



# MEPA COLLEGE

## ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Providing a student experience of the highest possible quality is something that MEPA College takes very seriously. Promoting and encouraging student engagement with all aspects of their learning experience is a key aspect of this, and it is vital that all students at MEPA College attend all their timetabled sessions, unless absence is unavoidable, to gain the greatest benefit from their education and training.

This policy has been developed as part of MEPA College's overall Student Attendance & Engagement Strategy which aims to provide a supportive learning environment of which student attendance is one aspect of overall engagement.

MEPA College monitors the attendance of students at timetabled teaching sessions for the following reasons:

- a) To aid the retention of students by allowing early identification of those students at risk and allow timely interventions to be made in terms of academic and pastoral support
- b) To enable notifications of withdrawals/suspension to be made on time so that external stakeholders, (e.g. CDMT, OFSTED) are informed in a timely manner.

## **SENIOR LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITY**

Emma Finch – Senior Management – [LMuir@mepatraining.com](mailto:LMuir@mepatraining.com)

## **ATTENDANCE PRINCIPLES**

- All schools/colleges seek to ensure that all pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential.
- MEPA College will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of MEPA College community feels wanted and secure.
- All staff will work with pupils /students and their families to ensure each pupil / students attends college regularly and punctually.
- MEPA College will challenge the behaviour of those pupils / students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- To meet these objectives, MEPA College will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, students, parents/carers, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice, and support.

MEPA College is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils/ students. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils /students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

The principal and staff, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at MEPA College.

## **AIMS**

- MEPA College aims to promote, among parents and children, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance to establish a routine for life.
- Parents / College students are advised of the school's expectations during the induction meetings for new pupils / students.

## TARGETS

MEPA College attendance target is 95% because we recognise that good attendance is imperative to academic, college, social and personal success, we have set an ambitious, but realistic target and any attendance below that will incur a level of intervention to support pupils and families.

## PARENTAL/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

### Students over 16 years old

Students over the age of 16 have a contractual obligation as part of their study programme and funding to attend school/college regularly and arrive on time.

### Reporting an absence

The following lines of communication can be used to report absence: Telephone: 01622 756644 to report absence. This option is available at any time, day or night. A message should be left stating the pupil's / students name, year group, name of caller and reason for absence, alternatively an email can be sent to [reception@mepatraining.com](mailto:reception@mepatraining.com) This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know that your child is safe. We require a call daily to confirm you or your child's absence and to ensure their safety.

### Medical Absences/Certificates

If a student is away for 5 or more consecutive days, a medical certificate must be provided to reception, upon their return. Students who have been absent from school/college for a long period due to illness or an injury, must arrange to meet the Principal, and/or SMT upon their return and prior to restarting a full timetable. In this meeting, the college will assess the student and may also suggest they see the Physiotherapist or Welfare Officer to inform them whether they are able to participate in full physical activities.

### Medical Sign Off

If a student is 'signed off' from College by the Physiotherapist, they will inform both the student and the relevant staff of the length of time the student has been signed off for. If a student would prefer to use an outside physiotherapist, they must provide documentation of the injury and the time they have been signed off for.

Should the student remain absent beyond the date agreed with the Physiotherapist, the student must email or telephone reception at [reception@mepatraining.com](mailto:reception@mepatraining.com) or 01622 756644 before 09.00am on each of the subsequent days they will be absent.

## THE ROLE OF MEPA COLLEGE STAFF

At MEPA College there is a whole organisation responsibility to oversee attendance. Class teachers are expected to complete a register within the first 10 minutes of each lesson throughout MEPA College day and update the register to show any late arrivals to the lesson after the register has been taken.

## INCORRECTLY RECORDED REGISTRATION MARKS

If a student has been marked present in a class incorrectly, vice versa, or the register has not been updated to show late arrivals to the lesson, the class teacher will be held to account.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence by text if students are 18 or over they will be contacted directly, followed by a phone call if no reason has been provided by the afternoon registration.

- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents / students requesting reasons for absence. If no reason for absence has been provided within 2 weeks of sending the letter, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)

It is the responsibility of the Senior Management Team to ensure:

- Absence trends are identified, including sibling patterns.
- Relevant staff are made aware of any issues affecting student's attendance, providing it is appropriate to do so. Confidential Information provided by parents/carers and students will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.
- Persistent Absentees are identified, and contact is made with parents/carers via telephone and meetings.
- Sign posting families to relevant agencies for support.
- Relevant referrals are made for attendance concerns where all other avenues of support have been exhausted.

## **PROCEDURE FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

### **PROCESS FOR STUDENT ON BTEC PERFORMING ARTS COURSE AND THE FULL TIME DIPLOMA COURSE**

Each pupil is expected to achieve at least 95% attendance whilst on roll at MEPA College. We aim to achieve a whole College attendance percentage of 95% by the end of each academic year.

- 95% to 91% Attendance – continuous monitoring will be conducted by the Attendance Officer. Letter 1 will be sent to parent. An informal discussion will be held to see why the student's attendance is dropping and how we can support them.
- 90% to 86% Attendance - continuous monitoring will be conducted by the Attendance Officer and meeting request with parents will take place. Letter 2 will be sent to parent. This will also start of effect the performance opportunities students are given throughout the term. Students on discounts / scholarships could be revoked (see scholarship agreement)
- 85% to 81% Attendance - continuous monitoring will be conducted by the Attendance Officer and meeting request with parents will take place with notice that a Penalty Notice will take place if attendance does not improve. Letter 3 will be sent to parent. Students will be removed from performances / events. Students on discounts / scholarships could be revoked (see scholarship agreement)
- 80% or below Attendance – a penalty notice will be requested; students will be removed from all performances until attendance improves. This is highly likely to affect the student's final grade and students on the full-time diploma program could have their tuition terminated.

Students 18 and above and on the full-time diploma program will be contacted directly and not through their parents.

## **CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION**

A student will not be removed from MEPA College roll without consultation between the Senior Management Team and the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate.

## LATENESS

MEPA College opens the doors to pupils at 8:00am, should they wish to arrive early.

Persistent Lateness is tracked and monitored carefully by members of the Management Team. When patterns of lateness have been identified by members of the Management Team, students will be asked to attend a meeting with the Principal, and/or Vice Principal to discuss strategies and to set targets to improve their punctuality. Students who fail to demonstrate an improvement will be subject to disciplinary action.

College students are expected to arrive in time for a 8:30am start. All students that arrive late must report to reception/class teacher where they will be signed in. Morning registers close at 8:45am. The student will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). Regular lateness to college will be addressed by Senior Management. A letter to be sent home for 95% or less days lateness.

## AUTHORISING ABSENCE

Absence is not normally allowed for any reason other than medical or serious personal reasons (e.g. family bereavement).

Only the Senior Management Team can authorise absence using a consistent approach. **The Senior Management Team is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence.** If absences are not authorised, parents/carers will be notified. MEPA College follow the guidelines for absence as stated in the Department of Health and NHS guidelines for school/college attendance and illness and would encourage parents/carers to do the same.

Long-term medical conditions need to be reviewed and monitored with evidence (either a letter from a consultant doctor or photocopy of medical prescriptions) where appropriate. Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between parents/carers and the college.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised. The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Absence if a parent/carer is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over term dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays
- Car broken down

If a student has a medical appointment, the student must email proof of the appointment to [reception@mepatraining.com](mailto:reception@mepatraining.com)

Students/parents should make every effort to arrange medical appointments at the beginning or end of the day or during free periods to avoid major disruption to their lessons. If it is only possible to get a medical appointment during class time, students should inform the Academy/College BEFORE the event otherwise the absence will not be authorised.

