

**South Thames Colleges Group**

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE, BEHAVIOUR AND COMMITMENT TO STUDY PROCEDURES (ABC)**

**1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The connection between attendance, behaviour and commitment to study and high achievement, progression and employability is clear.
- 1.2 This document sets out the procedures that the South Thames Colleges Group will apply in order to support all students into very good attendance, punctuality, learning behaviour and commitment habits and to completing work to the best of their ability (ABC).
- 1.3 The College records all relevant information on ProMonitor and expect all students to regularly update this through their view of the same tracking system; ProPortal.
- 1.4 The Student Code of Conduct is clear in our expectations; attendance should be 100% as should be the meeting of assessment deadlines. The College expect the right learning behaviours in and outside of class; the College aim to support everyone to achieve their goals with us and the College are firm on the standards the College expect. The College measure attendance as physical presence, and include in this educational visits, work placements and work experience. The Student Code of Conduct is published on all college websites and is the definitive version the College uses and is Section 4 of this document.
- 1.5 As a part of our induction and settling-in period, all students on new programmes are in probation during the critical first six weeks of their programme. Provided attendance, punctuality and work-rate are good enough, the College will "sign-off" everyone who has been in probation.
- 1.6 The College will not allow students on study programmes to drop parts of their programme after the end of probation, for example a BTEC student dropping a GCSE or Functional Skills qualification or a GCE A Level student dropping one or more subjects. However, alternative academic pathways may be recommended or required when a student has not attended or produced work to an acceptable standard to provide sufficient assurance towards a successful outcome.
- 1.7 Following the probation period and applicable to all of our students, the College use a clear system described below for those few students who show poor performance in either attendance, punctuality, behaviour and/or their commitment to study, and sometimes a combination of all of them. For students below the age of eighteen, the College will contact parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker during this process. The consequence of not meeting our standards and not responding to our support may invoke disciplinary action which may ultimately result in permanent exclusion.

**2 The Standards the College Expect**

- 2.1 The following standards apply to all students and are agreed not only with the Group's Leadership Team, but also the Student Representatives. These standards relate specifically to ABC. Standards relating to acts of gross misconduct are covered separately in the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

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**3 Attendance and Punctuality Standards:**

- i. An excellent standard is a 95%+ attendance rate;
- ii. A good standard is 90%+;
- iii. A satisfactory standard is 85%+;
- iv. 84% and below is a poor standard;
- v. Physical attendance below 75% is considered gross misconduct.

**4 Persistent Lateness**

4.1 Identified as three or more times for the same class and applies particularly where this disrupts others' learning. Lateness after breaks is inexcusable and the College regards this as disruptive behaviour.

**5 Authorised Absence**

5.1 Identified as job interviews (full-time), university interviews, hospital appointments and treatments, the funeral of a relative/close friend, recognised religious holidays, driving test (not theory), attendance at court/probation meetings, attendance at a College representatives' meeting and learners who are suspended (temporarily excluded). Infrequently, significant transport disruption may be authorised, but this would be a Cross-College decision allowed at the discretion of the Assistant Principal.

5.2 To help clarify, the following would NOT be considered reasons for authorising absence; isolated sickness, routine medical/dental appointments, "personal issues", baby-sitting younger siblings, relations or friends, waiting at home for arrival of a service/delivery, weddings and holidays. Where a student describes such circumstances, they must agree an action plan (SMART targets) in their ILP and have it signed-off by their Tutor.

**6 The Right Learning Behaviours**

6.1 In addition to good or better attendance and punctuality the right learning behaviours include:

- i. Students showing respect for all and forming good working relationships with each other and all staff working with them;
- ii. Students consistently having the correct learning materials for the class;
- iii. Students following the instructions and activities set for them in each and every lesson;
- iv. Students taking increasing responsibility for their own learning, including showing commitment over the year and not giving up; engaging with additional activity and catching-up when required, for example, students always respecting the needs of other learners by avoiding behaviours that affect the learning of others.

**7 The Praise Strategy**

7.1 The very large majority of our students enjoy and do well at college. The College believe it is important to celebrate progress and achievement and to that end the College records this on

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ProMonitor and from time-to-time in other ways including nominations for awards and prizes, this includes a commendation letter from the Assistant Principal/College Principal.

**8 Student Disciplinary Policy and procedures**

8.1 The College do not tolerate misconduct or poor standards of behaviour (disruption, inappropriate use of mobile devices in lessons, plagiarism, for example}. Where behaviour falls into this category the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure will be invoked.

**9 Support and Intervention**

9.1 Heads of School and their Deputies as well as Heads of Section, or their delegates, will monitor the performance of students against the standards described above and they will support their colleagues in applying the standards and procedures consistently and fairly.

**10 The Probation Strategy**

10.1 These processes ensure students stay on track to succeed. There are 3 aspects to this process:

- Stage 1 - Informal Misconduct
- Stage 2 - Formal Misconduct
- Stage 3 - Formal Serious or Gross Misconduct

10.2 Heads of School will ensure that the following procedures happen and will invoke the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure where students do not meet our required standards.

