

Applicable to:	Learners & Staff
Date:	2019
Page:	1 of 4

LEARNER ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

1. Description

The Learner Attendance & Punctuality Policy has been developed as part of St. John's Central College commitment to providing a supportive learning environment which enables all learners who have chosen to study with the College to achieve their full potential.

Attendance is a key component in learner retention, progression, achievement and employability. Regular attendance and academic achievement are closely linked. Learners who actively participate in their learning by attending classes regularly are more likely to:

- Enjoy a rewarding experience in which their knowledge, skills and abilities are developed.
- Successfully complete their course.
- Achieve better results.

St. John's Central College expects all of our learners to have full attendance in order to successfully complete their course. Employers set high expectations of attendance and punctuality in the workplace. We therefore expect our learners in the College to comply with high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Every course or activity requires a commitment to attend **all** parts of the programme on offer fully and punctually. Any learner unable to fulfill this commitment may be required to leave the course or activity.

Absence for reasons covered by a medical certificate fall outside minimum attendance requirement, but will be subject to a combined authorised and unauthorised absences over 20 days when a course may be terminated.

Attendance, which falls below 80%, where there are no extenuating circumstances, is unacceptable.

2. Learner Responsibilities

Learners are expected to:

- Attend 100% of their timetabled classes punctually.
- If learners are late into class the onus is on the learner to ensure that their attendance is recorded.
- Report any absence due to illness or other reason to the Class teacher/Main Office on the first and any subsequent day of absence.
- Do everything possible to avoid unnecessary absences by making medical appointments outside class time unless it is an emergency.
- The start date of the academic year is clearly outlined, therefore late starts are to be avoided.
- Provide medical evidence to the Class teacher for absences of more than **3 consecutive timetabled days**.
- Give prior notification to the Class teacher in the event of foreseen authorised absence.
- Those students experiencing difficulties with attendance are requested to contact their Class teacher.

Applicable to:	Learners & Staff
Date:	2019
Page:	1 of 4

3. Staff and College Responsibilities

The College will record, monitor and report on the attendance of all students for all of their timetabled classes in accordance with the College procedure.

For those students in receipt of the student maintenance grant this payment shall be made subject to satisfactory participation and attendance on the course. Learners absent for **5 days or more in a monthly period** will not receive a grant payment. This is subject to an appeal process if the student wishes to appeal the non-payment.

There are regular reviews of students' progress on their programme, including attendance, completion of assessment requirements and academic achievement, and that appropriate action is taken either to help learners achieve their academic aims or, where learners are failing to engage with the course, advising them to seek alternative career paths.

Verbal and written communications with learners with regards to attendance will be kept in order to build up a pattern of attendance behaviour and documentation will be used to support the College in its management of attendance and punctuality.

In the event of unsatisfactory attendance, the College is committed to advise learners of the support available to them, such as the College's Guidance Counselling Service, Disability Support Officer, VTOS Coordinator, Susi Grant Officer etc.

4. Susi Grant Payment

SUSI will pay the grant-holder's maintenance grant in monthly instalments in arrears during the academic year. Payment is made subject to satisfactory participation and attendance on the programme.

St. John's Central College is fully aware of the financial support that maintenance grants play in allowing learners to pursue full time education. The College policy aims to be student friendly. It adheres to the Department of Education and Skills (DES) guidelines which allows payment of grants subject to 'satisfactory participation and attendance.'

- Eligible students will not receive grants if they have been absent **five days or more** during a calendar month.
- When returning to College after an absence a learner is required to present medical certification to their Class Teacher, if applicable, on their return.
- If learners are late into class the onus is on the learner to ensure that their attendance is recorded.
- Retrospective medical certificates are not acceptable.
- A regular level of attendance is required to continue to receive grant payments irrespective of medical certification.
- Learners, who have long term absences due to illness, will cease to receive grant payments.
- All communications with regards to grants should be directed to the Susi Grant Officer.

