

# IVYBRIDGE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## ATTENDANCE POLICY 2020/21

<b>Context</b>	
Contents of this policy have been developed in consultation with parents/carers, staff and students of Ivybridge Community College and pays due regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attendance</li></ul>	
<b>Governor responsible:</b>	Michael Saltern, Chair of Governors
<b>Principal:</b>	Rachel Hutchinson
<b>Assistant Principal:</b>	Amy Pearce (APC)
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<b>This policy will be reviewed annually by:</b> 20 September 2020	
<b>Ratified by the Ivybridge Community College Governing Board on 11 August 2020</b>	<b>Signed on behalf of the Governing Board</b>  ..... <b>Michael Saltern, Chair of Governors</b>

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### **Mission Statement**

"Ivybridge Community College aims to provide an integrated, comprehensive curriculum in an environment where the whole learning experience is one of opportunity, endeavour, achievement and excellence."

### **Rationale**

It is the belief of this College that all students should aim for 100% attendance. Attendance is vital if students are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities on offer to them; poor or intermittent attendance can only lead to educational disadvantage and so hamper a student's achievement. A clear policy of action and rewards can only be of benefit to the College and individual students who may otherwise become "at risk".

### **Purposes**

- To promote outstanding attendance.
- To ensure punctuality is a priority for all.
- To ensure and reinforce regular College attendance.
- To minimise educational disadvantage through infrequent attendance.
- To conform to and strengthen legal attendance requirements.
- To restrict anti-social and negative activities caused by truancy.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and College.

### **The Senior Leadership Team will:**

- be responsible for monitoring consistency in registration procedures.
- be responsible for ensuring that all staff are trained to use the electronic registration system.
- be responsible for disseminating attendance data to Governors.
- work with the DDSL to analyse data by vulnerability factors, absence categories, classes and Year Group and to relate attendance data with attainment data.
- regularly review attendance data and procedural issues and have a written plan of action to improve attendance included in the College Improvement Plan.
- work with the DDSL to develop strategies to deal with issues that arise through consultations with staff or data analysis.

### **The Assistant Principal in charge of Attendance, Senior Leadership, DDSL, Academic Performance Leaders, Pastoral Leaders and DDSL will:**

- carry out initial enquiries/intervention prior to referral to other agencies or members of school staff.
- be familiar with the Attendance Officer's referral and recording system.
- gather and record relevant information to assist completion of Attendance Team referrals.
- respond to lateness by speaking to both students and parents.
- discuss attendance issues in DDSL/Pastoral Staff Meetings and in relevant staff meetings.

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#### **Guidelines for Staff**

To raise the profile of attendance and punctuality to College staff/governors we will:

- Relate attendance issues directly to the values, ethos and curriculum of the College.
- Provide information regarding attendance to staff and on the College website.
- Provide inset for appointed/promoted staff/new Tutors.
- Produce annual reports to Governors.
- Discuss attendance issues in Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)/Pastoral Staff Meetings and in relevant staff meetings.
- Share attendance figures regularly with staff.
- Communicate any student attendance concerns with the pastoral teams.

#### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

To ensure that parents/carers are aware of College attendance procedures and their parental responsibility for their child's attendance and punctuality, College staff will:

- Give information on attendance and punctuality on the website.
- Involve parents from the earliest stage of poor attendance.
- Make phone contact via the tutor (pastoral wellbeing check), using designated College staff and/or Truancy Call on the first day of absence if contact has not been made by parents and therefore reasons for non-attendance remain unknown.
- Encourage all parents into College (via appointments).
- Include parents in reintegration plans.
- Make full use of computer-generated letters regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Promote the expectation of attendance via letters/postcards and phone calls.
- Implement the Traffic Light System for attendance.
- Celebrate 100% attendance termly.

To ensure that students are aware of the importance of good attendance and punctuality the College staff will:

- Establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality.
- Relate attendance issues directly to the values, ethos and curriculum of the College.
- Record 'lates' to College and 'lates' to lessons.
- Include students in reintegration plans.
- Highlight attendance in assemblies.
- Not allow students off-site for lunchtimes without a lunch pass produced in liaison with our Community Police.

#### **Communication with students**

Tutors and Pastoral Leaders are responsible for the promotion of high standards of achievement. This is done through regularly monitoring indicators of student progress such as attendance. They complete termly 'informed conversations' with students where targets are set and reviewed and punctuality and attendance discussed.

Rewards are issued for termly attendance. **Lates to College and lates to lessons are recorded by staff and demerits are issued on epraise as a consequence.**

Staff should be aware of issues that may impact on a student's attendance such as low self-esteem or other personal issues and refer/discuss appropriate actions with the most relevant member of the Pastoral Team or Student Service.

