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Attendance / Lateness Policy

Background

ELC Bristol only runs intensive courses with classes both in the mornings and in the afternoons and our tuition fees are relatively expensive, so one would imagine we are not the sort of school which attracts students who do not want to attend or who would want to work rather than attend classes. This does not mean that we don't have attendance problems. Although the vast majority of students are motivated, there are always those who are not. Some are lazy, others are sick or have problems sleeping, some have children who are sick and there are always those whose priority is just having a good time.

To maintain the positive atmosphere we have in our classes, we need to encourage all students to attend as often as possible. Excluding a student for non-attendance is a last resort and is a failure on our part as it often means that the student should not have been here in the first place. Exclusions also become a statistic which can damage a school's reputation with agents and sponsors.

Procedures

During the welcome talk on the first day, the Vice Principal or Director of Studies explains to all students the importance of attending class regularly and the consequences of not attending. They will also explain the school's policy regarding students arriving late for classes.

Student attendance is recorded in the class registers. Teachers must fill in the registers carefully, marking when a student is present (/) or absent (A). If a student is late, they mark him/her down as present (/). If a student is absent, the teacher must indicate in the box at the bottom whether the absence was excused (E) or unauthorized (U). Often the teacher will not know this until they meet the student again so they must leave the authorized/excused box empty until they know for sure. Unauthorized absence is indicated by a U, and a complete day's unauthorized absence is indicated by a U with a circle around the U. If a student is doing an elective in another building, the teacher may not know if they attended the afternoon class – so if they were absent (unauthorized) for the first 2 lessons, they put a U in the box at the bottom, but don't circle it.

There is a separate excused absence record box in the register in which the class teacher makes a note of all excused absences, giving the reason for the authorization. Sickness is regarded as 'excused absence' but if a student misses more than 5 full days, the student must provide the school with a doctor's note. Teachers give doctors' notes to the Directors of Studies and they are kept with the students' records in the Pembroke House office.



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How students should inform us if they are ill

Students are informed in the induction talks and in their handbooks that when they are ill or have another good excuse for being absent, they need to text their DoS on the number provided for them in their handbooks and on the back of their student card.

Under 18s

All our students who are under 18 have to sign in in the office in their respective building before going to their first lesson. If the student hasn't signed in by 9.20, the relevant member of the safeguarding team will contact the student to find out why they aren't at school. As a safety net to this system, the teachers also inform a member of the safeguarding team if the student hasn't arrived in class after the first 5 minutes of any lesson has elapsed. The age of any students aged 16 or 17 is highlighted on the class register.

Attendance reports – reviews and analysis

Key members of staff are sent a circular email on Sunday evenings with an up-to-date report of students whose attendance is under 90% and 85% up to the previous Friday.

The database also produces reports of overall attendance which can be analysed by term (compared to previous terms) by building, teacher, class and nationality. These reports are discussed at senior management and teachers meetings where appropriate follow-up action is decided on.

Absence slips – if a student is absent from school, without authorization, for more than one day, the first teacher in the morning fills out an absence slip and gives it to their Director of Studies or Vice Principal during break time on the second day. The DoS/VP will then telephone the student or the accommodation provider and write down the reason for the absence on the slip and give it back to the class teacher. If a teacher is particularly concerned about their student and would like the Director of Studies/Academic Director to contact them before lunchtime on day 2, they should please let them know.

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Discipline

Teachers should, as a matter of course, always speak to **any** student who regularly arrives late or whose non-attendance disrupts the class. Teachers and Senior managers are sensitive as to the possible causes of absence in their dealings with students and take these into account when deciding what approach to take. If any student has more than 2 complete days' **unauthorized** absence within a two week period, the class teacher should speak to him/her.



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Teachers should also notify the DOS at the Friday teachers' meeting of any complete days' unauthorized absence and of any other concerns. There is, of course, some flexibility on these time frames depending on how long the student has been in the school and their previous attendance record.

If the absences continue, the teacher must inform the Director of Studies or Vice Principal and he/she should issue the first warning letter. The student must also sign this letter and be given a copy.

If after 2 weeks there is no improvement, the DoS or Vice Principal should issue the second warning letter.

If after a further 2 weeks the situation has still not improved, the student should be given the final warning letter.

If the student has any days unauthorized in the following 2 weeks, he/she will be asked to leave the school immediately.

Leaver's Certificates.

ELC Bristol has two types of leaver's certificate. One says that a student 'successfully completed a course', the other that the student 'was enrolled on a course'. Students whose attendance is less than 85% will be given the second type of certificate, which will also show the student's attendance percentage. Students are advised of this in the welcome talks, in their handbooks and it is also indicated in the warning letters for non-attendance.

Sick notes, records of any disciplinary meetings must all be kept in the students' files in the Pembroke office. Warning letters are filed away by the DoS and Vice Principal and a record is kept on the student's database profile.

Lateness policy

If students arrive more than 5 minutes late for any lesson, they are too late to be allowed into the lesson. If, however, a student feels they have a valid excuse for being late, they are asked to go to see their Director of Studies/Academic Director, who will take them to the classroom and ask the teacher to let them in if they believe the student has had a genuine problem. Students who are 3 or 4 minutes late are asked to knock on the classroom door before entering and are warned that their teacher may ask them to wait until there is a suitable break in the lesson before they are allowed in. See classroom Lateness policy poster below.



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Lateness

Students choose to come to ELC Bristol because they are motivated to learn English quickly and they know that ELC is a serious school. **Students who arrive late disrupt the class.**

If you arrive more than 5 minutes late, the teachers have been instructed not to let you into class.

We will only make an exception if you have a good reason for being late and if you telephone the school before the lesson begins.

If you are in Pembroke, please call 0117 9707050.

If you are in Abon, please call 0117 9707060.

If you are in The Summer Centre please call Pembroke and we will pass on the message.

