

# Student Attendance Policy

## Introduction

CECOS College London recognises the relationship between good attendance, punctuality and student success. Persistent lateness and poor attendance are disruptive to the teaching and learning activities of all College students and leads to poor student engagement, submission rates and success outcomes.

### The aims of this procedure are:

- to enable all absences to be fairly and consistently dealt with across the College.
- to monitor attendance and provide target support to improve student engagement and attendance
- to provide the best possible learning experience and professional behaviour.

In interpreting these procedures, the decision of the College is final. The College may amend this procedure at any time and may also take into consideration additional requirements and demands of partner institutions in relation to the circumstances of individual cases.

The College seeks to actively encourage the attendance of all students as part of their Personal and Professional Development, and link this to Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) to support the development of academic responsibility, self-discipline, and professional behaviours.

The College recognises that poor attendance may sometimes be linked to personal, financial, wellbeing, safeguarding, disability, caring responsibilities, or mental health concerns. In such circumstances, the College aims to balance academic expectations with compassionate and supportive intervention strategies that help students remain engaged with their studies wherever possible.

## External references

The College has developed this policy with consideration of the guidance set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education Sector-Agreed Principles:

- Principle 2: Engaging Students as Partners
- Principle 10: Supporting Students to Achieve their Potential

The Policy also reflects the requirements of partner colleges, partner universities and relevant awarding body regulations. This policy has also been informed by feedback from students, academic staff, student representatives, and support teams to promote a collaborative and student-centred approach to attendance monitoring and student success.

## Definitions

**Attendance** refers to the expected presence and engagement of all students with every element of their programme. This includes all compulsory lectures, seminars, workshops, practical sessions, tutorials and any form of summative or formative assessment preparation. All students should refer to their course descriptors, assessment schedules and timetables for further details.

**Attendance requirements** are inclusive of all sessions whether completed as a large group in lectures, small group for tutorials, or individual sessions (such as dissertation supervision or work placements).

Attendance is expected for all sessions whether they are run by College academics, or outside professionals/trainers to a minimum of **80%** for each module, term and programme.

**Monitoring** refers to all recording of student attendance, whether electronic or paper based.

Students funded via the Student Loans Company (SLC) or by other government and local authority grants are required by the College to have a minimum attendance record of **80%** in each term or period of study. ***Failure to meet minimum attendance requirements may result in termination of studies.***

### **Attendance requirements**

As part of the terms and conditions of enrolment at the College, students agree to comply with the CECOS College Code of Conduct, which specifies that students are expected to attend all lectures, seminars and tutorials, and where attendance falls below **80%**, actions will be taken including withdrawal. Where attendance is unsatisfactory, students will be subject to the Student Disciplinary Procedure, and registration on the programme may be cancelled. (See Appendix 1)

Students are required to arrive punctually for **all** classes, compulsory activities, tutorials and review sessions. This includes any work experience placements, where applicable. It is not acceptable for any part-time work or external activities to affect students' ability to attend classes.

### **Recording Attendance**

All students will have their attendance recorded for every lecture, seminar, workshop, or practical session, and registers will be centrally collated to identify absence levels. All attendance will be uploaded to a central electronic record so that individual and overall attendance at programme, campus and College level can be monitored and evaluated.

Attendance is automatically uploaded onto the College Student Management System (SMS) by administrative staff to enable analysis and overview of each individual student's attendance from the first week of the course. Students who fail to maintain over 80% attendance in the first two weeks without clear reason will be placed on attendance monitoring and may be referred to the Student Disciplinary Procedure where appropriate. Students will be offered guidance and support to improve attendance before any formal disciplinary action is considered.

Data will be analysed and monitored by attendance staff in the College using in-house software and shared with the Dean of Higher Education, the Director of Corporate Services and the Senior Leadership Team, as well as with Programme Managers/ Leads, lecturers and other support staff as appropriate.

The College will regularly ensure that individuals and groups of students are aware of and adhere to the attendance policy through a variety of methods including:

- Induction – 80% minimum attendance made clear
- Email/text and verbal reminders to students after each absence and failure to meet 80% attendance.
- Informal meetings, Individual learning Plan (ILPS) and tutorials
- Meeting with Academic Mentors, academic coordinators, Programme Leads, student services, Associate Dean or Dean.
- Discussions with student representatives
- Formal attendance meetings
- Official warnings

- Possible mandatory attendance at a Disciplinary Committee
- A warning about potential exclusion from the College.

