



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Updated September 2021
Approved by the Principal

This policy refers to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Learning and Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

1. Rationale

- 1.1 This information has been designed to help you understand attendance rules at Big Creative Academy.
- 1.2 The expected attendance for learners at classes is 100%. Learners are expected to be on time for their classes.

2. Unauthorised Absence

- 2.1 Unauthorised absence is when you do not attend a class and do not let your tutor know in advance.
- 2.2 Unauthorised absence is also where a tutor does not agree with the reason for a student's absence.

3. Authorised Absence

- 3.1 Some reasons for which you would be authorised are listed below. This list is not exhaustive, and there may be other occasions when you are authorised that are not detailed here.
 - A medical or dental appointment which cannot be arranged outside timetabled hours.
 - A one-off caring responsibility for a close family member.
 - A religious holiday.
 - A visit to a university either to attend an open day or for interview, or a career-related interview.
 - An appointment with an adviser (although these should normally be scheduled to avoid disruption to studies).
 - A work experience placement which is an integral part of a learning programme
 - Participating in a significant extra-curricular activity, such as drama, music, sport or volunteering, which has been agreed in advance with the Academy.
 - Attendance at a probation meeting.
 - Attendance at a funeral of a close family member.
 - National Union of Students official business.
 - Territorial Army/Cadet Forces/Reserve Forces events.

- 3.2 There are specific times when absence will be authorised if you provide at least two days notice for each occasion. You will not be authorised if you provide evidence of these events after they have happened.

Reason	Evidence Required
Holiday	Only allowed during timetabled holiday periods. Letter from parent required.
Medical or dentist appointment, which cannot be arranged outside attendance hours *	Appointment letter or doctor's note and tutor authorisation
Occasional care for a person if the learner has agreed caring responsibilities *	Course manager must be informed when caring responsibilities begin
Religious holiday *	Tutor authorisation
Relevant career-related open day or an interview *	Invitation letter and tutor authorisation
Appointment with Connexions advisor *	Appointment letter and tutor authorisation
Extra-curricular activities (taking part in an event that is linked to your course)	Tutor authorisation
Funeral or wedding (1 day per occurrence) *	Letter from parent or guardian and tutor authorisation
Severe disruption to transport	Tutor authorisation. Checks will be made to confirm disruption
Driving test *	Appointment card or DVLA letter
Court attendance, probation meeting, police station appointment or similar *	Letter from court, probation officer, police and tutor authorisation
Territorial Army or cadet's event *	Invitation letter
Centre closure due to training or other closure such as heating failure	You will be notified by your tutor

Absences marked with an asterisk (*) must always be authorised by your tutor at least two days in advance if you wish to be authorised. You will not be authorised if you provide evidence of these events after they have happened.

- 3.3 Tutors and Course Managers are entitled to turn down any applications for authorised absence if they are considered to be unreasonable. Consideration will be given to number of absences, repetitions of the same or similar absence as well as other relevant factors.
- 3.4 You need to let your tutor know as soon as you become aware you will not be able to attend for any reason. You will need to give your tutor a reason for your absence and provide proof of this absence as detailed above. Your tutor will check this evidence, mark the register accordingly and if necessary discuss any concerns with you.

4. Authorised sickness

- 4.1 If you are ill and cannot attend your classes you will need to let your tutor know on the first morning of your sickness. If you are ill during the day and have to go home you must also let your tutor know. You will also need to complete the Big Creative Academy Learner Self Certificate Sickness Form on your return from any absence caused by sickness (including if you go home during the day) and give it to your tutor.

4.2 You must provide the evidence as detailed above, or authorisation will not be made. It is your responsibility to ensure this is done. You may be allowed to self-certify periods of short term sicknesses (of less than one week) during your course.

5. Deception

5.1 In the event that any learner deliberately attempts to deceive Academy staff in connection with attendance, details of this behaviour will be passed on and you will be subject to the Learning and Behaviour Policy.

6. Additional hours for absences

6.1 The Academy will make every effort to allow learners to make up the time lost for absences outside of their scheduled timetable.

7. Process for dealing with non-attendance

7.1 If a learner's attendance drops below 90%, the learner will be given a first warning and will be asked to attend a meeting with their tutor (and parent/guardian) if under 18. The learner will be monitored for four weeks with an action to improve their attendance to 90% within the four-week block.

7.2 If the learner does not meet these targets they will move to a second warning where this process will be repeated with the Curriculum Manager.

7.3 Failure to improve attendance will result in the learner moving to a final warning hearing with the Director of Curriculum where the learner will be given a shorter two-week period to improve their attendance to 90%.

7.4 Failure to meet the targets set at a final warning hearing will result in an exclusion hearing with the Principal.

7.5 All stages above must be met and maintained by the student. Should a student fall under the threshold of 90% at any time they should be escalated to the next stage of the disciplinary process. Learners should not have multiple entries at any level for attendance and punctuality.

8. Safeguarding

8.1 If at any point a member of staff is concerned about a learner's wellbeing or out of parental control, the Academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy must be followed and the situation discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

8.2 Persistent absenteeism (2 weeks no contact) or changes in attendance can be a key indication of a safeguarding concern. Such absence will be referred to the safeguarding team for support and follow up.