


Policy

Climate for Learning and Attendance

Approved by:	Board of Trustees
Date:	Summer 2024
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This policy applies to:	 The logo for Durham Sixth Form Centre, featuring a stylized 'D' followed by the text 'DURHAM SIXTH FORM CENTRE'.

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Links with other policies:

This Policy is linked to:

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy
- Statement of Intent - Curriculum
- Statement of Intent - Most Able
- Statement of Intent - Disadvantaged
- Statement of Intent - SEND
- Statement of Intent - Oracy
- Statement of Intent - Skills

1. Policy Introduction and Purpose Statement

- 1.1. In line with our values, Durham Sixth Form Centre has the highest expectations of all of our students, to ensure that they are able to maximise their full learning potential and be prepared for those all-important next steps in life, whether that is higher education, an apprenticeship or employment. We are fully committed to supporting the personal and educational needs of all students by providing the highest level of academic and pastoral support.
- 1.2. We firmly believe that effective learning is best achieved in a supportive and mutually respectful environment. Our Climate for Learning Policy is designed to support students to develop lifelong skills and behaviours, equipping them for the workplace and to contribute successfully to society. The policy aims to promote positive behaviours; students must therefore know what is expected of them as well as the consequence of not meeting these expectations.
- 1.3. We recognise the importance of developing positive relationships but also recognise that context and personal circumstances can sometimes impact on student behaviours and that no two students or circumstances of misconduct are likely to be the same. As such, we reserve the right to use professional judgement and may sometimes vary the approach we take [and may make adjustments to arrangements set out in this policy] when addressing issues related to behaviours and conduct.
- 1.4. We will consider whether issues in relation to behaviours and conduct may be linked to a student suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm. Where this may be the case, we will follow our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and consider whether pastoral support, early help intervention or a referral to children's social care is appropriate.
- 1.5. All members of staff are accountable for challenging unacceptable behaviours and conduct as it is essential that we have the highest expectations and are consistent in the behaviours and conduct that we accept on site, in lessons, on visits, organised events and when students are representing Durham Sixth Form Centre such as whilst completing work experience. It is important to build relationships on trust and respect. Therefore, it is important that we support our students in a professional manner and challenge any issues in a calm, professional and fair way.
- 1.6. Durham Sixth Form Centre aims to:
 - Provide high quality transition to prepare students for the demands of further education and next steps, including apprenticeships and the world of work;
 - Offer a wide range of courses and subjects (NB: it must be noted, however, that this offer will depend upon demand, availability of resources and teaching staff);
 - Provide high quality teaching, resources and facilities to support students in maximising their potential;
 - Provide access to high quality resources to support face-to-face learning. This includes wider study resources to support independence and resilience;
 - Monitor the progress of students regularly and provide routine updates to parents/carers throughout the academic year, including attendance;
 - Praise and recognise students for a consistently excellent attitude to learning, recognising when they go above and beyond;
 - Report any matters of concern to both the student and their parents/carers in order to resolve any issues quickly;
 - Respond to any parent/student queries as quickly as possible, aiming to do so within 48 working hours;
 - Offer a safe and tolerant environment for students to learn in where discrimination and bullying of any kind will not be accepted;
 - Offer a balanced and holistic curriculum of academic, personal and social education, including information relating to careers advice and guidance, health, well-being and sexual health;
 - Support students' academic and personal welfare;

- Provide access to additional support services, if appropriate;
- Give students the opportunity to exercise responsibility and leadership;
- Provide a range of enrichment, recreational and extra-curricular activities in which students can engage;
- Support the development of skills, including employability skills, through all aspects of our delivery;
- Provide appropriate records about students to future employers and higher educational establishments, as appropriate.

Positive Behaviour

1.7. Staff are encouraged to use praise and recognition to positively affirm the styles of behaviours we expect to see students exhibit in and around the Academy and in lessons. Staff are encouraged to make good use of systems that recognise positive behaviours, attitude to learning, achievement and attendance, such as praise postcards home, commendations, rewards and awards. In addition, following routine data captures (Progress Indicator Letters) students worthy of special note will be identified by the relevant Senior Leader and receive letters home and other rewards as deemed appropriate.