All authorised and non-authorised absences are recorded, and action taken where necessary (further information given below). Where a student misses classes, they will be contacted by phone, email and/or SMS and asked to explain the reasons for their absence. Students **are required to respond** to these messages.

Tutors are required **to mark attendance as late for any student arriving** after the scheduled start time of the class, **and as absent if they arrive more than 30 minutes late**. Students arriving late must report directly to the tutor and explain the reason for their late arrival. The academic mentor will determine whether the late arrival is authorised.

### **Absence notification (short-term)**

If a student is unable to attend a scheduled class due to illness or other reasons, the student must inform the College as soon as possible before the class start time. Absences must be reported to the Academic Mentors and the Programme Support Team, whose contact details are provided to students during the induction process / also available on Moodle.

Where there are valid reasons for absence students, such as minor illness or temporary medical conditions, student may let the College know that they will not be able to attend classes for the week. For any longer absences students must provide proof, including doctor's notes, evidence of an accident, or other documentation. If a student knows in advance that they will be unable to attend their classes, they must inform their Academic Mentor and the Programme Support Team and provide appropriate supporting evidence for their absence. The following rules will apply to absences:

- During term time students **will not** be given leave of absence for overseas national holidays or attendance of family events or celebrations etc.
- No student will be granted authorised leave of absence for more than 2 weeks during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances and such leave is approved by Attendance Committee. In addition, students are normally expected to maintain **80% attendance for at least two weeks after returning from authorised leave**, after which previous attendance concerns may be reviewed and considered for authorisation where appropriate.
- Any absence due to illness must be notified to the Academic Mentor as soon as possible, preferably before 10.00 am on the day of absence.
- Students who are absent from classes for more than 1 week must provide an official doctor's certificate. Medical evidence such as sick notes or doctor's certificates will normally be accepted for a maximum continuous period of four weeks. Where a student remains unable to return to study after this period, or where repeated sick notes are submitted in close succession indicating ongoing inability to engage with studies, the College may require the student to apply for a Break in Learning (BIL), temporary suspension of studies, or may consider withdrawal from the programme in line with attendance and academic engagement requirements.

- Students are encouraged to inform the College of any medical condition, disability, pregnancy, caring responsibility, mental health concern, or other circumstance which may affect their attendance or engagement with studies. This enables the College to provide appropriate academic support, wellbeing guidance, safeguarding intervention, and reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 and College policies. Any information disclosed will be treated confidentially and managed sensitively in accordance with data protection and safeguarding requirements.
- Instances of illness that affect an assessment must be reported to the College, and where relevant, with medical evidence (doctor's or hospital note). The same is applicable for other extenuating circumstances. (See Extenuating Circumstances and Reasonable Adjustment Policy).

### **Long-term or frequent absence**

If students are absent for longer than four weeks without informing their Tutor, academic mentor, Programme Manager, Course Administrator or other senior manager, without providing appropriate evidence to support a legitimate absence (for example major illness or operation), they may be withdrawn from the College. In this circumstance, the College's Student Disciplinary Procedures will not apply but their withdrawal will be recorded on Student Management System (SMS) for any future applications to the College.

All students are at risk of being withdrawn from their programme after consistent and continued periods of absence are recorded. A student whose attendance falls below 50% during the term may be subject to disciplinary procedures, which could result in withdrawal from the programme. Re-enrolment will only be considered where evidence is provided demonstrating how engagement and attendance will be improved in the future.

Authorised absence does not remove the requirement for ongoing academic engagement. Where a student has not physically attended classes or engaged with learning activities for a continuous period of four weeks or more, the College reserves the right to review the student's continuation on the programme, even where absences have been authorised, in order to comply with partner institution and regulatory requirements.

Students are permitted to apply for temporary leave, suspension of studies, or Break in Learning (BIL) of their programme of study for personal, pregnancy or medical/health reasons.

