



Attendance Policy 2019-2020

**Reviewed and Approved by the Leadership Team
September 2019 – to be updated September 2020**

At David Game College, ensuring that students have a full attendance is fundamental to everyone's success. There is a strong link between under-achievement and poor attendance. Those students who regularly attend make better progress, both socially and academically, which is why we ask for a 100% attendance, but have a realistic target attendance of a minimum 95%.

It is also important that we maintain parents' and students' awareness of the importance of full-time attendance and make clear the correlations between attendance and learning.

Parents/carers can help us by:

- Ensuring your child/ward attends College regularly
- Telephone each day (in the morning) of any absence and give us the reason and tell us when the student is likely to return to college
- Arranging all non-emergency medical appointments outside of college hours
- Providing medical verification where illness-absence is frequent or prolonged
- Ensuring that your child not only attends, but is also punctual to classes
- Ensuring that all students of Compulsory School Age agree to sign in and out in reception and abide by the rules as set out by the Head of GCSE

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and emails as necessary
- Write to parents/guardians about poor attendance and ask them for a meeting to explain absences that are frequent or excessive
- Inform you if your child has poor punctuality

- Show zero-tolerance to students who have persistent absence for no valid or authorised reason

This Policy is available on-line at www.davidgamecollege.com

1. We will consider any request for this policy to be made available in an alternative format.
2. We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments*. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility or fairness of the policy.

*Equality Impact Assessments are carried out to see whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on grounds of race, gender, disability, age, religion or sexual orientation.

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For all enquiries in respect of this policy, please contact:

Named person: John Dalton
 Vice Principal
 David Game College
 31 Jewry Street
 City of London
 EC3N 2ET
 Tel: 020 7221 6665

1. Rationale

This policy covers the principal elements of what the college considers necessary for good and punctual attendance by pupils. Its formulation is designed to enhance consistency in approach to attendance across the different programmes at David Game College (“the College”). The College is committed to offering opportunities for the development of all students in ways that meet individual needs. One aspect of this is a commitment to improving retention and achievement through raising standards of attendance and punctuality.

In short, the College expects and demands a 100% attendance by all students as it recognises the important correlation between students’ absence and academic progress. Naturally, students may be ill from time to time or have to visit universities etc. It is important that authorised absences are logged and understood. The college has zero tolerance for unauthorised absences. For both visa and non-visa students the College will also look for patterns of non-attendance and make efforts to challenge the students and if necessary permanently exclude the student or report them to the relevant authority. The Leadership Team sets targets for overall student attendance and in some cases, individual students.

2. Aim

This policy aims to assist all students to take responsibility for their full and prompt attendance which will enhance their learning experience, develop their personal skills and promote retention, achievement and progression. In the case of Compulsory School Age (CSA) students, the policy is intended to ensure full compliance with the requirements of Ofsted.

3. Principles on which the policy is based

There are four principles underpinning the College’s approach to student attendance:

- a. Student attendance should be managed across the College;
- b. Targets for student attendance rates should be set and monitored across all College programmes;
- c. Punctuality and full attendance at lessons should be a benchmark by which the quality of the College’s teaching and learning is judged;
- d. Every effort should be made to maximise punctuality and attendance.

4. Students’ Entitlements

Students are entitled to the best opportunities to be successful in their studies. If a student’s general attendance and punctuality give the College cause for concern and there is a worry that the student may not complete his/her studies successfully, the student will be contacted by the College Attendance Officer to discuss their progress. An attempt will be made to identify any problems or difficulties and arrangements may be made for special help from the teaching staff or for special tutorials and support. The College Attendance Officer in conjunction with the Heads of Year will listen to any problems raised and will try to give the support and guidance needed to help the learner

to be successful. It is part of the student's entitlement that lessons start and end promptly. Every effort will be made to give advance warning of unavoidable changes or cancellations to classes.

