Lews Castle College Attendance Policy 2019-20

The College is a community, and as with all communities, must have some basic ground rules if it is to function effectively. The College policy on attendance is similar to that found in any workplace. There are consequences if you fail to keep to it.

By taking up a place at College, you have agreed to attend your course in order to gain qualifications. In order to achieve these, you need to attend regularly and punctually. Poor attendance affects your work. It can also affect other students in your group, especially where group or team work is involved.

It is your responsibility as a student to ensure you understand the policy and procedure.

If you are on a Further Education course, absences are either authorised or unauthorised. Both can affect potential payment of funds to you.

You are responsible for reporting your absence.

Failure to follow the procedures below may affect payment of your EMA/Bursary and Discretionary and/or Childcare Funds.

1. Authorised Absence

An authorised absence is one which has been agreed in advance by your Personal Academic Tutor. You must complete an Authorised Absence Form before your absence, get it signed by your Personal Academic Tutor and tutors whose classes you will miss for them to initial and then take it to Student Services.

Acceptable Authorised Absences:

- To attend the funeral of a close family member
- To attend an emergency appointment with your GP – you must still ring to tell Reception know you will be late
- To care for an ill dependent child

Evidence required before the appointment for the following:

- To attend a hospital or dental appointment
- To sit a driving test
- To attend a job interview
- To attend court

For these you must show an appointment notice or letter. Absences will not be authorised if you do not show proof.

In exceptional circumstances not covered by any of the above, authorised absence may be given at the discretion of the Personal Academic Tutor and documented on the authorised absence form.
You cannot request an authorised absence for:

- Driving lessons
- Missing the bus
- Routine appointments with your GP*
- Sleeping in
- Holidays taken out with college holidays

*Appointments with your doctor, dentist etc. should be fitted into private study time or after College hours unless you need urgent attention.

Non-attendance for these reasons will be marked as unauthorised absence.

2. Sickness Absence Notification

If you are off ill you must phone Reception on 01851 770000 between 8am and 9.30am clearly giving your name, student identity number and course, and state that you are off ill.

Reception will notify staff.

Only absences notified by 9.30am will count as authorised.

DO NOT contact your teaching staff direct.

DO NOT text the college – the system cannot process them and the message will be lost.

If you are off sick for more than one day, you must ring in on each day you are off sick by 9.30am and tell Reception. This is so that we can notify staff so that they can mark you are off sick on the Registers.

If you have frequent absences and/or are failing to engage with the course, you will be required to attend a meeting with your PAT to discuss the situation. This can lead to payment of funding being withheld or withdrawn.

If you are ill for more than a week:

If you have to take more than a week off college, you must get a ‘Statement of Fitness for Work’ from your doctor, which you need to bring into college on your first day back and give to your Personal Academic Tutor.

- Prolonged periods of absence due to illness or injury must be backed up by medical certificates which you should forward to your Personal Academic Tutor. Do not wait until you return to college.
• If you have an on-going medical condition which may affect your attendance, we will ask you to provide a letter from a healthcare professional confirming this.

• If you are likely to be absent for a prolonged period (four weeks or more) on the grounds of ill-health or for other genuine reasons, payment of EMA, Bursary and/or Discretionary and Childcare Funds will stop after four weeks, unless the college is supporting your absence by helping you to maintain progress on the course.

• You must keep in contact with the college if you are off. If you are off sick, we can offer ways to catch-up when you are well enough to return. Or you may be able to agree to do some work at home, as you recover, depending on your circumstances.

3. **Unauthorised Absence**

• If you do not ring into the college to tell us you are off ill, this counts as unauthorised.

• Not having enough credit on your mobile phone or a flat battery are not acceptable reasons for not calling in.

• Coming in for only part of the day but missing some classes without informing the relevant teaching staff (including your PAT) will be counted as unauthorised absence for the periods you miss.

4. **Timekeeping – arriving late/leaving early**

Late arrival or leaving early will be recorded in the Class Register.

Students are expected to account for late arrivals to their Personal Academic Tutors, in advance where possible.

Early departure must also be agreed by the Personal Academic Tutor in advance.

Persistent unauthorised late arrival/early departure will lead to the Personal Academic Tutor meeting with the student. If no satisfactory explanation is received, it will count as a Disciplinary offence and the Student Disciplinary Procedure will be followed.
5. **Non-Payment of EMA/Bursary/Other Funds**

No letters are sent regarding withholding money, it is automatically stopped when you do not comply with the attendance and engagement requirements on your course. This will be discussed between you and your PAT.

If you want to query an absence, you need to discuss this with your Personal Academic Tutor. The PAT will notify Student Services of any recommendation for payment. Student Services staff cannot amend Registers.

6. **Important Points to Note**

- If you are absent from College for a period of 2 weeks without explanation, your place will be withdrawn.

- If you are under 16 and absent without genuine reason or prior authorisation, your parent/guardian will be contacted by letter or by telephone, where appropriate.

- If personal or financial difficulties are the cause of your absence, you can discuss this in confidence with any of the Student Services staff.

- Persistent, unexplained absenteeism can lead to disciplinary action being taken against you.

- If you withdraw from your course, you must discuss this with your Personal Academic Tutor **before** you withdraw. You are liable to repay any money which has been overpaid as a result of your withdrawal.