### **Authorised absences**

There are some absences which can be marked as an authorised absence. These include:

- illness;
- medical appointments, which could not be made from College hours;
- a recognised religious holiday relating to the student's declared faith or belief system recorded with the College. The College may request reasonable evidence or prior notification where appropriate.
- a visit to a university interview, a career-related interview;
- a work placement, which is an integral part of the student's programme of study and for which the student does not receive payment;

- attendance at a probation meeting or an official appointment with a social worker, UKVI, Home Office, Embassy, or related immigration authority where attendance is mandatory and supported by official documentation. Routine passport renewals, travel arrangements, or appointments arising from personal holiday travel will not normally be treated as authorised absences.
- severe disruption to a student's method of transport, such as a strike or snowstorm, that leaves the student with no alternative method of travelling to College;
- a College representatives' meeting or Student Council Meeting.

### **Unauthorised/unexplained absences**

The following reasons for absence are **not** acceptable and **cannot** be marked as authorised or explained absences. They include:

- holidays
- part- or full-time work which is not part of the student's programme of study
- leisure activities
- birthdays or similar celebrations
- shopping
- driving lessons

Students should be aware that if they take holidays during term time, unless agreed due to exceptional **circumstances, their coursework may not be eligible for submission, marking and verification.** They will also be called to a meeting in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

### **Protocols for monitoring and following up on absences**

#### **Stage 1**

1. All registers will be completed at the start of each class, workshop, tutorial, or other timetabled activity. Any students arriving up to 30 minutes after the scheduled start time will be marked as late. Students arriving more than 30 minutes late without a valid reason will be marked as absent and will be required to complete an absence form.
2. Each unauthorised absences will result in a warning text, phone call or email being sent by central administrators (Attendance officers/ Academic mentor).
3. More than two consecutive absences will be followed up by a phone call to the student or a request for the student to contact the College and any possible mitigating circumstances will be identified and to remind them of the College's attendance requirements.

#### **Stage 2**

4. Following the initial email/texts and telephone follow-up, if a student's absence is still of concern, s/he will be invited to attend a meeting in the College Attendance Office or for FE, and the Academic Mentor for the programme to discuss the reasons behind such absences.
5. Students who have been called to an attendance meeting will be required to submit any and all evidence linked to health, care or other factors which are or have affected their ability to attend classes.
6. Continued unauthorised absences will result in the students having to attend a meeting with the Programme Lead/Manager, Associate Dean or the Dean who may refer them to the Attendance

Monitoring Committee who will decide on what penalties may be applied in line with the attendance policy.

### Stage 3

7. Where a student persistently fails to meet the College's minimum attendance requirements despite support and intervention, the matter may be referred through the Student Disciplinary Procedure, which could ultimately result in withdrawal from the programme where all reasonable support measures have been exhausted.
8. In instances where a student does not attend a scheduled meeting in the College and no viable reason is given for non-attendance at the meeting, the College may withdraw the student from the programme with no opportunity to re-enrol on any programme.
9. Should the decision be to withdraw a student from a course, the reasons for the decision must be sent in writing, prior to withdrawal taking place.
10. In cases where students either:
  - a. do not attend for the scheduled meeting
  - b. no communications are received from the student
  - c. no improvements take place following the attendance meeting or disciplinary panel meeting the student may be withdrawn from the programme.

Students funded by the partner Colleges or universities whose attendance is below the attendance threshold set by the partner will be required to leave the College and may be reported to the Student Loans Company, who may enforce repayment of loan moneys already advanced.

### Role of Academic Mentor

The Academic Mentor is responsible for handling students with attendance below 80%. They work closely with lecturers and Academic Coordinators to ensure proper intervention strategies are implemented. The key responsibilities include:

1. Maintaining a tracking sheet for all the students and students below 80% attendance.
2. Updating sick notes and medical records on Academia platform if provided by students.
3. Ensuring students submit necessary documentation (EC Form/LSS for students for all the programme) with the help of the Academic Coordinator.
4. Conduct one-on-one meetings with at-risk or high-risk students less than 60% and make an action plan.
5. Implement personalized attendance improvement plans and conduct follow-ups.
6. Categorising students as 'At Risk' based on weekly attendance meetings.
7. Providing weekly follow-ups with at-risk students.
8. Keeping detailed records of attendance discussions and outcomes and outcomes update in the Academia platform.
9. Escalating the attendance information of students with less than 60% attendance to Leads/Managers.
10. Providing early academic intervention for students struggling with attendance.
11. Referring students, where appropriate, to wellbeing services, safeguarding support, counselling, learning support services, or external agencies to ensure students receive appropriate pastoral and academic assistance.