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### **Understanding Types of Absence for Staff and Parents**

Every half-day absence from College has to be classified as either Authorised or Unauthorised by the Principal (not by parents). This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from College for a good reason such as illness or medical appointments which unavoidably fall in College time.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the College does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Absence codes are entered in line with statutory guidance. As a College, we will not authorise holidays during term time and fixed penalty notices may apply.

### **Absence Procedures**

When a student is absent parents/carers must contact the College on the first day of absence on the **Absence Line 01752 891777** and any consecutive day of absence. The College must be notified of any planned absences using the S2 Absence Request Form (available on the College website, Student Reception and Pastoral Offices).

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the College, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them for attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

If a child is absent on the first day of absence, we will;

- mark the absence as unauthorised in the first instance if no reason for absence has been given.
- telephone on the first day of absence if we have not received a reason.
- send a truancy call letter highlighting that we have not had any reason for absence.
- the DDSL will monitor those students where no contact has been made.

### **Leave in term time**

Students should not take holidays or seek leave of absence in term-time. Any requests need to be made in advance on the S2 Absence Request Form (available from the College website, Student Reception or Pastoral Offices). Please note that only the College has the right to authorise absence.

Leave in term-time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking their children away during term time.

Remember that any savings that could be made by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to a child's education. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in term time to go on holiday.

In making a decision, the College will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

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Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the College, or in excess of that agreement, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

College term dates are as advertised on our website. Parents are notified of any modifications by newsletter at various points in the year.

#### **Telephone Numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents, including for absence, so we need to have current contact numbers at all times. Parents must provide the College with up-to-date numbers for at least two contacts.

#### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If students are late at the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their Tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

#### **How we manage lateness:**

- The College day starts at 8.50am and we expect students to be in registration at that time.
- Afternoon registration is at the start of Block 4.
- Morning registers are marked at 8.55am and students will receive a late mark if they are not in registration by that time.
- Lateness to College will result in a de-merit being issued.
- If a student is late into registration before 9.10am, they must report to their Tutor. After 9.10am they must report to Student Reception where they will be issued a de-merit. Any concerns must be raised by the student with the Pastoral Leader.
- Repeated lateness to College will be followed up by Pastoral Leaders/DDSL/Senior Leadership Team in line with the Attendance procedures and College Code of Conduct. If students are persistently late, parents will be asked to meet with the Pastoral Team and DDSL to resolve the problem. Parents can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to College on time.

#### **Frequent Absence**

If a child is frequently absent we will:

- contact parents and students to see if support can be given to deal with any issues causing absence;
- invite parents in to discuss the situation with their Pastoral Leader/DDSL if absences persist;
- refer the matter to the DDSL if attendance moves below 94%;
- ask for further medical information and possibly medical evidence if illness is given as a reason for absence on a regular basis;
- Refer the absence to the Education Welfare Officer for legal follow up.

#### **Traffic Light System**

Ivybridge Community College operates a 'Traffic Light System' to make parents and students aware of the implications of poor attendance. We consider that students who have over 96% attendance to be attending well and in our green zone. Those who fall below 96% down to 94% have attendance that requires monitoring and are in the amber category. Those students with below 94% attendance are likely to have serious

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implications on their education and will be referred to the Local Authority. These students are in the red category and will be internally monitored. Parents of those students failing to achieve above 94% will be invited to discuss this. Should improvements not be forthcoming then the Education Welfare Officer will be informed, and legal sanctions are likely to commence.

#### **Persistent Absentee (PA)**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling for whatever reason. Absence at this level does considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absentee mark, or is at risk of moving towards that level, is given priority and parents will be informed by letter from the DDSL.

Persistent absentee students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All persistent absentee cases and those at risk of becoming persistent absentees are automatically made known to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

#### **Daily Procedures**

- The taking of the register is an integral and key part of the College day and should be seen as such by all parts of the College community.
- SIMs registration will be taken by tutors each morning and this is followed by block by block registration for each lesson.
- Registration in the Sixth Form sector is the same as for Years 7 to 11.
- Any student that is marked present and is then reported missing from a lesson will be followed up immediately by following the College Missing Student Protocol. The use of SIMs Lesson Monitor will build a complete record of each student's attendance as well as enabling longer-term analysis and absence management.
- All absences must be encoded, and unauthorised absence followed up.
- The system will facilitate the Safeguarding Team, Education Welfare Officer, Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL), Assistant Principal, Pastoral Leader and Tutors to investigate attendance concerns and take prompt and appropriate action.
- Student lateness will be monitored as well as absence to ensure efficient educational delivery; all problems being reported to the Tutor/Pastoral Leader and passed on to the DDSL.
- All students leaving the College site must sign out and back in again on their return. All notes in Kite Booklets must be signed by Tutor, Pastoral Leader or member of Senior Leadership Team. All Tutors must alert students to this procedure.
- Students who arrive after registration classes must sign in at Student Reception. This information is entered into SIMs straight away by Millennium Reception staff.
- Spot checks will be made to check on:
  - i) Internal truancy
  - ii) Absconders
  - iii) Attendance procedures

