POLICY 066
FE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Policy 066: FE Student Attendance Policy

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

1.1 The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the effective implementation of the ACM Teaching Learning and Assessment Policy. The Attendance and Punctuality Procedure is designed to create a strong attendance culture that supports safeguarding, high retention, achievement and progression.

2. POLICY DETAILS

2.1 The Academy of Contemporary Music is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students, staff, visitors and guests and acknowledges its particular responsibilities to all students in FE provision.

2.2 All FE tutors within ACM have a responsibility to check attendance for all students in every lesson.

2.3 Every member of staff must complete training in the following areas:

- Safeguarding Young People
- An introduction to GDPR
- Health and Safety in Education Awareness
- The Prevent Duty

2.4 ACM will ensure there are established governance structures in place to ensure that all aspects relating to attendance are regularly audited, reviewed and monitored.

2.5 ACM expects all students to participate fully in the life of the institution and attend not only in timetabled lectures but also to book tutorials and participate in workshops and masterclasses, all of which are offered to enhance your programme. Lectures, tutorials, workshops and masterclasses can be expected to take place between the hours of 09.00 and 18.00 (Monday to Friday) and students are expected to make themselves available at these times.

2.6 At ACM FE, we strongly encourage students to pursue industry-related experiences to support and enhance their studies. Absence requests for this nature must be carefully administered so that a student's attendance, learning, and deadlines are not negatively impacted. Students making such requests must submit an Absence Request Form to Diploma Leadership at least one week in advance for the request to be considered. The full scope of this policy should be reviewed on the FE Course Hub.

2.7 ACM normally expects students to attend 100% with a minimum of 90%. Attendance and full participation is important to gain the most from the programme and prepare students for assessments and develop the skills you will need. Workshops, guest lectures, tutorials and other activities also provide additional support and insight.

2.8 Although 90% attendance is normally required, ACM recognises and is empathetic towards the individual needs of students with disabilities and chronic illnesses. As such, alternative and fluctuating minimum attendance requirements may be agreed with a student on the basis of Reasonable Adjustments. Any adjustments made to attendance

requirements must be requested, assessed and approved by the Principal of FE, relevant Level Leader and Lead Tutor, and SENCo.

2.9 In the event that a student's overall attendance falls below the minimum 90% threshold, without good reason, the Principal of FE, relevant Level Leader, and the student's Lead Tutor will set up interventions by way of an Individual Learner Agreement.

2.10 Failure to improve overall attendance following intervention via an Individual Learner Agreement may result in removal from the programme.

2.11 ACM acknowledges that mental health is an important factor in its Further Education courses. ACM recognises the World Health Organization 2001 definition of good mental health, where it is defined as "a state of wellbeing in which the individual realises his or her abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community."

2.12 If a student's state of mental health is negatively impacting their attendance and academic attainment, reasonable adjustments may be made to support the student and minimise disruptions to their studies, conditional on acceptable written verification being submitted, by the way of the following:

- authorising absences;
- authorising late arrivals to and early exits from campus;
- in some cases, extensions for assignments;

2.13 One of the following forms of written verification submitted to FE Leadership will be deemed acceptable:

- an email from the student's parent, carer or legal guardian;
- a certification from a GP, counsellor, psychiatrist, CAMHS or similar professional

2.14 In some instances, the FE Leadership may require both parental/carer/legal guardian verification and professional certification.

2.15 Upon receipt of acceptable verification the following actions will then be taken:

- The Wellbeing Team will be notified immediately
- A check-in phone call will be made to the student to ascertain if any support is required

2.16 Non-attendance for four consecutive weeks could result in withdrawal from the course if sanctioned by the FE Leadership Team, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Principal.

2.17 In cases of a student being absent for more than 5 consecutive days, a meeting will be arranged between the student, parent/carer/legal guardian, Level Lead and The Principal to discuss the student's Fitness To Study.

2.18 Students must attend the classes they are registered on (i.e classes as they appear on their timetable), and are not permitted to attend alternative classes at alternative times without prior approval from the Principal of FE.

