order to support students to achieve these expectations;
- a series of interventions for reviewing, supporting and improving the attendance of students at WMSF;
- guidelines for students with persistent absenteeism which impacts their academic progress

1.7 Associated Policies, Procedures and Protocols:

- Understanding, Supporting and Responding to Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Fitness for Study Policy
- Bursary Policy

2. Scope

2.1 The Supporting & Responding to Attendance Policy applies predominantly to 16 – 19 year-old students who are funded via the Educational Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

2.2 Specific accountabilities of parties are:

- The Principal holds ultimate accountability to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all students
- The Vice Principals & Assistant Principals have responsibility to ensure that procedures and processes are in place to support good attendance and to improve attendance where it is below the expected levels so that students can be successful on their study programmes
- The Personal Development, Behaviour & Attitudes Leads, Curriculum Area Leaders, Subject Teachers and Personal Tutors and the Attendance Officer, have responsibility for applying processes and procedures associated with supporting good attendance
- The Attendance Panel, composed of those members of staff relevant to the attendance, safeguarding and well-being of students, have responsibility for applying processes and procedures associated with supporting good attendance and identifying solutions that are in the best interest of the student where there are concerns over the attendance of a student.

3. Supporting Good Attendance

3.1 William Morris Sixth Form expects students to achieve 96% attendance over the course of an academic year, which allows for students to have a reasonable amount of absence for illness, medical appointments, religious observance and progression activities such as educational visits.

3.2 Good attendance is supported via clear reporting procedures, transparent access to attendance data for students as well as parents/carers and timely interventions based on the available attendance data.

3.3 Accurate recording of attendance is necessary for the following reasons:

- It allows for robust safeguarding procedures to be followed
- Attendance recording is a legal requirement for all maintained schools.

- It enables us to act early to address patterns of absence to ensure students have good attendance in order to reach their full potential
- Parents/carers can be notified about the attendance of the young person in their care in order to support good attendance and outcomes.

3.4 It is the Tutor's and Subject Teacher's responsibility to record student attendance to lessons and the registration must be taken during the first 15 minutes of the lesson start time.

3.5 Tutors and Subject Teachers are required to input one of the following codes.

Code	Description	Additional information
/	Student is present	
L	Student is present, but was late to the lesson	Where a student is late, the minutes late are to be added.
N	Student is not present	

3.6 Students or parents/carers are required to notify the Attendance Officer of any planned absences in advance of the date by completing a planned absence form.

3.7 Students or parents/carers are required to notify the Attendance Officer of unplanned absences on the morning of the absence so that staff can be notified.

3.8 The following absence codes will be applied to the register by the Attendance Officer*:

Code	Description	Additional information
N	Unauthorised absence	This is applied when the Sixth Form has not been notified for the reason for absence, or the reason provided is not valid, such as routine doctors or dental appointments (these should be made during free periods).
I	Illness	Students are permitted to self-certify their illness, however absence for illness still counts within the 5% permitted absence for the year. Where there are persistent or sporadic illness patterns, parental/carers/doctor confirmation will be requested and students may be referred to the Fitness to Study Panel.
M	Medical/dental appointments (not routine GP/Dentist appointments)	Students are required to provide evidence in advance to the Attendance Officer via the planned absence form.

		Where there are persistent or sporadic appointment patterns, parental/carers/doctor confirmation will be requested and students may be referred to the Fitness to Study Panel.
C	Appointments for circumstances other than medical/dental, such as housing or social work appointments.	Students are required to provide evidence in advance to the Attendance Officer via the planned absence form.
R	Religious Observance	Students who have religious holidays outside of the Sixth Form holidays are permitted to have one day per holiday.
W	Work experience	The Attendance Officer is to be notified about any meaningful work experience in advance via the planned absence form (if arranged independently of the Sixth Form). Students are encouraged to arrange work experience during the holidays, however where this is not possible and has been agreed, this will not count against a student's attendance.
V	Educational visit, such as visits to universities or apprenticeship providers	The Attendance Officer is to be notified of educational visits via the planned absence form. These will not count against a student's attendance.
J	Interview (not related to progression)	The Attendance Officer is to be notified via the planned absence form.
Y	Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement	In such instances, a member of the Pastoral Team will contact home to ensure the well-being of the student.

*These codes represent the most common reasons for absence and are not an exhaustive list.

3.9 Parents/carers will be notified each time the young person in their care is absent from a lesson and/or the day where they have been registered with an N code (meaning no explanation for their absence has been provided or the reason provided is not valid).

3.10 Where students have been registered with an N code for two consecutive days, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carers to check on the welfare of the student and to promote the attendance expectations and procedures.