### **Deferring units or courses**

Any student who expects to be absent from classes for more than one week for any reason (for example, their own illness, or the illness or death of a close family member) must inform the College as soon as possible.

Any student who becomes pregnant is advised not to attend onsite classes in the last four to five weeks before the expected date for the birth of the child. CECOS College advises all students who are pregnant to notify the College so that suitable arrangements to interrupt studies can be made, as appropriate, and students enabled to resume studies, having made all the necessary arrangements for the welfare of their child. The student will be responsible for any associated expenses.

Students who become new parents, including paternity or adoption leave circumstances, are encouraged to notify the College as early as possible so that appropriate academic support, temporary interruption of studies, or reasonable attendance adjustments can be considered on an individual basis.

### **The summary document below sets out the key points for all students and staff around attendance requirements and missed classes**

#### **Student Wellbeing and Support**

The College recognises that attendance and engagement may be affected by personal circumstances including mental health concerns, disability, financial hardship, caring responsibilities, bereavement, pregnancy, safeguarding concerns, or other wellbeing matters.

Where attendance concerns arise, students will be encouraged to engage with appropriate support services within the College. These may include:

- Academic mentoring
- Wellbeing and safeguarding support
- Learning support services
- Counselling referrals
- Financial guidance
- Extenuating circumstances procedures
- Reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010

The College aims to take a supportive and proportionate approach to attendance management while maintaining academic standards and professional expectations.

### **Disciplinary actions for students failing to meet 80% attendance requirements.**

Where a student contravenes the CECOS Student Attendance requirements they will be subject to the Student Attendance Disciplinary Procedures as outlined below:

#### **Stage One:**

1. Students will be spoken to by the College Attendance Officer or the Academic Mentor.

2. Students will be expected to explain absences and provide/agree an action plan for improvement which will be closely monitored.
3. Within the first two weeks of starting a course or a new term/semester, students are expected to maintain a minimum of 80% attendance. Where attendance falls below this threshold, students will receive a formal warning and will normally be given up to two weeks to demonstrate immediate and sustained improvement. Failure to improve attendance within this period may result in escalation to Stage Two of the Attendance Disciplinary Procedure and may place the student at risk of withdrawal and suspension of maintenance funding where applicable.

#### **Stage Two:**

4. If a student's attendance fails to improve following Stage 1 by week 6, they will be invited to a meeting with an academic lead/manager. A final written warning will be provided confirming that continued poor attendance will result in their withdrawal from their course. Warnings may include formal attendance improvement conditions and mandatory engagement with support interventions, tutorials, mentoring, or attendance review meetings. Continued failure to engage may result in escalation through the Student Disciplinary Procedure and possible withdrawal from the programme.

#### **Stage Three:**

5. Where the attendance of a student continues to be of concern, they will be referred to the Associate Dean or the College Disciplinary Committee who will decide whether to withdraw the student.
6. A letter explaining this decision (Appendix 2) will be sent to the student on behalf of the compliance officer of the campus. Where students are excluded, they have the right to appeal against the decision.

#### **Summary of Attendance Warning Stages**

##### **Stage One Warning:**

Issued where attendance falls below 80% or where there are repeated unauthorised absences. Students will receive verbal and/or written guidance and an attendance improvement plan.

##### **Stage Two Warning:**

Issued where attendance does not improve following Stage One intervention or where attendance concerns continue. Students will attend a formal meeting with an Academic Lead or Manager and receive a final written warning.

##### **Stage Three / Disciplinary Referral:**

Issued where attendance continues to remain unsatisfactory despite previous interventions and support. The case may be referred to the Associate Dean, Attendance Committee, or Student Disciplinary Committee, which may result in withdrawal from the programme.