1.8. The Climate for Learning Policy is underpinned by three basic expectations of students which are:

- attendance and punctuality
- academic
- conduct

1.9. At enrolment, we share these aims with students and, as part of our Climate for Learning agreement, students sign up to the following expectations:

1.10. Attendance and punctuality expectations

- Maintain excellent levels of attendance (95%+) at subject lessons.
- Attend and engage in all weekly CORE sessions.
- Attend mentoring appointments, additional wider study support sessions and compulsory support sessions, when directed to do so.
- Follow the published protocols for absence.
- Arrive and be ready to start learning at the published start times for each lesson.
- Ensure no unauthorised absence.
- Do not take holidays during term time.
- Take responsibility for catching up any work missed due to absence, for whatever reason.
- Attend all examinations, on time, and do so in compliance with exam board regulations.
- Accept financial responsibility for non-attendance at examinations (see Examinations Policy).

1.11. Academic expectations

- Actively participate in all activities in lessons.
- Complete all work set by the appropriate deadlines and to the best of their ability. This includes classwork, wider study, coursework and any online learning.
- Ensure any work submitted is their own, has not been created using artificial intelligence (AI) and is not plagiarised in any other way.
- Understand that, as a full time student, any non-contact periods are for independent/wider study.
- Work independently and conscientiously throughout the course to prepare for assessments/examinations.
- Be organised, self motivated, proactive and resilient with regards to their studies.
- Actively seek help and guidance from teaching staff and others in the pursuit of their studies.
- Effectively utilise independent study periods to engage in wider study and revision in support of learning. If this is deemed not to be the case, this non-contact time is likely to be withdrawn.
- Manage their time and workload effectively ensuring that their academic studies are prioritised over part-time work and other commitments.

- Remain committed to a full time programme of study which will include a minimum of three Level 3 subjects (or equivalent).
- Complete and meet deadlines for coursework/non-examined assessment elements of all applicable courses.

1.12. Conduct Expectations

- Follow the reasonable instructions of the Academy's staff at all times.
- Maintain appropriate standards of behaviour, ensuring respect is shown to staff, other students, buildings and facilities both in classrooms and the wider environment.
- Refrain from eating and drinking in lessons (with the exception of water).
- Remove caps/hats and outside coats/jackets in lessons in order to create a mature, professional and purposeful learning environment.
- Not use, or make visible, mobile phones in lessons, unless directed to do so by the teacher.
- Not use, or make visible, headphones in lessons, unless permission is granted to do so by the teacher.
- Wear lanyards with student ID badges at all times whilst on site and follow published protocols if they forget their lanyard.
- Never, under any circumstances, bring people on site who are not students of Durham Sixth Form Centre.
- Report any strangers on site to a member of staff immediately.
- Dress appropriately for an educational setting. See Student Dress Code.
- Read the weekly Student Briefing Notes to ensure they are aware of important messages.
- Check Academy email accounts, student notice boards, the Student Dashboard, social media and Google Classrooms regularly, in order to stay abreast of current news, important updates and work set by their teachers.
- Adhere to all Academy policies, including the Acceptable Use of ICT and Internet Use Agreement.
- Accept that this is a non-smoking site (including e-cigarettes and vapes) and to comply with this requirement.
- Accept that the use of, or being under the influence of, alcohol and/or drugs is strictly prohibited.
- Accept financial responsibility for any property committed to the student's care or to ensure its return in good condition at the end of the course.
- Take advantage of the opportunities provided by Durham Sixth Form Centre.

Bullying and Harassment

- 1.13. Durham Sixth Form Centre does not tolerate bullying and/or peer-to-peer abuse including sexual abuse and harassment. If a student feels that they or others are being bullied, harassed or discriminated against, they should report it to a member of staff. All reported incidents will be investigated, dealt with accordingly and logged.