Students should also consider the Assessment / Rehearsal / Performance Schedule when booking time off. Students can only miss an assessment if they qualify for 'extenuating circumstances'. Please note that requests to attend Weddings, Birthdays and other Special Occasions will not be considered as Authorised Absence, and attendance of such events will have a negative impact on your attendance percentage.

Students who have met with the Principal or Vice Principal and have subsequently been granted authorised absence for a specific length of time, will still need to email in the details to [reception@mepatraining.com](mailto:reception@mepatraining.com). Please note an absence not notified is recorded as an unauthorised attendance.

## **NEW PUPIL**

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, this will be addressed during the Pre-admission meeting.

## **STUDENTS IN RECEIPT OF FUNDING**

Students in receipt of funding / scholarships from the college, please note that your continued receipt of funding is conditional on satisfactory attendance of classes as well as appropriate behaviour at the College and progression in your studies. Students who fail to meet these conditions may have their funding / scholarship support withdrawn by the College, in accordance with the scholarship / discount agreement.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE/HOLIDAY**

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Senior Managements ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school/college unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (MEPA College has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport in law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Senior Management may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances", but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Senior Management Team, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits, and the Senior Managements decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

### **Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with college holidays.
- Where an absence from college is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of an immediate member of the family.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when MEPA College is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable, and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Senior Management Team can agree on the absence of a student in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Parents/Carers are requested to submit requests for leave of absence/holidays during term time to the Senior Management Team. The Senior Management Team will then respond in writing with their decision to authorise or unauthorised absence.

Holidays during term time will be recorded as unauthorised and could lead to a penalty notice being issued.

## **STUDENTS UNWELL DURING TRAINING TIME**

If a student becomes unwell during MEPA College day they will be escorted to the medical department. We will make every effort to keep the student in college, whilst ensuring they are monitored, and it is safe to do so.

If the student is under 18, Parents/Carers will be contacted via telephone to explain the ailment and what measures have been taken to address this. If the student is too unwell to stay in college, parents will be asked to come to MEPA College to collect their child to take them home – or state if they are happy for the them to travel home. This supports MEPA College’s safeguarding procedures.

If Parents/Carers are unsure whether the illness constitutes a day’s absence, they will need to telephone MEPA College for advice. If parent/carers are aware their child may be unwell, but have decided to send them to college, they should contact MEPA College so we can alert the relevant staff to closely monitor the pupil throughout the day. Should their condition deteriorate further, we will contact the parent/carers to advise you of the situation.

## **ATTENDING OPEN AUDITIONS AND AGENT MEETINGS (YEAR THREE STUDENTS ONLY)**

Students wishing to attend Open, and Agency Auditions must email details of the audition and job details to [reception@mepatraining.com](mailto:reception@mepatraining.com) with the relevant times. Any requests received less than 48 hours prior to the audition will not be authorised. Registers will be marked as positive if you follow the procedures above.

Please also note we will be doing spot checks on the following:

- Agent Meetings (Agents may be contacted to confirm meetings)
- Open Auditions (Open auditions may be visited/contacted to confirm attendance)

Adherence to these procedures is extremely important and failure to do so can cause unnecessary additional work for the Academy/College. Abuse of these systems and procedures will lead to disciplinary action.

## **ATTENDANCE CODES**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Description</b>
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Education off site (no Dual reg)
C	Exceptional circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
I	Illness

J1	Interview
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Abs
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
#	School closed to pupils & staff
Y	Enforced closure
	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access
Q	arrangements
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on roll
-	All should attend/No mark recorded
C1	Absence - Performing / Undertaking regulated employment
C2	Part Time Timetable
Y1	Transport Issues
Y2	Travel Disruption
Y3	Part of School Premise Closed
Y4	School Unexpected Closure
Y5	Pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

## APPENDIX 1 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 1

Date

Dear

### **RE: (child name) Class/year group – Letter 1 Attendance Concern**

I am writing with concern regarding (child name)'s attendance to school. We aspire for all students to have a 100% attendance. Currently (child name)'s attendance is XXX. This letter is automatically triggered as part of our Attendance policy when a student's attendance falls below 95%.