#### **Appeals**

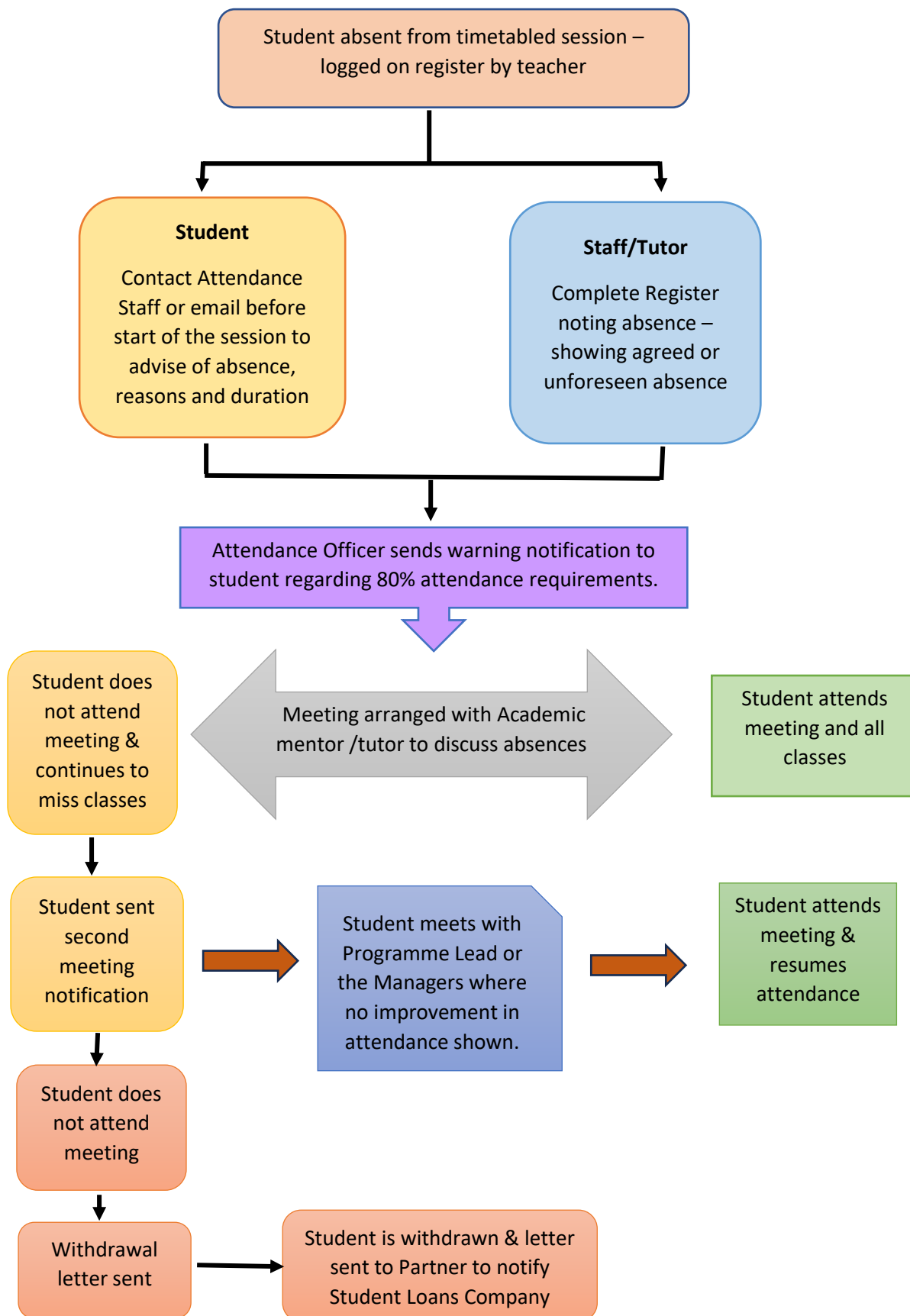
Students wishing to appeal the decision to exclude them must do so in writing to the Director of Corporate or Associate Dean within **5 days of the letter of withdrawal**. They must state why they are appealing the decision. The letter of appeal will be reviewed by the Director of Corporate Services or Associate Dean or Head of Further Education and an independent senior manager.

Where there are no clear grounds for the appeal and the College has followed its' procedures correctly the appeal may be rejected. Where grounds for appeal are clear, the Appeals Panel and the concern will be dealt with in line with the College's Appeals Procedure. The Appeal Panel's decision is final.