Student Dress Code

- 1.14. Durham Sixth Form Centre believes that the way we present ourselves has an important role in contributing to the ethos and values it represents and in setting an appropriate tone for learning, behaviours and attitude, but also in preparing students for the world of work and life beyond sixth form.
- 1.15. Items of clothing that may reasonably be expected to cause offence or deemed inappropriate to any member of the Academy community, such as those bearing inappropriate language or images, or particularly revealing items of clothing, are not permitted.
- 1.16. If a student breaches the Dress Code, the matter should be referred to the Pastoral team, who will review the situation and:
- Discuss the issue with the student - explaining what the issue is and how the Dress Code has been breached.

- Ask the student to refrain from wearing the item(s) of clothing again and/or send the individual home to remove or change the items of clothing. Please note: this is not a fixed term exclusion and the student will be readmitted immediately once they comply with the Dress Code.

Probationary period

- 1.17. The transition from school to sixth form and from level 2 to level 3 study is a significant one, and students will adapt to it in different ways. Durham Sixth Form Centre treats the first half term as an important period during which each student will have the opportunity to make some changes to their study programme and teachers and tutors will be able to monitor and support every student to enable them to succeed and achieve. This period is referred to as the Probationary Period, and it enables both students and staff to work together to ensure that students are working well, are happy and engaged, and are developing good study habits.
- 1.18. For the minority of students, this period will allow them to reconsider their subject choices with appropriate guidance and support. It will serve as a useful settling-in period in which they can be helped to develop as sixth form students rather than school pupils. Occasionally the probationary period will identify students for whom the sixth form environment is not working, for whatever reason. We will explore any additional support students may need during this period, and beyond. Where there are significant concerns about attendance, punctuality, commitment, attitude to learning or behaviour during this period, contravening the Climate for Learning agreement, the identified student may have their probationary period extended, in order to allow a further opportunity to demonstrate improvement, or have their place of study withdrawn.
- 1.19. At enrolment, both parents/carers and students will be required to confirm their acceptance of these expectations by signing the Climate for Learning agreement.

2. Attendance

- 2.1. Excellent attendance and punctuality are both characteristics of students who achieve highly, and are essential in the development of employability skills. At Durham Sixth Form Centre, we regularly review student attendance as we know that there is a direct link between excellent attendance and academic achievement. The most up-to-date research from the Sixth Form Colleges Association demonstrates that a student with less than 90% attendance performs around one fifth of a grade below expectation on average. For a student with less than 85% attendance this has an even greater significant impact with the student performing around half a grade below expectation. Extrapolated across a three A level programme, the typical student with attendance below 85% will perform at least two grades lower than a student with attendance above 95%. In competitive university entrance and other contexts, two grades represents a life-changing difference. As such, we expect students to maintain an excellent level of attendance (95%+) and punctuality at lessons. This includes all timetabled subject and CORE sessions, mentoring appointments and additional wider study support sessions, when directed.
- 2.2. Whilst we recognise that there may be genuine reasons for absence, for which we provide a plethora of support, unfortunately, once a student begins to fall behind it is often difficult to catch up. Our courses are demanding and absence, for whatever reason, will inevitably lead to students missing work and falling behind with their studies which can have serious consequences on academic success and progression.

Attendance Protocols

- 2.3. Our attendance procedures place similar responsibility on students to that of a professional work environment promoting independence, accountability and proactivity so that students are better equipped to deal with future employment or training. We expect students and their parents/carers to follow the published protocols for absence which are listed below:

Illness

- 2.4. The student or parent/carer should contact Durham Sixth Form Centre's Attendance Officer on the morning of absence with a reason for absence. This reason must be a specific one. For instance, "feeling unwell" will not be considered appropriate and would thus be challenged accordingly.
- 2.5. The Attendance Officer can be contacted by email at: studentabsence@durhamsixthformcentre.org.uk or by telephone on 0191 3830708. The student or parent/carer should try to give some indication about the length of absence so this information can be shared with the appropriate members of staff.
- 2.6. If a student becomes ill whilst at the Academy and needs to go home early, they must liaise with their Progress Tutor in order to sign out and ascertain the reason for leaving. If the student is unable to speak to their Progress Tutor, they must sign out at Student Reception in the Resource Centre. Failure to do so will mean the absence is not authorised.
- 2.7. Where we have concerns about a student's attendance and/or if patterns of non-attendance begin to emerge, we will remove the option where students are able to 'self-certify' non-attendance. In such situations, the parent/carer of the student will have to contact the Attendance Officer to inform them of the absence as well as give a suitable reason.