2.19 Students attempting to attend classes on which they are not registered (i.e classes that are not on their timetable), will be asked by the tutor to leave and attend the correct class and will not be marked as present.

2.20 Students attending the incorrect classes will not be marked as present, and this will affect their overall attendance percentage.

2.21 All ACM students and staff are required to wear ID cards and lanyards and keep them visible at all times whilst on ACM premises. Class registers are able to be taken using the contactless functions within the ID Cards and related systems. Any student found to be abusing this system (e.g. by granting access to another person by using their ID card, obtaining a positive attendance mark using someone else's ID card), may be subject to the student disciplinary procedures.

2.22 ACM's FE attendance policy is supported by the Further Education Leadership Team & the ACM Safeguarding Team. Both teams must remain aware of all concerns relating to attendance.

2.23 By promoting good attendance and punctuality we aim to:

- Make good attendance and punctuality a priority for all those involved in the ACM FE community;
- Raise our students' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and its connection to successful study and progression;
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, guardians or carers, students and staff;
- Work in partnership with parents/guardians/carers.

3. POLICY SCOPE

3.1 This Policy applies to students on Level 2, and Level 3 FE provision at ACM Guildford and ACM Birmingham. This Policy does not apply to Foundation Year Higher Education students at all ACM campuses.

3.2 The related Procedures to this Policy apply to all students and to all aspects of learning programmes including classroom-based and online sessions, tutorials, workshops, GCSE/Functional Skills, support sessions, work placements/experience and enrichment activities.

4. RELATED POLICIES

- Safeguarding Procedures
- Student Charter
- Data Protection Policy
- Prevent Policy
- External Speaker and Events Policy
- FE Student Disciplinary Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

5. POLICY OWNER

5.1 The responsibility for this Policy falls under the remit of the Safeguarding & Pastoral Services Manager & Principal of FE, overseen by the Student Experience and Quality Committee. This role is supported under the Further Education Leadership Team.

5.2 The responsible committee will ensure the cyclical review of this Policy is carried out under ACM's Quality Assurance Framework.

6. DEFINITIONS

- ACM - Academy of Contemporary Music
- FE - Further Education
- DSL - Designated Safeguarding Lead
- FELT - Further Education Leadership Team
- LSA - Learning Support Assistant
- SENCo - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
- DfE - Department for Education

7. PROCEDURES

7.1 Class registers are normally electronically marked at the beginning of the lesson, and submitted before the end of each session, or, in exceptional circumstances, by the end of the day. Class registers record attendance, absence, lateness, and early exits, and should be signed or initialled by the tutor.

7.2 In the event that the electronic register system is not working, a paper register must be taken and handed in to a Registry Administrator at the earliest opportunity, and before the end of the day.

7.3 Lateness is defined as arriving any time after the start time of the lesson. All students arriving late must be acknowledged and challenged appropriately. Students should be asked to provide reasons. LSAs should be directed to assist in managing this process. Lateness to the first lesson of the day may sometimes be related to transport or domestic problems and can be a support issue. However, lateness to other sessions in the day may be classified as a disciplinary issue. Students should not be turned away from a class on the grounds of lateness. Lateness should be recorded numerically, reflecting the number of minutes the student is late.

8. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

8.1 Through the ACM Student Charter, students make a commitment to actively engage in their studies. Students are expected to attend all timetabled sessions and attend meetings with their tutors and academic supervisors. Attendance is monitored and records are kept relating to the level of attendance a student has.

8.2 Students are required to contact the Student Hub on the day of any absence by telephone, email or notification on MyACM. Any absence reported must have reasons put on Insight by Administrators and Tutors. Students should be informed of the notification procedure during induction and reminded by their Tutors regularly in tutorials.

9. STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

9.1 All teaching staff should normally email any absent students directly following the lecture.

9.2 All teaching staff should know the name of the Lead Tutor for each student in their class. This can be found in the 'Year Instance Information' tab on the students' records. The Lead Tutor is responsible for monitoring attendance of their group at all classes and implementing interventions to improve attendance with individual students who are below the 90% ACM target. There should be no unexplained absences by 16-18-year-old students. If this occurs then the tutor should contact the Safeguarding team immediately.

9.3 Persistent student absence or consistently poor punctuality must be addressed by Level Leaders in accordance with this Policy.

9.4 At each weekly group tutorial, the Lead Tutor should address the previous week's absence(s)/punctuality directly with the student concerned and note the reasons for absence on Insight if not already given. If the student is absent, they and their parent/carer should be contacted via an email that seeks a response. If this method gains no response, then standard letters should be sent via a Programme Administrator. Absence with no contact is a safeguarding issue and local authorities or the Police may have to be informed. The Safeguarding Team must be informed in these circumstances immediately.

9.5 In the case of persistent absence (normally after three missed sessions) without valid reasons or evidence, a one to one tutorial should be held to discover the reasons for absence and any underlying problems. The discussion with the student should lead to recorded target setting. This will specify an agreed course of action to be undertaken by the student. Any agreed course of action may include support for the student from the SafeguardingTeam. Non-attendance at the tutorial increases the risk of interruption or withdrawal from the course of study.

9.6 Invitation to and outcomes of attendance meetings and official warning letters should be copied to the parent/carer/employer unless specific evidence or information from the student indicates this may harm them in some way. In this case, the Designated Safeguarding Officer should be involved. Curriculum Administrators are responsible for the administration of letters. Notes of letters sent must be made on Insight.

9.7 If the student continues to miss classes and has not improved attendance over a two week period to meet the agreed improvement target, a Level 1 disciplinary hearing should be held with the FE Leadership Team. The parent/guardian/carer should be invited to the meeting arranged with the student as appropriate. This may also apply in the case of vulnerable adults.

9.8 At the meeting, current data on attendance should be produced and any reasons previously given considered. Validity of reasons should be checked and the impact on achievement and progression opportunities should be highlighted. Teaching /work missed and assignments not completed should also be confirmed in writing. A solution to reverse the poor attendance should be agreed. Finance, ALS and study support needs should be checked. Other external forms of support should be sign posted if appropriate.

9.9 An ILA should be drawn up that is reviewed by the Level Leader fortnightly. Poor attendance will not normally be a reason for exclusion.

9.10 Any agreed plan of action should include support for the student; attendance contract and catch up on learning action plan. This should be added to Insight. Details of the agreed course of action will be communicated to the parent/guardian/carer.

9.11 Insight issues weekly attendance and punctuality reports at College, Department and Course level, including exception reports where the attendance level is below 90%.

9.12 Where this is the case, the FE Leadership Team will monitor that an investigation and appropriate action is being taken.

9.13 Summary reports of attendance and punctuality levels are produced by Curriculum Administrators and reported to the Directorate and the Quality and Standards Committee by the Principal. The Principal also reports to the Executive, and East Surrey College on these matters.

9.14 Levels of attendance and punctuality are a key data set for Course Review, Self-assessment and Quality Improvement planning and it is essential they are reviewed as part of these processes.

9.15 The academy overall target for 2022/23 is 90% with no unexplained absences.

9.16 Attendance will also be monitored in-year through the Further Education & Integrated Services Team.

10. HOLIDAY PROCEDURES

10.1 Students are advised that holidays should not be taken in term time as it is likely to impact on guided learner hours and achievement and progression prospects.

11. EXHIBITS/APPENDICES/FORMS

11.1 This Policy has been written in accordance with, and with reference to, the following statutory guidance and legislation:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2021)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2018)
- The Prevent Duty (DfE, 2015, updated 2019)
- The Children Act 2004 (with later amendments),
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006,
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012;
- Information sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (HM Government, July 2018)

12. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

12.1 There are no further supporting documents to this Policy.

13. DOCUMENT HISTORY AND NEXT REVIEW

Version: 1.3
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Approved by: Academic Board
Date of next review: August 2026