5. Students' Responsibilities

The College requires students to **attend all classes punctually** according to their timetables. Students should not knowingly miss a class for anything other than illness or exceptional circumstances. It is not usually permitted for students to take holidays in term-time. If a student needs to miss a class, the parent or guardian should:

- a. Contact the College attendance officer in order to inform the Heads of Year and member of staff who teaches the lesson(s), in advance, of any planned absence (e.g. for a doctor's or dentist's appointment);
- b. Phone or email the College administrator, as soon as possible, to explain an unplanned absence due to illness. The parent or guardian will be asked for details of the illness and for how long the absence is expected to last;
- c. Explain by letter or email the reasons for absence due to illness lasting more than one week. Addresses will be checked against College records for verification.
- d. The student must make arrangements to catch up on any work missed during absence.

If a student is **absent without authorisation** (for visa students please refer to Appendix 2) and there has been no response from the parent or guardian, the student will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course after 10 days of absence. There may also be other remedial actions taken (including disciplinary action in some cases) before the end of the two week absence period, if a student's pattern of attendance and/or punctuality is not of an acceptable standard. Unacceptable attendance and/or punctuality may affect examination entry. Students may be excluded from classes if they are more than 10 minutes late, unless there are good reasons.

6. Teaching Staff's Responsibilities

All Teaching Staff are required to:

- a. Advise students of the College Attendance Policy during induction;
- b. Inform reception of the absence of any student either at the start of a lesson, during the first break or at the end of a lesson
- c. Inform the Heads of Year if a student has been absent for two lessons or where attendance is erratic;
- d. Mark attendance, absence and lateness in the register and that registers are kept up-to-date and accurate; use the appropriate nomenclature and symbols (provided in the back of the register) for indicating types of absences;
- e. Contact, or arrange for contact with the student or parent/guardian, via the Heads of Year, where appropriate, wherever there is cause for concern;
- f. Monitor and report individual and group attendance and punctuality for their classes;

- g. Help to support students' return to College, as appropriate;
- h. Ensure withdrawal forms are completed, via the Personal Tutor, as appropriate, where a student has been absent without authorisation for four weeks;
- i. Start and finish classes on time.

Personal Tutors are required to:

- a. Keep other teaching staff informed of issues and actions relating to a student's attendance and punctuality;
- b. Monitor and report on students' attendance and punctuality, with the help of teaching and support staff;
- c. Refer unresolved issues concerning attendance and punctuality to the College Attendance Officer and Vice Principals;
- d. Ensure paperwork regarding student attendance is up-to-date and kept in the tutorial file.

7. College Management's Responsibilities

The Vice Principals and Heads of Years are responsible for ensuring that staff are aware of this policy and that students have been inducted into it. In addition, the Vice Principals will be responsible for setting annual targets for attendance rates across all College programmes. In conjunction with management information from the register system, the Vice Principals are responsible for facilitating the production of regular timely and accurate attendance data and reports, to allow teaching staff to take prompt action for the benefit of students. Senior staff are also responsible for monitoring those whose attendance falls persistently below 95% and initiate actions to improve attendance for individual students.

8. Standards by which the success of this policy can be evaluated

- a. Annual targets for attendance are met; to try and keep attendance at no less than 95%
- b. Continually improving attendance and punctuality;
- c. High levels of attendance and punctuality when measured against relevant benchmarks;
- d. Swift action to support students with below acceptable benchmarks for attendance and punctuality;
- e. Improved student success;
- f. Staff compliance with the policy during quality audits;
- g. Positive feedback in self-assessment reports.

9. Responsibility for implementing this policy

- a. The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy across the College;
- b. The Vice Principals are responsible for overseeing the operation of this policy in the College;
- c. The Vice Principals are responsible for ensuring that academic teaching staff and Personal Tutors collaboratively address the requirements of this policy;
- d. The College staff, which includes Personal Tutors and subject specialists, together with appropriate support staff, are responsible for meeting student entitlement.