Appeal:

- A student can make a written appeal against the non-payment of grants using the official Maintenance Grant Appeal Form. (These are available from the Main Office)
- In the event of an appeal not being successful, a student can make a final appeal to the College Principal.

5. Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS)

Applicable to:	Learners & Staff
Date:	2019
Page:	1 of 4

- It is a condition of acceptance on the VTOS Programme that each participant attends and participates fully (min. 80%) in all timetabled classes.
- In the event of absence, the VTOS Co-ordinator should be informed prior to the absence or on the first morning of the absence and where possible state the number of expected days of absence.
- Participants shall be required to submit a medical certificate in respect of all absences of more than **3 consecutive timetabled days** unless the co-ordinator is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, details of which will be recorded.
- Participants who have been absent without satisfactory explanation for **10 consecutive timetabled days will be deemed to have opted out of the programme and their VTOS payment terminated**. Re-admission to the programme can only occur with the permission of the VTOS Co-ordinator.
- Participants who have missed a significant amount of time, authorised and unauthorised combined, which will result in they being unable to participate effectively on the course, may be advised by the Attendance Committee, which comprises of the Deputy Principal in charge of Attendance, Class teacher and/or Subject teacher or College Management against resuming their place on the course in the current year. **In this regard, above 20 days of absences would be regarded as significant.**

6. In the Event of Unsatisfactory Attendance:

Where a learner's attendance is unsatisfactory, one or more of the following actions may be taken:

1. Class teachers may contact the learner to seek an explanation for their unsatisfactory attendance;
2. Learners may be invited by the Attendance Committee to discuss with the college Attendance Committee how their attendance will be improved and any support that may be required;
3. Learners in receipt of a SUSI grant will not receive grants if they have been absent **five days or more** during a calendar month.
4. Learners who have been absent without satisfactory explanation for **10 consecutive timetabled days** without contact with the College will be deemed to have opted out of the course. The onus is upon the learner to make contact with the College. Re-affirmation of enrolment can occur only with the permission of the Deputy Principal in charge of attendance in the first instance.
5. Where a learner has missed a significant amount of time, authorised and unauthorised combined, which will result in they being unable to participate effectively on the course, the learner may be advised by the Attendance Committee or College Management against resuming their place on the course in the current year. **In this regard, a period above 20 days absent would be regarded as significant.**
6. The Attendance Committee has the power to recommend to the Principal the learner's college place should be terminated.
7. Staff writing references for students (for colleges, universities, employers etc.) will refer to students' record of attendance;

Applicable to:	Learners & Staff
Date:	2019
Page:	1 of 4

Absent 3 consecutive timetabled Days or more:
Result: Medical Evidence

Absent 5 days or more in a monthly period:
Result: Non-payment of Susi Grant

Without satisfactory explanation for 10 consecutive timetabled day:
Result: VTOS payment terminated

Without satisfactory explanation for 10 consecutive timetabled days:
Result: Deemed to have opted out of the course

Authorised and unauthorised combined absences over 20 days:
Result: Course place may be terminated

7. Appeals Committee

A learner can make an appeal to the Appeals Committee which can uphold or overturn the decision of the Attendance Committee. The Appeals Committee comprises of a Deputy Principal, a staff representative and an external person. Course Co ordinator, Class teacher and Subject teacher(s) are central to giving the Appeals Committee objective background to each case that arises. The aim of the Committee is to deal with each learner fairly, but while at all times, implementing the agreed College Policy regarding attendance.

8. Disclosure

Learners over the age of 18 have the right to privacy of their attendance records. However, attendance records will be made available

1. to individual learners, or parents/guardians if the learner is under 18;
2. to statutory authorities with the right to access to such information on receipt of a valid request for such information;
3. to others in appropriate cases and with the written request of the student (or parent / guardian if the learner is under 18) concerned.

5. Associated Documents

Discipline Policy
 Student Contracts