

# **The ArtsXchange**

**Part of T4 Trust**

## **ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSION POLICY**

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## The Roles and responsibilities

### Roles

The Trust Board	The Board of Directors of the Trust (including any committee of the board duly appointed by it), who may also be referred to as trustees
The Headteacher	The teacher in charge of the college who may also be referred to as Head of College

### Key personnel

Head of College	Gosia Klosek Email: <a href="mailto:gosia.klosek@theartsxchange.com">gosia.klosek@theartsxchange.com</a>
Business Manager	Lorraine Drewe Email: <a href="mailto:Lorraine.drewe@theartsxchange.com">Lorraine.drewe@theartsxchange.com</a>
Designated Safety guarding lead	Adelle Miles Email: <a href="mailto:adelle.miles@theartsxchange.com">adelle.miles@theartsxchange.com</a>
The Safeguarding Lead and Health and Safety Executive for T4 Trust	Julie Pierzchniak Email: <a href="mailto:Julie.pierzchniak@t4trust.co.uk">Julie.pierzchniak@t4trust.co.uk</a>
Safeguarding Lead – Board of Governors T4 Trust	Sara Attwood
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	Tim Djavit – London Borough of Islington 020 7527 8102
The NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line	0800 028 0285 which is free & anonymous, more information can be found at <a href="http://nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing">nspcc.org.uk/whistleblowing</a> .

## Legislation

We believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, represents the college ethos, enables consistency and quality across the college and is related to the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007
- Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The following documentation is also related to this policy:

- Advice on School Attendance (DfE)
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools (DfE)
- Improving Attendance at School (DfE)
- School attendance parental responsibility measures: Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police (DfE)
- Race Disparity Audit - Summary Findings from the Ethnicity Facts and Figures Website (Cabinet Office)
- Data Protection: a toolkit for schools (DfE)
- Preparing for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) - Information Commissioner's Office

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

## Promoting good attendance

- We expect all college staff to support and promote excellent college attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all students are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to college. college staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality's
- Sometimes a student's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances, it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances

- We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents/carers of the importance of good attendance and its links to student attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend college regularly
- We have a duty to monitor student ' attendance through daily registration and will address all poor or irregular attendance by contacting and discussing the situation with parents
- We will inform the local authority of student who are regularly absent from college or have missed ten days or more without permission. The local authority must have in place 'robust procedures and policies' to enable them to meet their duty in relation to Children missing Education (CME)
- We have a duty to establish the whereabouts of all absent students and will send a member of the college staff to a child's home if contact cannot be made by phone with the child's parents/carers. We will inform the police if there is no answer when college staff visit the family home
- For all students we have in place at least three emergency contact phone numbers for different adults associated with each student
- We believe truancy is a matter that we treat very seriously as we feel students are not only losing valuable learning time but they are putting themselves at serious risk as the college and their parents are not aware of their whereabouts
- We have a duty to ensure that all parents/carers are aware of our 'legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders or penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in college.' Parents/carers have a duty to ensure their children are well behaved and attend college regularly as 'good behaviour and attendance are essential to children's educational prospects'
- We are aware that 'parenting contracts, orders and penalty notices for irregular attendance apply only to students of compulsory college age who are registered at a college' but they can also be applied for misbehaviour by students outside compulsory college age such as sixth form students. While 'penalty notices for parents of students found in a public place during college hours after being excluded also apply only to children of compulsory college age who are registered at a college.'
- We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with the Education Welfare Service which provides support for students and their families in order promote good pupil attendance and to reduce truancy
- We are aware that leave of absence can only be granted to a student only in exceptional circumstances and in authorising a holiday in term time we will take into account the child's attendance record, the child's age, the reason for the trip, the time in the academic year and the employment difficulties that parents/carers face by taking holidays in college holiday time.
- We will exercise a consistent approach and ensure equity for all students.
- We are aware that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) will entirely replace the current Data Protection Act (DPA) by making radical changes to many existing data protection rules and regulations that colleges, academies and other educational establishments adhere to under the DPA. The principal aim of the GDPR is to strengthen and unify the safety and security of all data held within an organisation