10. Review of this Policy

- a. The Vice Principals are responsible for the periodic review of this policy;
- b. The next review is due to take place in September 2020

Appendix I

For advice on the appropriate ways in which to record attendance for students of Compulsory School Age, see:-

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance

For the regulations affecting migrants who wish to study in the UK, see:-

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/student-visas>

Appendix 2: Student Attendance Policy Procedure

Rationale

Attendance is very important for two main reasons: students have made a commitment to work towards achieving academic success by enrolling on their programme of studies. In order to achieve success in their studies it is important that they participate in, and engage fully with, all their scheduled activities such as lectures, workshops and seminars. The College therefore regards attendance as an essential part of students' studies. Further, the College is required by law to have robust systems in place in order to keep track of our students. Under this new points-based system, it is the duty of the College as a sponsor to ensure that our students are in compliance with all the requirements of their permission to study in the United Kingdom. In order to achieve this, the College monitors attendance very strictly so that we are able to ensure that our students are not in breach of their legal duties.

The legal framework

If a student is in the UK on a student visa, he/she must aim to attend all lessons and must submit all his/her work on time. To maintain attendance throughout the duration of their course, holders of a student visa are advised that David Game College ("the College") is obliged to comply with the United Kingdom VISA Immigration (UKVI) Tier 4 rules.

The College Rules:

- **All students should attend 100% of lessons**
- **Students must be punctual for lessons**
- **Students of compulsory school age (CSA) must be College every week day and sign in and out as directed in the rules. They should be in College for 25.5 hours per week.**
- **If students are absent, their absence must be authorised and backed with a good reason and some evidence**
- **Students who show a pattern of absence will be warned in writing and if the pattern or further unacceptable absences keep occurring they may be asked to leave the College**
- **Warning letters will be given to students, but the College takes a strict view of absence and will intervene quickly to prevent further absences.**
- **If a student is on a visa, then they are under strict obligations to respect the right that they have been given through the visa and not to abuse its privilege**
- **If any visa students has a pattern of absence or simply too many small absences they will be warned; if they persist, they will be reported to UKVI**
- **If a visa student misses 10 consecutive expected contacts and fails to provide a reason that is acceptable or evidence-based, then they very likely to be reported to UKVI**
- **Although each student will be considered on a case-by-case basis, the aforementioned rules will be generally enforced for the purposes of discipline and adherence to the law**

Procedure for Recording Attendance

- a. The Attendance Officer and Heads of Year monitors and the attendance at each class.
- b. Paper registers are kept on each class and the information transferred into the College's information management system
- c. The Tutor of each lesson puts in appropriate codes against the name of each student on the register.
- d. Students arriving after the start of the lesson but within the first 10 minutes of the class are marked as 'Late'.
- e. Students arriving more than 10 minutes late may join the class at the discretion of the Tutor.
- f. The register is collected from each class and any authorised absences will be incorporated. The Attendance Officer then updates the Attendance Database by the end of the day. This will be checked once a week by the Registrar and audited by the Leadership Team.

Definition of an "expected contact"

David Game College defines (in terms of UKVI) an expected contact as a full day present at the College (or as determined by the timetable on any given day). If a student misses 10 consecutive expected contacts without any communication from parents/guardians or the student, then the College is very likely to report the student to UKVI.

Procedure for Authorised Absence

If a student is unable to attend a class, he/she must do the following:

- a. In case of planned leave, fill in a Leave of Absence Application Form and submit it well in time. Leave forms are available at the College reception
- b. In case of unplanned absence, inform the Attendance Officer as soon as possible to explain the reasons. On return to College following any period of unplanned absence, complete a Return of Absence Form explaining the reasons for absence (e.g. due to illness, for a doctor's or dentist's appointment etc.).
- c. The Principal, or his representative, will be responsible for the sanctioning of any leave. Records of authorised absence will be retained.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Policy

The Attendance Officer is responsible for ensuring continuous and effective implementation of this attendance policy. The College Leadership team monitors the operation of this policy on a weekly basis by receiving regular reports on student attendance from the Attendance Officer. Attendance is discussed in regular meetings of the Leadership group – all instances of authorised and unauthorised absence are reviewed. The policy itself is regularly reviewed in order to make sure that it is in full compliance at all times with the relevant laws and regulations of the UKVI. The following is the procedure for monitoring the attendance policy:

- a. Once all attendance has been entered into the system on the same day, the Attendance Officer generates a Daily Attendance Record.
- b. The Attendance Officer reviews the daily report and necessary action is taken. In the case of unauthorised absence, Email and SMS alerts are sent to students who have missed 2 expected contacts.
- c. If the students misses a number of lessons and they are contacted by letter as are their parents and Guardians and warnings issued
- d. Once a student has missed 10 expected contacts for no good reason, the UKVI is informed.
- e. The College Leadership team reviews attendance each week and discusses any student who has received a warning letter or who has been reported to UKBVI
- f. UKVI will be informed using the appropriate and prescribed systems about the following occurrences, whichever occurs first:
 - i. A student has missed 10 expected contacts – these include but are not limited to attending a lecture, a meeting with a tutor or other member of staff, submitting an assessed or non-assessed coursework, attending a test/examination etc. If a student who has already been reported to the UKVI reports back to the College with a valid reason for his absence and the College is satisfied with the response from the student to warnings and his/her efforts to improve the attendance, UKVI will be informed.
 - ii. If a student has had a significance change of circumstance.
- g. Students who have been issued a final warning and reported to the UKVI, and who have failed to provide a satisfactory explanation to the College for their missed expected contacts, may have their sponsorship withdrawn.
- h. A Register of those students reported to the UKVI is maintained by the Registrar. A log of all the communications with students is maintained for future references and follow-up by The Principal or his representative.
- i. An interview conducted with a student about attendance/absence or any warning sent to the student must be recorded in the student file. The reasons and evidence for any authorized absences being granted will also be recorded and kept in the student's file.
- j. The College will take all possible actions in its power to track the whereabouts of any students who have continuously failed to attend or have had their places withdrawn. The College will provide all relevant information that will help the UKVI to identify and locate such students.
- k. The College will also a report a student if a pattern of absence is established without valid reasons.

Appendix 3: Examples of Authorised and Unauthorised absence

Authorised absence may include absences for reasons (and evidence) such as the following:

2. Illness (other than a cold or sore throat)
3. Medical and dental treatment (usually with evidence – text message)
4. Close family wedding or bereavement of family members
5. Short-term exceptional domestic circumstances
6. Certain days of religious observance
7. Court appearances
8. Attendance at a Children’s Hearing or Care Review
9. Excursions or sporting fixtures arranged by or in conjunction with the College
10. Universities official visits/ interviews or some specifically approved educational visit
11. Attendance at aptitude tests e.g. BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT or ILETs.
12. Home Office appointments

In any such cases, the College will require *bona fide* evidence of such reasons, such as a doctor’s certificate or other evidence in writing. In the case of family or religious events, corroboration should be provided by the student’s parent or guardian.

Unauthorised absence may include absences for reasons such as the following:

13. Holidays taken in term-time without prior approval by the College
14. Students who claim to have a “cold” or “sore throat” or some other form of low risk endemic medical condition
15. Unsubstantiated illness
16. Visiting relatives
17. Leaving before the end of term to secure a cheap flight
18. Any unexplained absence
19. Parent’s illness (depending on context and severity)
20. Going shopping, haircuts, dental appointments, driving theory tests, bank appointments
21. Sleeping in late
22. Collecting or taking a relative to the airport
23. Extended leave following a period of approved leave for such as religious observance
24. Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation is considered unsatisfactory

Persistent absence is defined by the DfE as where a child’s attendance falls below 90%. For a student of Compulsory School Age, where a child is defined with persistent absence, the College then has a duty of care to ensure that all further absences must be confirmed with medical or other relevant evidence. Unauthorised absence could also result in legal action or a fine.

Exceptional Leave

Time off will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and this leave is granted at the Head teacher's discretion. Any parent or guardian who requires exceptional leave for their child/ward must request this in writing from the Vice Principals or Head teacher and at least one week's advance notice should be given (where possible).

John Dalton, September 2019

TBR: September 2020