

## **ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY**

Levels of attendance have a direct impact on the success of our learners. Learners are more likely to complete and achieve their qualification if they attend classes regularly. Learners who arrive late have an impact not just on their own learning but also on the progress of the rest of the class. High expectations of attendance and punctuality will also be required by future employers. We need our staff to set and enforce, and our learners to comply with, high expectations of attendance and punctuality. If you cannot come to class/placement for any reason, it is very important that you telephone or email Rutledge or your employer to explain the reason why.

### **Main Principles**

The expectation is for 100% 'present' at all scheduled classes. The focus is on presence' rather than absence. Learners should be in class ready for the start of their lessons; late is late.

- Learners should know their own attendance levels and the regular review and reporting of attendance will be part of the learner monitoring process. The measure of attendance will be 'present'.
- In order to reduce the amount of time learners are not in class, either from sickness or other reasons, there will be high expectations and consistent processes to monitor, follow up and report on attendance.
- Any learner absence will be followed up by a member of Rutledge staff within 24 hours. Learners will be expected to explain in person the reason for their absence and the authorisation of absences will be limited to specific situations.
- There will be clear consequences for learners whose attendance falls below agreed levels. Conversely high attendance will be recognised and rewarded.
- Attendance monitoring is part of the Rutledge quality processes. Responsibility for achieving high levels of attendance lies with the tutors and MPC's.

### **Learners with Disabilities, Learning Difficulties or Other Support Needs**

If a learner has a disability or medical difficulty that directly affects their attendance or ability to arrive on time this should be identified with the learner and with their mentor. We will work with the learner to ensure that reasonable adjustments and support is in place and levels of expectation set accordingly. Any reviews or disciplinary actions will take into account and be responsive to the needs of learners with disabilities, learning difficulties or other emotional, social or behavioural needs. Support will be offered and provided where appropriate.

## **Expectations of Teaching Staff**

Quality improvement is the responsibility of course tutors, as well as managers. In order to improve class attendance the actions required by staff and learners are specified below.

Rutledge's high expectations should be communicated clearly. Learners are expected to be present in 100% of classes and to arrive before the start of class ready to learn. Tutors should:

- Consistently reinforce the message that poor attendance or punctuality is not acceptable and where it falls below an agreed level this will lead to action, including possible disciplinary action or even exclusion.
- Provide learners with clear instructions and a contact number to call in person if they are going to be absent that day; they must call in to report each day of absence.
- Accurately and fully complete each class register by the end of the session.
- Follow up each absence by a telephone call to the learner within 24 hours. This can be done by the tutor, administrator or MPC.
- Attendance should only be 'authorised' for absences agreed in advance or for exceptional personal circumstances. Sickness without a medical certificate is not authorised but must be marked as sickness.
- Challenge any learner who arrives after the start of the class. There is no '10 minute' rule. Complete a late book or follow up after the class has finished.
- Ensure that attendance and lateness is monitored weekly by a specific member of the teaching team and the consequences as given below are followed.
- Openly and regularly discuss the attendance and lateness levels of a group in class and tutorial sessions.
- Directly address issues of attendance/ punctuality in Individual Progress Reviews with targets for improvement set and monitored.
- Regularly obtain attendance reports for each group and discuss with other tutors, Mentors and managers,

## **Consequences**

The level for measuring attendance will be the 'present' level. Where attendance is affected by authorised absence it may still be necessary to talk directly to the learner or hold an Absence Review Meeting.

### **Absence Review Meeting with tutor or mentor (plus disciplinary warning if appropriate):**

- Attendance: Below 85% 'present', or absent two or more sessions in a week or 5 or more absences in any 4 week period
- Lateness: late twice in a week or more than 5 times in any 4 week period or patterns of lateness
- Patterns of absence (e.g. every Monday, Essential Skills lessons) or concerns about sickness occurring on a regular basis
- The review meeting should discuss reasons for absence, support where required and methods to catch up on missed work. Where appropriate a disciplinary warning can be issued.

### **Formal Disciplinary Hearing with Branch Manager**

- Attendance: Continued 'present' rate of less than 85%, persistent lateness or failure to improve since warnings or absence reviews

- If a second Disciplinary Hearing for poor attendance or punctuality is held, this can lead to final red warning or exclusion.

### **Reporting**

Attendance reports can be obtained from TMS

Personal tutors will report each week on the weekly and 4 weekly attendance of their group/course and discuss on a regular basis with their Manager at their IQS progress meeting.

### **Learners are expected to:**

- Ensure that they attend all lessons on their course and arrive before the start of the lesson properly equipped and prepared.
- Inform their tutor in person, before the lesson by an agreed contact route, if they have genuine reasons for lateness or absence.
- Know how to find out and regularly look up their own levels of attendance.
- Understand the expectations of attendance, the levels at which follow up action will happen and what the consequences will be.
- Always try to keep health and other appointments out of class hours where possible.
- Not take on work commitments that clash with time at Rutledge; any absence for work will be counted as unauthorised absence.
- Commit to complete outstanding work as homework from missed classes due to poor punctuality or attendance, with support as appropriate.

### **General Actions for Teaching Staff**

- Ensure that learners who are behind with their course work and require extra help are given individual attention or referred to Additional Learning Support (1-1 support)
- Where appropriate parents/employers should be involved to address issues of attendance and punctuality and for them to receive information on attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure that classes start promptly and finish as timetabled; tutors should be in the room before the start of class ready to start at the scheduled time. Classes should start on time even if there are learners who may arrive late.
- Learners should not be excluded from classes due to lateness unless there is a very good reason, for example health and safety or the level of disruption.
- Ensure that class attendance is enhanced by good practice in teaching and learning. This may include a variety of activities that engage learners in challenging and interesting tasks, use of a variety of teaching styles and formative assessment feedback.
- Emphasise motivational factors such as career progression routes, expectations of employers, the value of the final qualification in the job market or progression to Higher Education, in order to maintain the learners' interest and determination to achieve.

### **Authorised Absence**

A learner may be allowed reasonable time off in the following circumstances:

- to attend interviews for employment or Further Education;
- to attend interviews with the Department for Employment and Learning/Social Security Agency/Jobs and Benefits Office/Careers Office;
- to take written examinations or external competitive assessments related to the professional and technical qualifications being pursued;

- to attend a court of law;
- to attend a Community Service Order as directed by a Court of Law;
- for domestic emergencies including immediate family bereavements;
- to attend annual training courses or camps. A participant who is a member of the Auxiliary or Reserve Forces and who is required to attend annual training courses or camps may be granted special leave for a maximum of 2 weeks;
- to attend hospital/doctor/dentist appointments; only in emergencies or where these cannot be arranged outside the hours of participation.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

A learner absent without permission for more than four consecutive training days may be treated as having left the programme.

If a learner is absent without permission and is unable to provide a satisfactory explanation, the participant must not receive EMA for the period of absence. One fifth of the normal weekly allowance will be deducted for each full day of unauthorised absence. Rutledge will invoke disciplinary procedures where a participant has been absent without permission for five consecutive unauthorised days.

**Reviewed: SMT (August 2112)**

**Revised: Breda Cullen**