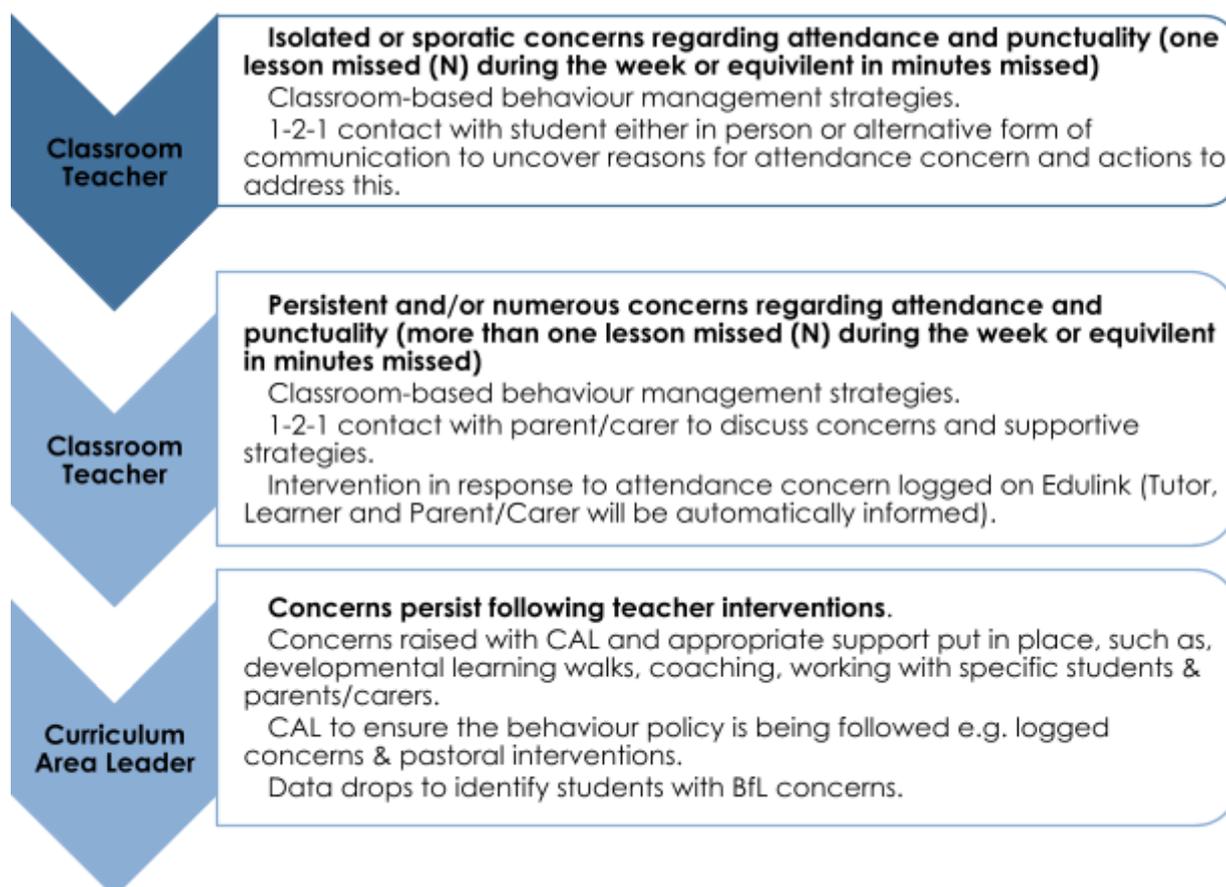
- 3.11 Bursary payments are linked to attendance, and are reviewed monthly (see Bursary Policy).
- 3.12 Calendared events throughout the year, including Learner Review Days and Parents'/Carers' Evenings are aimed at supporting good attendance.

4. Responding to attendance and punctuality concerns

4.1 William Morris Sixth Form adopts a whole-sixth form approach to understanding, supporting and improving attendance.

4.2 As part of the curriculum team, subject teachers are required to challenge absenteeism and poor punctuality to support students to improve their attendance in their subject area. Where attendance continues to be a concern, Curriculum Area Leaders are to support the Subject Teacher where appropriate.

The diagram below demonstrates how good attendance is supported via the curriculum team:



4.3 Where a student is absent for reasons such as occasional illness, medical appointments, religious observance and progression activities such as educational visits, it is expected that teaching colleagues and tutors work with students to ensure they are not disadvantaged.

4.4 It is reasonable for teaching colleagues, on a short-term temporary basis, to liaise with students via email and online platforms, however this is not a long-term solution and such cases will be dealt with via the Fitness to Study Policy.

4.5 Where attendance concerns require wider support due to declining or cumulatively poor attendance (below 90%), the Pastoral Team will be involved to respond accordingly.