#### **Detailed guidelines for Registration procedures**

1. Registration must always be a formal occasion with students seated on chairs and quietly attentive. Registers are legal documents and it is essential that they are marked and kept accurately. Assistant Principals, Pastoral Leader and the DDSL check records regularly.

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2. Daily Bulletins are read each morning. Where a Tutor is absent, the Pastoral Leader will arrange cover for the group. New staff will have the registration and attendance procedures explained to them as part of their Induction Programme.
3. All students signing in late at Student Reception for any reason will be entered into SIMs straight away and a de-merit issued on epraise.
4. Parents have been asked to contact the College via the dedicated College Absence Reporting line if their child is absent and such notification, during or after the absence, should be noted in the Kite Booklet. A note should support telephoned messages from parents, preferably in the Kite Booklet. This may be entered into SIMs by the Tutor.
5. Should no contact be made by parents on the first day of absence, Tutors and Pastoral Lead are then responsible for any follow up action needed in the first instance. If a student brings information about a future absence, this should be either entered onto SIMs, emailed or passed on to the DDSL for entry on to the main Attendance System. This is to avoid any unnecessary calls.
6. Tutors should follow up all discrepancies with the student, other members of staff, parents or Pastoral Leader. When a note is not received from a parent, one is required in the Kite Booklet.
7. Staff will receive any un-cleared absences from the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis for clearing.
8. SIMs should be saved immediately after a register is taken at the beginning of each lesson. If it is suspected that a student is truanting the Missing Student Protocol should be immediately followed.
9. If there is no parental communication to report an absence the Attendance Officer will send calls home and this may be followed up by a call from the Tutor, Pastoral Leader, Academic Performance Leader, DDSL. For any high-risk student a call will be made immediately.
10. When a student needs to be off premises during the day, he or she should bring a note from his/her parents, which the Tutor, Pastoral Leader or Assistant Pastoral Leader should initial. The note may be written in the Kite Booklet. This note should then be shown to staff in Student Reception as the student signs out on leaving College. The student also signs in on his/her return. If a note or telephone call is not received from the parents, then students must not leave the College.
11. The S2 Request for Leave of Absence form must be completed in advance of any longer periods of absence. We will not authorise absences for holidays unless the reason is unequivocally "exceptional". Exceptional will only refer to your family and set of circumstances and may not refer to cost, convenience or arrangements with others. The S2 Request for Leave of Absence form may be found on the College website or collected from Student Reception or Pastoral Offices.

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12. Lunch passes may be applied for by collecting a letter from the DDSL. Lunch passes are issued to students with 96% attendance or above. Lunch passes are only granted if a student will be met by a parent or relative who takes full responsibility for him/her once he/she leaves the College Site. This cannot be an ad-hoc process and parents must choose if they wish the student to return home or not.

#### **Office Procedures:**

There are some office procedures of which you should be aware:

In exceptional circumstances, a Tutor or Pastoral Leader may have to tell the DDSL that permission cannot be granted and the absence will remain unauthorised, but an Assistant Principal with oversight for attendance must sanction this action.

Pastoral Leaders will regularly discuss particular student attendance problems with the Assistant Principal, DDSL and Attendance Officer.

The Assistant Principal with responsibility for Attendance will oversee registration and will liaise with Pastoral Leaders, Academic Performance Leaders, Attendance Officer and, DDSL over particular problems.

The Assistant Principal overseeing attendance and the DDSL will liaise with members of staff to ensure that students are given the opportunity to catch up and reconnect with their work.

Information about trips, visits, or other foreseeable absences must be passed to the Attendance Office, Student Reception, the DDSL and to the relevant Pastoral Leader. Students should also record these events in their Kite Booklets and get them countersigned by supervising staff so that parents and Tutors can acknowledge them. The trips can be front loaded as they have to be reported on the following morning. Pastoral Leader will inform Tutors and the DDSL of all such information passed to them.

#### **Registration using SIMs**

- Morning registration is by Tutor Group.
- Afternoon registration is by Academic Group.