10.3 All students on new courses in the College are placed in probation in their first six weeks, which is an opportunity to support students during their settling in process. The College expect that all students will complete this period successfully. However, for those few students who present attendance, behaviour and/or commitment to study problems in their first few weeks, the College will give students a Stage 1 Informal Misconduct warning and identify clear improvement targets and further support to help students achieve their improvement targets.

10.4 Students who do not make sufficient improvement will be identified as at Stage 2 Formal Misconduct, within the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. A stage 2 meeting with parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker of students below the age of eighteen will be arranged at this stage.

10.5 Students who do not make sufficient improvement within two weeks (or before the review week) will be identified as at Stage 3 Formal Serious or Gross Misconduct Concern, within the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. A Stage 3 meeting will be arranged at this stage at which the Head of Section, or their delegated representative, will present their evidence to the Head of School and the student will have their opportunity to present any mitigating circumstances or new information.

10.6 Students under the age of eighteen will have their parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker invited to this meeting. The Head of School will make the decision on the outcome of this meeting according to the Stage 3 penalties described in the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. Where students at Stage 3 Formal Serious or Gross Misconduct have not

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made sufficient improvement, the final outcome will be communicated in writing to the student and parent/guardian in the case of students under the age of eighteen.

- 10.7 In the case of exclusion, the right to an appeal exists. A student excluded through the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures may appeal to the Principal. Such an appeal must be received, in writing, by the Principal within ten working days from the receipt by the student of the written notification of the exclusion. The appeal should set out the grounds on which the appeal is to be heard as identified in the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.
- 10.8 If a student is excluded from the College, then this fact would be considered in any future application they might make to the College Group.
- 10.9 After the first six weeks of a new course has passed, the College uses a similar process of three stages:

**11 Stage 1- Informal Misconduct Concern**

- 11.1 Students who show attendance, behaviour and/or commitment to study issues that fall below expectation are provided with a support plan and targets for improvement and parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker of students under the age of eighteen are informed of Stage 1 Informal Misconduct concern.
- 11.2 Partnership normally lasts for a minimum of three weeks and is reviewed weekly to measure the impact of support. Students may be kept at Stage 1 for periods greater than three weeks. Students who achieve improvement are formally "signed off". However, any student who completes Stage 1 successfully, but then presents further performance issues in that academic year, is moved straight to Stage 2.

**12 Stage 2 - Formal Misconduct Concern**

- 12.1 Students who are unable to respond to the support offered in Stage 1 Informal Misconduct Concern are moved to Stage 2 Formal Misconduct Concern with a formal disciplinary warning and renewed targets for improvement with support. A period of two to three weeks is normally set for this stage. Parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker of students under the age of eighteen are informed.
- 12.2 At this stage of the ABC process, students may not be allowed to take part in educational visits, residential field trips or to represent the College in either individual and/or team sports. In some circumstances the College may also put into place an internal exclusion which will help ensure a student does not go to any part of the Group where good learning or behaviour could be compromised.

**13 Stage 3 - Formal Serious Misconduct Concern**

- 13.1 Students who are unable to respond to the support offered in Stage 2 Formal Misconduct Concern are moved to Stage 3 Formal Serious or Gross Misconduct Concern. The Head of School will arrange a meeting at which the Head of Section, or their delegated representative, will present the evidence and the student will have their opportunity to present any mitigating

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circumstances or new information. Parents/guardians/relevant LA virtual school/social worker of students under the age of eighteen are invited.

- 13.2 The Head/Deputy Head of School will determine the recommended outcome which could include a final warning or a decision to exclude the student permanently from the College.

**14 Exclusion for ABC**

14.1 Our aim is that very few students will be excluded through the disciplinary policy and process as a consequence of ABC, nevertheless, the College will see this process through where required and in the event of a permanent exclusion, this means a student may not be able to return to the South Thames College Group in the following year or years.

14.2 In the case of a final warning or permanent exclusion, the right to an appeal exists. A student excluded may appeal to the Principal. Such an appeal must be received, in writing, by the Principal within ten working days from the receipt by the student of the written notification of the permanent exclusion. The appeal should set out the grounds on which the appeal is to be heard as identified in the Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.

**15 Non-Progression related to ABC**

15.1 Where serious or gross misconduct concern has emerged during the year and sufficient opportunity given to respond to targets, a student will not be allowed to progress from say, year one of a study programme to year two irrespective of the results they may achieve. However, they may be permitted to complete their current academic year.

15.2 This will be communicated verbally through the normal lines of communication but will always be put into writing. Any appeal against this decision would be routed through the Admissions Appeals process.

15.3 The Group aims to support students back into good attendance and learning behaviour patterns and in the majority of cases that is the outcome. However, the Group will not tolerate repeated poor attendance, poor punctuality and/or failure to give in work of a quality in line with the ability of the student. The Group will not tolerate poor learning behaviour either and this can include, for example, what is persistent low-level disruption in lessons such as the inappropriate use of mobile devices, distracting others and other attention-seeking behaviour. Copying the work of others (plagiarism) whether it is directly in class or outside of class using unacknowledged sources is also regarded by us as academic misconduct, as is misconduct during examinations, as set out in the Student Code of Conduct.

15.4 Breach of examination rules and procedure will be treated as serious or gross misconduct.

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