Stage 1: Behaviour for Learning (Tutor)

The Tutor will work with the student to decide on appropriate, achievable targets for the student in the categories below:

Attendance – Attendance to lessons is to be improved to 96% and on time by [behavioural change that will enable them to achieve this] and this will be reviewed over the next 10 term time days.

Punctuality - Minutes late will be improved to ____ by [behavioural change that will enable them to achieve this] and this will be reviewed over the next 10 term time days.

When issuing a Stage 1: Behaviour for Learning, the following process is to be followed:

- The Tutor will phone parents/carers to inform them and then arrange a meeting with the student to discuss the reasons for not meeting the sixth form's expectations and strategies to address these.
- The Tutor will then send a Stage 1: Behaviour for Learning letter home informing them that the young person in their care is subject to a Stage 1: Behaviour for Learning and outlining the targets the student is required to meet during this period of improvement.
- The targets are to be reviewed 10 term time days later in a 1-2-1 meeting.
- If the student is on track to achieve their targets, a second review is to be scheduled to ensure the student continues to make improvements. If they are not on track, then the student is escalated to a Stage 2: Behaviour for Learning.
- If after two reviews all targets have been met satisfactorily then the case is a dormant concern.
- If concerns about the student's BfL arise again, they will be placed back on a 10 day review with their Tutor before being escalated to Stage 2, if necessary.

Stage 2: Behaviour for Learning (Tutor and parents/carers)

The Tutor will review the targets set in the Stage 1 meeting.

In addition, a **Behaviour for Learning agreement is signed by the student to say they understand the targets, the process and the potential consequences of not achieving set targets.** Any additional support via student services is to be put in place

A Stage 2 letter is sent home outlining the updated targets as a result of the student not being able to meet the targets set at Stage 1. Parents/carers will be asked to attend a Stage 2 meeting in person or via Google Meets. As above, targets are reviewed 10 term time days later.

If after two reviews all targets have been met satisfactorily then the case is a dormant concern. If a student does not meet their Stage 2 targets they will be referred to the Behaviour & Attitudes Lead to decide whether to escalate to Stage 3: Behaviour for Learning or whether to continue to review their progress.

If concerns about the student's BfL arise again, they will be placed back on to a 10 day review by their Personal Tutor..

Stage 3: Behaviour for Learning

Where a student is escalated to Stage 3, a behaviour panel reviews the situation and will adjudicate on the best course of action in the interests of the student concerned.

The Behaviour Panel will comprise a Vice or an Assistant Principal, the Behaviour & Attitude Lead, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), plus any other relevant member of staff as deemed appropriate from student services.

Based on all the available evidence, one of the following decisions will be made:

- To set final targets to be reviewed by the Behaviour & Attitudes Lead (as above)
- To refer to the Fitness to Study Panel due to issues impacting behaviour that relate to health/medical needs (if this has not been identified earlier)
- To conclude that the placement is no longer appropriate for the student and that they will be placed on a two week supported internal transition program to an appropriate route such as a Level 2/3 apprenticeship or supported internship.

If the Sixth Form reaches a decision, after consultation with the student and parents/carers (if applicable), that a student should withdraw then this will be actioned. In these situations, the Sixth Form would always assure students and their parents/carers that the best interests of the individual student and their welfare are at the centre of any decisions made.

5. Responding to persistent absenteeism

5.1 Where a student has chronic or persistent absenteeism their case will be referred directly to the Attendance Panel so that any underlying issues can be addressed as soon as

possible. Their case will be triaged to decide whether it is appropriate for the Staged process to be initiated/continued, or whether an alternative course of action is necessary.

5.2 Parents/Carers will routinely be notified that the young person in their care has persistent absenteeism.

5.3 Students with persistent absence are required to sign an Attendance Agreement for Persistent Absenteeism and where no improvement is made, parents/carers will also be required to sign an agreement.

5.4 Students with persistent absenteeism that is below 80%, where there is no justifiable reason, may have their study programme amended or may not be entered for their qualifications due to having missed significant amounts of learning.

5.5 Where persistent absence is a result of issues around a student's fitness for study, specific support and reasonable adjustments will be put in place.

5.6 Where a student misses 21 sixth form days consecutively, then in line with statutory guidance, they will be removed from their study programme.

5.7 Where a student's attendance impacts their ability to progress within or beyond the sixth form they will be referred to the Careers Team so they can be supported onto a suitable pathway.

6. Key Documents

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073591/School_attendance_guidance_May-2022.pdf

Responsible Staff	Mary Berrisford / Julia Brown
Approving body	Governors
Review date	June 2023
<i>All policies are available to stakeholders either on the Sixth Form website or upon request from the Sixth Form Office.</i>	