Leave of Absence

- 2.8. For a known absence (funeral, interview, open day, specialist medical appointment etc.) a blue Leave of Absence form must be completed in advance and handed in to the Attendance Officer. These can be obtained from Student Reception. In order for this absence to be authorised, the student must provide appropriate evidence.
- 2.9. Routine doctor and dentist appointments and driving lessons **must not** be organised during a student's timetabled commitments. Such appointments should be made during a student's non-contact periods, after the end of the Academy day or during holidays periods.

Holidays

- 2.10. Holidays in term time are not permitted. We will never authorise holidays during term time but if a holiday is taken against our advice, a green holiday form must still be completed and taken to the student's Pastoral Support Manager. The Pastoral Support Manager will timetable the student for Supervised Study in the Learning Hub in order to support the student in catching up any missed work. It is mandatory that students attend this additional support.

Punctuality

- 2.11. Students who arrive late to any lesson will be recorded by their subject teacher as late on their register - with a note and the number of minutes late recorded. The student will still gain their attendance mark. Students must make the missed time up at the end of the lesson. Patterns arising from poor punctuality will be dealt with through the Staged Sanction System.

Non-attendance and no contact

- 2.12. Students' attendance will be monitored initially by our Attendance Officer who will escalate any causes for concern to the appropriate member of the Pastoral Team. Patterns arising from poor attendance will be dealt with through the Staged Sanction System.
- 2.13. Failure to follow attendance protocols, as well as patterns of irregular/unexplained absence and the taking of holidays will affect financial bursary payments.

3. Staged Sanctions

- 3.1. As our students are becoming young adults and taking increasing responsibility for their own lives, we will always seek to raise any issue(s) with them directly first in a bid to address the matter as quickly as possible. By raising any issue(s) with students directly, we wish to give them the opportunity to act maturely and respond positively. However, parents/carers will be informed if this is not the case.
- 3.2. If students continue to fall below our expectations, it is then that they will be moved through our formal Staged Sanction System, see Appendix 1. Actions at each stage of the Staged Sanction System will be progressive in nature. Parental engagement and support is expected throughout this process.
- 3.3. If a student is placed on the Staged Sanction System in Y12, this will be carried forward into Y13.

Misconduct and Gross misconduct

- 3.4. Misconduct and gross misconduct are rare at Durham Sixth Form Centre. They are determined by the severity of the incident(s) or where, despite previous warnings, unacceptable behaviours have been repeated. Any matter of such a nature will be fully investigated and communicated.
- 3.5. Misconduct - examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Smoking or vaping on the Academy premises.
 - Bringing others on site who are not students here and/or being complicit in them gaining entry to our site.
 - Plagiarism/Exam malpractice.
 - Failure to meet NEA and Applied General assignment deadlines by the final deadline.
 - Persistent absenteeism/prolonged unauthorised absences.
- 3.6. Gross misconduct - examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Violent, threatening or obstructive behaviour.
 - Harassment or bullying (physical or verbal, including by electronic means).
 - Violation of the Academy's rules and procedures in relation to health and safety.
 - Possession of or dealing in illegal substances.
 - Possession of or being under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
 - Involvement in a criminal offence, which may adversely affect the Academy's reputation.
 - Abusive behaviour towards a member of staff or another student.
 - Sexual abuse, assault or harassment.
 - Carrying an offensive weapon.
 - Theft or willful damage to Academy property.
 - Behaviour that brings the Academy into disrepute.
- 3.7. In addition, repeated breaches of the Climate for Learning agreement, which results in an escalation through the upper stages of the Staged Sanction System, is considered to be gross misconduct.
- 3.8. If we consider an incident to be sufficiently serious, the following actions may be taken:
 - We may escalate students to the upper stages of the Staged Sanction System.
 - We may issue students with a fixed term exclusion whilst we investigate the issue(s).
 - We may permanently exclude students from the Academy.
- 3.9. In the event of an incident of gross misconduct, a formal meeting with the student and parents/carers will take place with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Parents/carers will be informed of the outcome, as soon as possible thereafter.
- 3.10. In some instances of gross misconduct, the Academy may need to report matters to the police and/or other professional bodies e.g. safeguarding team, health and safety team.