- We acknowledge the new guidance given to all colleges in the 'Data protection: a toolkit for colleges' (DfE April 2018) regarding the appropriate use of personal data
- We aim to be judged at least good in all college inspections by ensuring that standards for all students are higher than colleges of a similar size and that standards continue to improve faster than the national trend. We believe we will achieve this by having in place a home-college agreement that all parents have signed up to and by improving student attendance and truancy
- We as a college community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010
- We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates in to all aspects of college life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We want everyone connected with this college to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.
- We acknowledge the findings of the Race Disparity Audit that clearly shows how people of different ethnicities are treated across the public services of health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.
- The educational section of the audit that covers: differences by region; attainment and economic disadvantage; exclusions and abuse; and destinations, has a significant importance for the strategic planning of this college.
- We believe it is essential that this policy clearly identifies and outlines the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the procedures and arrangements that is connected with this policy.

## **Context**

Students at The ArtsXchange have struggled to engage with mainstream education and when they arrive here, they have an entrenched history of non-attendance and exclusion. Many of them have Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties and a negative attitude. Most come to us as non-attenders, from a part-time placement or were educated in isolation;

Their attitude to education is shared by the majority of their parents, many of whom failed to engage with learning at their own schools or colleges. They may also feel that they are being blamed for their children's educational failure.

Our short-term aim is to make our students feel safe. At the ArtsXchange we have created an environment where they are nurtured consistently, and we show them how to build healthy and appropriate relationships with us and with each other so that they can begin to engage with learning. Our long-term aim is to equip them with the academic, social and practical skills they will need to lead a stable, independent and fulfilling adult life.

We expect our students to attend college but it is also central to our ethos that we treat them as individuals, and we recognise that there are many factors in their lives that make their

attendance difficult. For this reason, we do not punish non-attendance. Instead, we work on removing the barriers that are inhibiting attendance. We do this by addressing the reasons behind any individual's failure to attend college, and ensuring that we deliver a creative curriculum in a safe and stimulating environment.

This policy also includes procedures concerning the college register and the college's exclusion practices.

## **Our practice**

Our aim is to remove the barriers that are stopping a student from attending college. These include:

- Students' emotional problems.
- Lack of routine in students' chaotic and dysfunctional families – no-one to get them up, provide clean clothes.
- Problems in getting to college – this can include fear at having to travel through a gang-controlled postcode, college phobia, high risk behaviour or mental health conditions.

To overcome those barriers, we offer:

- **Emotional support**

We encourage students to come to college by providing a supportive environment that makes them feel contained and safe. All staff work consistently to support students, to form appropriate relationships with them, and to make the college an emotionally nurturing community. We foster a warm, open and reflective atmosphere, enhanced by the use of windows, light and open spaces throughout the building.

- **Food**

We provide a nutritious breakfast and lunch free of charge to students. Breakfast is served between 9.00 – 9.40am; this encourages students to arrive in time for lessons and optimises their capacity for learning.

- **Guidance on punctuality**

We recognise that our students often present with disruptive patterns of behaviour, particularly when they are new to the college. It is important to appreciate that, compared to our students' home lives, college life revolves around a timetable and is highly structured.

Within this, staff model punctuality to students, just as they model other appropriate forms of behaviour. By the time our students attend college, we have impressed upon them the importance of meeting commitments that will give them learning – and ultimately earning - opportunities. As few of them come from working families, it is important that this sense of personal responsibility is part of the college's culture. Students who are late are welcomed, and reasons for lateness are addressed at an appropriate time.

- **Target setting**

We always treat our students as individuals and just as we expect staff to differentiate between students in terms of their behaviour, where attendance targets are set, they relate to individual students. We make it clear that we have high expectations, and we work with students' families/carers and with a local authority Attendance and Welfare Officer to maximise attendance.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### *Head of College*

- Has a legal requirement to record and monitor attendance. This has been delegated to the Attendance Officer

### *College Office*

- To record attendance in the register until 10.00am
- To collect the register at 10.00am
- To follow up absence with a phone call and, if there is no answer, a text message
- Update the fire register if students arrive late or a reason for absence is established
- Complete the register on the college's Management Information System (SIMS) weekly
- Complete exclusion paperwork

Note: Registration should be recorded on the Management Information System (MIS) - SIMS

### *Teacher/Tutor*

- Continue to call home to establish a reason for absenteeism
- To follow up absence with a courtesy call at the end of the day (wish the student well if unwell, ask if they are likely to be in tomorrow, say they were missed.)
- To follow up concerns about punctuality and attendance with parents/carers and students
- To offer students/parents alarm calls as appropriate
- To discuss attendance where there is a concern, and to recognise good attendance
- To co-ordinate work and home tuition