**Please mark the register as follows:**

**Every lesson must be marked on** your SIMs register at the beginning of each block.

**To take someone else's register** you will need to;

In SIMS go to Focus – Lesson monitor- take register.

- select the binocular icon and change to the person you want to be.
- double-click on the lesson or Tutor block concerned.
- mark the register and **save**.

**Other Registers:** You will be expected to maintain your normal lesson-by-lesson register as outlined in the Staff Handbook.

**Register Codes:**

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- / Present at morning registration
- \ Present during the afternoon
- 0 Unauthorised Absence.
- L Late before the register is closed i.e. arrives before 9.05am and has not been required to sign in at the Office
- U Late after the register has closed. This counts as an unauthorised absence and will therefore normally be cleared with another code
- B Students educated off-site. Students being educated off-site
- C Other circumstances
- D Dual Registration (ie present at another school or PRU – not counted in possible attendances)
- E Excluded. Use only for a formal exclusion. Ask your Pastoral Leader for exact details of the period of exclusion. (**Note: ONLY** to be used by the Attendance Office Staff)
- H Family holiday for which permission has been granted in exceptional circumstances in exceptional circumstances. S2 Absence Request Form is available from the College website, Student Reception or Pastoral Offices.
- I Illness (NOT medical or dental)
- J Interview (approved education activity)
- K Educated onsite but not in a lesson
- M Medical. A stay in hospital or a medical/dental appointment. For parental-certified sickness use code C
- P Approved sports events
- R Religious observance
- S Study leave
- V Educational visits - field trips, etc. A note should be entered in the Kite Booklet by the student and initialled by the supervising staff
- W Work experience for Year 10, Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 only

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#### Other codes used by the computer:

#	Holiday for all
Z	Not part of the school year
X	Only staff should attend
Y	Enforced closure
-	All should attend
!	No attendance required.
*	Not on roll

**Truancy Checks:** From time to time you will be asked to make attendance returns for specified blocks. This must be returned to the Attendance Office promptly for checking.

#### Sixth Form Attendance

Students are expected to attend Tutor Block and all lessons.

An orange absence form should be used by the students to authorise foreseen absence (forms available from outside the Sixth Form Office in the Sixth Form Common Room).

For unforeseen absences, such as illness, a parent should telephone the College absence line in the morning and telephone in on every morning of consecutive absence.

If students are absent from College unexpectedly, an automated call is sent home to establish why the student is absent.

Each fortnight, Tutors are provided with a report of student attendance for the previous fortnight. If students have had 8 blocks or more of Unauthorised Absences in a fortnight (this includes Tutor Block and study blocks) – this equates to roughly 20% of their lessons, they are identified by their Tutor.

The Tutor discusses with the student to ascertain whether they have a *reason* for these absences which can be reported back and updated or whether the student needs to go on to an Attendance Log.

If the student does not need to go on a log, the Tutor should remind students of the protocol when they are absent from College.

If the student does need a log:

- Stage 1: Attendance log to Tutor for 2 weeks.
- Stage 2: Attendance log to Pastoral Leader for 2 weeks.
- Stage 3: Attendance log to Personal Development and Welfare Leader for 2 weeks.
- Stage 4: Formal warning for failing to meet College expectations.

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Each attendance log will generate a letter home to parents to keep them informed. Sheets should be returned to the Pastoral Leader each week who will update the KS5 Office with any register updates required. Logs also available from the Pastoral Leader.

Teaching staff are responsible for monitoring lesson absence, and they should challenge students over individual unexplained absences. Any students missing from a lesson but who have been in College earlier in the day, the Missing Student Protocol should be followed.

If students are not attending lessons, this should be logged using De-merits. First occurrence leads to a discussion with teacher, second occurrence leads to discussion with teacher and parents being informed. A third occurrence would lead to involvement from the HoD, a CFC6 being completed and student referred to Personal Development and Welfare Leader. Failure to attend lessons will then lead to an Attendance Log monitored by the Personal Development and Welfare Leader and Formal Warnings if this is failed.

Persistent absence issues will lead to Formal Warnings being issued and after three Formal Warnings, this may result in a student being taken off roll.

Students are permitted to sign in and out of College during the College day if they do not have a timetabled lesson. This must be done via the automated machine in the Sixth Form area using their ID card.

#### **Targets**

The College has targets to improve attendance, parents and students have an important part to play in meeting these targets. Targets for the College are displayed in Tutor Groups and students should take time to study them.

#### **The attendance target for Ivybridge Community College is 96%.**

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our students can be amongst the best.

Through the College year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided and we ask for your full support.

#### **Summary**

The College has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a legal responsibility to make sure that their children attend College regularly. All College staff are committed to working with parents and students to ensure the highest level of attendance possible.