Removal of place of study

- 3.11. If a student does not make sufficient improvement following significant levels of support and intervention, as outlined in our formal staged sanction system, or has been involved in a form of gross misconduct, the Principal reserves the right to withdraw a student's place of study at the Academy at any point. This will be in the form of a permanent exclusion.
- 3.12. Once a decision has been taken to remove a student's place of study at Durham Sixth Form Centre, the parent/carers will be notified as soon as possible by either a meeting or telephone conversation. The Principal will also confirm the decision in a formal written letter to the parent/carer, which will be sent via post.
- 3.13. If excluded, the student concerned will be offered the opportunity to meet a member of the Academy's careers team to discuss other options available to them.

Searching (with or without consent)

- 3.14. The Principal, and staff they have authorised, have a statutory power to search for any item banned by the Academy and/or which has been identified by the [Department for Education](#) as an item which may be searched for, including knives/weapons, alcohol, illegal drugs and stolen items, fireworks and pornographic images, or any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury, or damage to property.
- 3.15. Academy staff can search a student for any item listed above, with or without consent. If a member of staff suspects a student has a banned item in their possession, they can instruct the student to turn out their pockets and/or bag. The searcher must be the same sex as the student and there must be a witness present.

4. Achievement & Attainment

- 4.1. As outlined in the introduction to this Policy, *'we have the highest expectations of all of our students to ensure that they are able to maximise their full learning potential and be prepared for those all-important next steps in life, whether that is higher education, an apprenticeship or employment. We are fully committed to supporting the personal and educational needs of all students by providing the highest level of academic and pastoral support'*. Where a student begins to struggle with the academic demands of a particular course, the student must demonstrate that they are trying hard to overcome these challenges. The subject teacher and/or Head of Department should also offer support and intervention. This support can take a variety of forms. If such concerns exist alongside issues associated with attendance and/or attitude to learning, these will be addressed through the Staged Sanction System.
- 4.2. Students must pass their end of Year 12 summer examinations in order to continue that subject into Year 13. Where a student is unable to continue their chosen subject we may, in some circumstances, be able to offer them enrolment onto a one year course in Year 13. Enrolment onto these courses, however, will be based on the student having excellent levels of attendance and attitude to learning, and at least satisfactory performance, in their other courses.

5. Fit to Study

- 5.1. At Durham Sixth Form Centre, we recognise that a small minority of our students may have significant medical issues or personal circumstances which may affect their ability to adhere to some of the expectations outlined in this document. In such a scenario, support and actions will be implemented inline with our Fit to Study procedures. These actions will be bespoke to the individual and form the basis of a Fit to Study Support Plan.
- 5.2. A student's fitness to study will be questioned if any of the following arise:

- Health problems or personal circumstances disrupt a student's own study.
 - Health problems or personal circumstances affect the study of other students.
 - Health problems or personal circumstances place unreasonable demands on staff or other students.
- 5.3. The Academy has a duty of care to its community and is bound by health and safety legislation, which means it is obliged to take action if a student presents a risk to themselves or others.
- 5.4. We will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to our expectations and protocols in order to take an individual's condition or circumstances into consideration but students will still be monitored in the same way as all other students.
- 5.5. We expect students to accept and fully engage in any support offered, demonstrating that they are making every effort to overcome their barriers to learning. We are not a distance learning institution and thus, irrespective of a student's medical issues or personal circumstances, physical face to face presence in class is compulsory.
- 5.6. If a student does not make sufficient improvement following support and is still unable to meet expectations which have been adjusted to take their circumstances into consideration, a Fit to Study Case Review meeting will be enacted. If issues persist, it will be deemed that the student is not 'fit to study' and, at this point, the Principal reserves the right to withdraw their place of study at Durham Sixth Form Centre.