### *Asst. Head of College, and the Attendance and Welfare Officer*

- Discuss attendance of all students at weekly case management meeting
- Plan intervention with Attendance and Welfare Officer (AWO) for those causing a concern

### *College Leadership Team*

- To ensure the curriculum offered meets the needs of the students
- To ensure that work is available to be taken to non-attendees

#### *Attendance and Welfare Officer*

- To meet with parents and students at the beginning of the college year to discuss attendance
- To carry out home visits
- To inspect registers
- To attend weekly meetings with the welfare team

#### *Students*

- Responsible for attending
- Responsible for discussing any difficulties with their tutor

#### *Parent/Carers*

- Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends college
- Should acknowledge non-college attendance and the consequences
- To notify the college of lateness and absence

## **Attendance Procedure**

**Form Tutors** to complete registration on SIMS twice a day

**College Office staff** to coordinate registers, and to complete MIS registers weekly.

**Teachers/Tutors** to follow up ALL absences by contacting parents on the first day of absence, and subsequently if the absence continues.

**Head of College** to inform **Form Tutors, Welfare Team & Asst. Head of College** of any specific concerns.

**Asst. Head of College** to oversee strategy causing concern, and to discuss significant issues at her line management meeting with the **Head of College**.

## **Persistent absence**

It is consistent with the college's ethos that we offer places to students who were not previously in education. While our aim is to engage them with education, it would be unrealistic to expect them to suddenly achieve high attendance figures, and our success in developing their attendance should be seen in this context. Encouraging them to attend college is an on-going process that relates to their success in forming relationships within the college, and which can be hampered by on-going personal difficulties outside college. An attendance rate categorised by the Government as persistent absence can therefore represent a success if seen in context of a young person who has never previously engaged with learning and who continues to lack family support.

We do not believe that the likelihood that a young person is likely to remain a persistent absentee is a reason to deny them a place at the ArtsXchange; conversely, we believe that all young people, irrespective of their circumstances, should have the opportunity to engage with education, and that our specialist provision can meet the needs of those who struggle. This view is actively encouraged and supported by the Governing Body, whose members recognise the college's success in increasing attendance rates for many students.

For these reasons, The T4 Trust does not subscribe to the details of the Government's initiative on persistent absence though we are vigilant in tracking it and working to ensure that students do attend. We set challenging and ambitious targets for each student, treating each as an individual and tailoring our responses to take account of their complex needs and their family's circumstances. We believe that our attention to tracking and challenging poor attendance is appropriate for our students and exceeds the Government's requirements.

## **Exclusion**

At the ArtsXchange, exclusion from the college community is used as a last resort and for the shortest period possible. It is not a punitive measure and is initiated by the Head of College and the Assistant Head when it is felt that it is unsafe for a student to be in college. It is done in the interests of a student's own health and safety, and the health and safety of others and because we feel that, at that time, the college is not an appropriate environment for the student. This ensures that both students and staff feel safe in the college.

Students enjoy attending the college and become upset when they are excluded. When a student is sent home, we do not cast them adrift, we immediately begin to use the "breathing space" created by the student's absence to develop a plan of how best to support them and reintegrate them into the college.

We also support them at home so that our work with them continues. This includes home visits. These can be made by our Assistant Head of College, the Welfare Team, the Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist, and other staff who may work with the student off-site at a library or ideas store. This work may be academic or it may relate to the reason the student is unable to integrate with the college community, e.g. anger management or bullying.

We believe that the way we handle exclusion is rare if not unique, and it is resource-intensive. Like everything else at T4 Trust, we adopt this practice because it works. We recognise that our students do not have consistent family support. By treating them with understanding and respect, and offering them continuity of support in their relationship with us, we find that they are able to take positive steps forward in a situation that, handled differently, could be detrimental to their fragile emotional state and lead to criminal activity.

We also recognise that some students who are referred to the ArtsXchange have such specific complex needs that day SEMH or alternative provision does not meet them. If we feel that the college lacks the specialist resources to manage a student effectively, and we believe that it is in their best interests we will support them and their parents/carers to find another provision that is appropriate for their needs.