50 – Attendance Policy

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Date policy to be reviewed: March 2028

Committee responsible for policy:
Board of Governors

Geraldine Kelly — Chair of the
Board of Governors

Review No.	Date	Summary of Changes	Reviewer

Introduction

At the Ridge Employability College (TREC) we believe that for learners to achieve their goals and achieve their full potential, good attendance is essential.

We understand that barriers to attendance can be complex, and that some learners find it harder than others to attend college.

We work hard to ensure we maintain positive and supportive relationships with learners and families to support regular attendance and access to learning.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and rewarding high attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify learners who require more support.
- Intervening early and working collaboratively with other agencies to ensure learners and families are safe and well supported.
- Build strong relationships to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework of the Education Act 1996.

Absence

TREC defines 'Absence' when a learner does not attend college sites on a college day for any reason. An absence can be defined as authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the college has granted leave where the circumstances are deemed extreme and of a serious nature at the discretion of SLT.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during college time, for which the college has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the college has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.
- Mental Health issues that have been diagnosed by a professional.

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents/carers keeping learners off college unnecessarily or without reason.
- An absence for sickness for which the college has **not** granted leave.
- Refusing to engage in session.
- Leaving site without permission.
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.

Persistent absence (PA):

Learners who have been absent from college for 10 percent or more across the year for any reason will be considered as a persistent absence.

Monitoring

Attendance and punctuality are monitored daily. The college's attendance target is 97%.

Attendance expectations

TREC has high expectations for learners, learners are expected to:

- Attend college every day they are required to be at college, for the full day.
- Attend college punctually.
- Attend every timetabled session

The college opens from 8.45m.

The college day starts at 8.45am and learners will be taken to their tutorial session , ready to begin lessons at this time.

Learners will access a natural break during the morning and afternoon sessions to access a toilet break and a drink.

Learners will engage in a lunch break between 12noon and 12.45pm.

College prepares for learners to depart at 2.45pm and doors close at 3pm (12.45pm/1pm on Fridays).

Learners will be recorded as late if they arrive in sessions later than 9.15am or 1.15pm.

Absence Reporting Procedure

Learners, parents/carers are required to contact the college office via telephone before 8.00am on the first day of absence and all other subsequent days, using the automated attendance line on 01302 897445. An explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g.one college day should be reported.

Where a learner is absent, and this has not been reported to the TREC a member of the SLT/admin team will contact the learner, parent/carer via telephone as soon as is practicable on the first day that the learner does not attend college.

The college will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.

The college may request medical evidence where a learner is absent due to illness.

If a learner's attendance drops below 90 percent SLT send a letter home and speak to learner where necessary. If issues persist, we will arrange a formal meeting with the learner and their parent/carer. This will then be closely monitored by SLT and could trigger a Learner Progress meeting.

Leave of absence

TREC will only grant a learner a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. To have requests for a leave of absence considered, the college will expect parents/carers to contact SLT in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis. The learner's previous attendance record will be taken into account. The college is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a learner's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a learner's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason

Illness and healthcare appointments

Learners and parents/carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of college hours wherever possible.

Religious observance

Learners will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least two weeks advance.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a learner belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the learner will be expected to request a leave of absence at least two weeks in advance. Absences will not be granted for learners from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences.

The college recognises that students with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. TREC will incorporate robust procedures to support students who find attending college difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Learners with Medical Conditions Policy, the college will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled students to reduce barriers to attendance. Consideration will be given to the EHC plans. The college will secure additional support from external partners to help learners'

attendance where appropriate.

Where non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their learner's lack of attendance.

Where staff have a mental health concern about a learner that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a learner is unable to attend college for long periods of time due to their health, the college will:

- Inform the LA if a learner is likely to be away from the college for more than 15 college days.
- Provide the LA with information about the learner's needs, capabilities, and programme of work.
- Help the learner reintegrate at college when they return.
- Make sure the learner is kept informed about college events and clubs.
- Encourage the learner to stay in contact with other learners during their absence.

The college will support learners with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending college may cause them. This will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the learner is attending college as normal and there have been signs of significant improvement in attendance.

To support the attendance of learners with SEND and/or health issues, the college will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a learner to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a learner can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implement a system whereby learners can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to college where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Absence in exceptional circumstances

Exceptional circumstances will include when a learner is unable to attend because:

- Transport provided by the college, LA or parent is not available and the learner's home is not within walking distance.
- There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the learner from attending.
- The learner is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.

Attendance intervention

TREC will use attendance data to improve attendance where patterns of absence are

emerging. SLT will implement strategies to support improving attendance on a case-by-case basis. SLT will consider the particular needs of the learners whom the intervention is designed to target.

TREC has effective procedures for managing absence, SLT will:

- Establish a range of specific, evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Sending letters to parents/carers.
    - Having a weekly tutor review.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Creating attendance clinics

Roles and responsibilities.

Learners are responsible for:

- Attending their sessions and any agreed activities when at college.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at college.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the college with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the college if their details change.
- The attendance of their young person at college.
- Promoting good attendance with their young person

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring learners do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual learners to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register by 9.15am and 1.15pm during the college day.

SLT is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the college.

- Ensuring all learners, parents/carers are aware of the college's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every learner has access to their education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in college.
- Informing the LA of any learner being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with learners, parents/carers with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor

attendance The governing board has overall responsibility

for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the college.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the college's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the college's Learner and Parent Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people.

TREC will work collaboratively to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with learners, parents/carers to build trust, to support open and honest communications about the expectations of the college. To ensure inclusion and support meeting the needs of all our learners. This policy intends to support a high level of attendance to prepare young people for the world of work and their adult life. It is important that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them