Limits to support

- 5.7. Whether medical conditions or other circumstances are raised before a student joins Durham Sixth Form Centre, or whilst studying here, there must be reasonable limits set to the support which can be offered. Our resources and the support available is finite and needs to be available to other students as well. As such, there will be situations in which we believe that we have made sufficient reasonable adjustments and we have exhausted all of the support options available.

Appeals

- 5.8. Both students and parents/carers have the right to appeal the decision taken by the Principal to withdraw the place of study at Durham Sixth Form Centre. This can be done through the Complaints Procedure Policy

Restarting at Durham Sixth Form Centre

- 5.9. Some students who leave during Year 12, as a result of struggling with significant medical issues or personal circumstances, may wish to restart Year 12 in the following academic year. This restart is on a conditional basis with the student having to reapply under our Year 12 Repeaters route. Students should contact the Academy, in the second half of the summer term, to request the 'Year 12 Repeaters Expression of Interest Form', which they should fill out and submit in line with the instructions on the form. A review will be conducted, following the submission of an application, to determine whether the student is fit to return to study. Medical evidence may be required to demonstrate that they are fit to study. All applications will be considered at the point of enrolment, at the end of August, and a decision will be made by the Principal at this point. Please see our Admissions Policy for further details.
- 5.10. If a student is offered the opportunity of a restart, they must restart their education in the following academic year. Such students must state that they are sufficiently recovered and ready for the restart of their studies, and the challenges this may present, and that they are well enough to access face-to-face Level 3 education, in line with this Policy, at the point of the restart. They must also accept that they must adhere to the expectations stipulated within this Policy, including those linked to attendance.

- 5.11. Any student who restarts Year 12 will be closely monitored in order to ensure their return to study is successful. In addition, students may not be able to restart Year 12 on the same courses due to funding restrictions.
- 5.12. Whilst every effort will be made to follow this policy, circumstances may not always allow this or may render parts of the policy inappropriate. Individuals will be treated fairly and in line with legislation in all instances.

Equality Statement

- 5.13. This policy applies to all Durham Sixth Form Centre students regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. All individuals will be treated in a fair and equitable manner recognising any special needs where reasonable adjustments can be made. No individual will suffer any form of discrimination as a result of this policy.

6. Appendix 1: Staged Sanction System

Staged Sanction System

Stage	Staff	Description
Logged Interventions <i>Please note: Students will not officially be on the SSS at this point.</i>	Teachers, Progress Tutors	All issues will be logged as a Teacher Intervention, Progress Tutor Intervention, or Other Intervention . These issues may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subject Attendance Concerns ● Overall Attendance Concerns ● Attitude to Learning Concerns (Wider Study completion, missed deadlines etc.) ● Behaviour for Learning Concerns ● Punctuality Concerns ● Achievement/Performance Concerns
	Heads of Department, Pastoral Support Managers	Where a number of interventions have been logged, the Subject Teacher will seek the support of the Head of Department and the Progress Tutor will seek the support of the Pastoral Support Manager to implement further interventions. These will be logged as HOD Interventions or PSM Interventions .

If, following interventions by the colleagues above, concerns remain, the student will be formally placed on the Staged Sanction System at Stage 1 with appropriate interventions and targets.

Stage 1	Pastoral Support Manager/Leader of Learning
Stage 2	Assistant Principal
Stage 3	Vice Principal
Stage 4	Principal

Fit to Study Policy

Stage	Staff
F2S#1	Pastoral Support Manager
F2S#2	Assistant Principal
F2S#3	Vice Principal
F2S#4	Principal



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