

## **Rathmines College**

### **Policy and Procedures on Attendance**

In the interest of maintaining academic standards and ensuring that students achieve to the best of their ability, the college requests your full co-operation with the procedures outlined in this document. The college aims, through its tutor and department structure to support students and an opportunity to avail of the guidance service in the college is available to all students.

#### **Your Responsibilities**

- Students are required to attend all scheduled classes punctually. Classes commence on the hour with the exception of classes at 11.05am and 3.05pm when there is a ten-minute break.
- A record of attendance at each subject is kept by course teachers and each tutor maintains an official register with the overall record of attendance.
- Attendance records are very significant in compiling end of year references which are an essential part of the end of year portfolio.
- Medical appointments should be notified to the tutor in advance and an appointment card should be presented
- Any student who is absent due to illness for three days in succession is required to present a medical certificate to the tutor within five working days of returning to college.

#### **Our Procedures**

- Students who are not attending college each day and who do not make contact with the course tutor will receive just one telephone call from the tutor to discuss the attendance issue.
- In the case of some students who may be under 18 years of age, parents will be involved at every stage.
- On the accumulation of **5 uncertified days** absent the tutor will need to be informed of the reasons for the absenteeism. Half days count in the calculation of absences. A verbal warning will be issued at this stage by the tutor by direct contact or by email and a record of this will be kept on the official attendance register.
- If the attendance record does not improve and the student has been absent for a total of **10 uncertified days**, a letter will be sent by the Head of Department with the date and time for a meeting with the tutor and Head of Department. Attendance at this meeting is mandatory
- At this meeting the student will have an opportunity to explain the attendance record. A review of the student's progress on the course will take place and a mutually agreed plan of action for the remainder of the academic year will be drawn up.
- If further difficulties relating to attendance and commitment to the course arise, the matter will be referred to the Principal and the Head of Department will submit a final written report of the student's attendance and progress for her consideration.

#### **Sanctions**

- Students referred to the Principal on matters of attendance or commitment to the course may not be provided with a reference by the college which employers regularly request.
- Student availing of financial support such as Grants, VTOS or Back to Education will be informed at this stage that the funding body will be notified of their attendance record and the college will not sign weekly or monthly attendance reports for payment.
- The Immigration Authorities will be notified in the case of students on Study Visas and attendance or other letters will not be provided by the college.
- Suspension and expulsion may take place and the students will be notified in writing of their removal from the official college register. Details of an appeals process will issue with any notice of suspension or expulsion.
- Fees or course charges will not be refunded.

### **Guidelines for staff in the implementation of the Attendance Policy**

Following discussions with staff a final draft of the Attendance Policy for 08/09 is now being issued. It is intended that all tutors would ensure that it is signed by the students following explanation and discussion. Tutors are requested to seek clarification where necessary with their Head of Department. Towards achieving equal treatment for all students, it is important that staff interpret and implement the policy consistently across all courses. These guidelines are intended to clarify the purpose of the document and help towards achieving consistency in implementation

1. The policy is intended to be a positive move to improve attendance and performance and to lighten the burden on tutors.
2. The key to the implementation is the keeping of accurate attendance record at each and every class.
3. The tutor, once records are accurate, has to respond when the student has missed 5 days and issue a formal verbal warning. Please note half days are counted in the calculation of absences. If the student is not in the college this verbal warning may be sent by email or given over the telephone. Preferably, email messages should be used with the request to acknowledge receipt facility.
4. In order to keep Dept Heads informed, a record of students who have been given the verbal warning should be kept and passed on to the Dept Head on a weekly basis.
5. Once the 10 days absences are reached the tutor should inform the Dept Head of the details and pass it on the Dept Head for further action.
6. The Dept Head is responsible for emailing Martha in the general office to request a letter to be sent inviting the student in to meet the tutor and Dept Head. The Dept Head will sign off this letter and the time for the meeting should suit both the tutor and Dept Head.
7. If the student turns up in the classroom while the letter is being processed or in the post, then the student should be allowed to continue attending.
8. Prior to this meeting a summary should be compiled by the tutor of assignments due and the overall attendance pattern should be written up. Students with particular need eg adult students with childcare responsibilities or those who have serious illness or disabilities should be responded to sympathetically at this meeting.
9. It is often the case that students have issues, which cannot be resolved at tutor or Dept Head level. It is therefore important that referrals are made at an early stage so that the student can avail of the Guidance and /or Psychological service before its too late to make a difference. Tutors or Dept Heads should not take on issues outside of their competence.
10. The emphasis at the meeting is to help the student to remain on the course by setting out what is required and drawing up a plan.
11. If a student fails to turn up and does not contact the Head of Department then the case has to be passed on to the Principal.
12. When students fail to respond and implement the agreed attendance and performance plan, the Principal will, at the request of the Department Head write formally to the student arranging a meeting and this will be the final chance for the student to co-operate. Prior to this meeting an update on the work submitted and due by the student will be provided by the Department Head.
- 13. It is important to understand that a considerable number of students are on VTOS, Back to Education or Grants. It is not acceptable that these students are allowed to continue receiving payments while their attendance is irregular. Equally, students on Study Visas will not be granted any refund for their non-Eu fee and will not receive letters etc for travel or immigration purposes. Decisions in this regard will rest with the Head of Department in consultation with the Principal**