As each family's circumstances are different, we want to work with parents to provide the best education for every child. Pupil welfare and wellbeing are really important to us at [MEPA College](#), and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for students to experience a sense of belonging, success and fulfilment.

We will continue to support (child name)'s education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence. Over the next couple of months, we will continue to monitor (child name)'s attendance.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss anything further, please do not hesitate to get in touch via email at [lmuir@mepatraining.com](mailto:lmuir@mepatraining.com)

Best wishes,

Emma Finch  
Vice Principal

## APPENDIX 2 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 2

Date

Dear

### RE: (child name) Class/year group – Letter 2 Attendance Concern

I am writing with concern regarding (child name)'s attendance to school. We aspire for all students to have a 100% attendance. Currently (child name)'s attendance is XXX. This letter is automatically triggered as part of our Attendance policy when a student's attendance falls below 90%.

We want to continue supporting (child name)'s education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence. We are requesting yourself as the parent/carer of child name, and child name meet with myself to look at how we can best support child name increasing their attendance at MEPA College.

#### **Proposed Date and Time**

Below is the proposed date and time of the parental meeting regarding (child name)'s attendance.

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:** Earl House, 27-29 Earl Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1PF

Please could you confirm your attendance to this meeting by emailing [lmuir@mepatraining.com](mailto:lmuir@mepatraining.com). If you are unable to attend the proposed date and time, please email with an alternative date and time suggestion.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Emma Finch  
Vice Principal

## APPENDIX 3 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 3

Date

Dear

### RE: (child name) Class/year group – Letter 3 Attendance Concern

I am writing with concern regarding (child name)'s attendance to school. We aspire for all students to have a 100% attendance. Currently (child name)'s attendance is XXX. This letter is automatically triggered as part of our Attendance policy when a student's attendance falls below 85%.

We want to continue supporting (child name)'s education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help address gaps in their learning due to absence. However, due to (child name)'s attendance not improving and falling below 85%, we will be requesting a Penalty Notice with Kent County Council.

In order to prevent this next step, we are requesting yourself as the parent/carer of child name, and child name meet with myself to look at how we can best support child name increasing their attendance at MEPA College.

#### **Proposed Date and Time**

Below is the proposed date and time of the parental meeting regarding (child name)'s attendance.

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Location:** Earl House, 27-29 Earl Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1PF

Please could you confirm your attendance to this meeting by emailing [lmuir@mepatraining.com](mailto:lmuir@mepatraining.com). If you are unable to attend the proposed date and time, please email with an alternative date and time suggestion.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Emma Finch  
Vice Principal

## **APPENDIX 4 – ATTENDANCE LETTER 4**

Date

Dear

### **RE: (child name) Class/year group – Penalty Notice**

The Registers at xx 'school' show that your child has missed more than a day of school each week on average, without good reason, over the last half term. You, as parent, are legally responsible under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. As such you are now being referred for a Penalty Notice under Sec. 444 of the Education Act (1996) for failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child(ren).

The Penalty Notice is being requested in line with the Code of Conduct administered by the Local Authority. If accepted, a warning letter will be sent, whereby a 15-day monitoring period would be set in order to give you an opportunity to improve your child's attendance and avoid a subsequent fine. Should your child have 5 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during the 15-day monitoring period, a Penalty Notice will be issued. Once issued, a PN incurs a fine of £60.00 rising to £120.00 per child if not paid within 21 days.

Please take steps to make sure your child gets to school on time every day, and to obtain a Medical Certificate if he/she is too ill to attend. Any other reason for absence should be discussed with the school and it is the School's decision whether to authorise any absence that is not covered by medical evidence.

We thank you for your support in ensuring that your child is not absent from school during term time.

Thank you for your continued support.

Your sincerely,

Mandy Ellen  
Principal of MEPA College