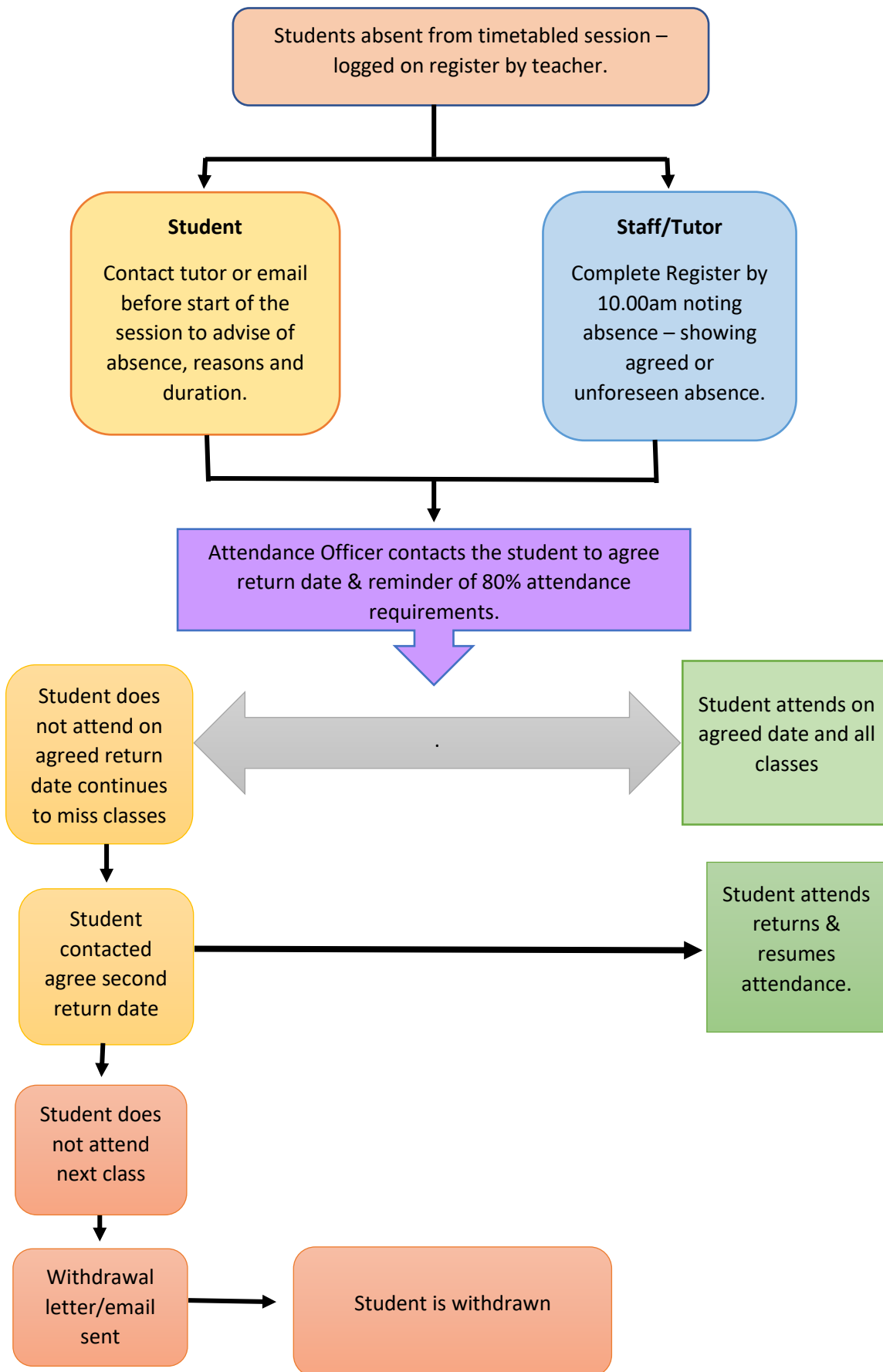
**Other related documents**

- a. Student Code of Conduct
- b. Student Disciplinary Procedure
- c. *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Engaging Students as partners.*

## Appendix 1 – Higher Education Protocol



## Appendix 2 – Further Education Attendance Protocol



## Appendix 3

Date:

### *Private and Confidential*

**First Name Surname (Student)**

**Address 1**

**Address 2**

**County**

**Postcode**

Re: Notification of withdrawal from programme of study

Dear xxx,

After a review of attendance and evidence of academic progress and conduct matters, as outlined in the College Student Code of Conduct, and a recent meeting with you, the Course Manager's feedback, the College has reached a decision that you should be formally withdrawn from your current course. Where appropriate, we have tried to contact you to arrange progress reviews and warnings have been sent in connection with non-attendance.

Kindly note the action of formally withdrawing you from your course of study will impact your life as a student as follows:

- You will not be able to resume or transfer your course to any other academic programme within the College and/or will not be able to complete your first year due to the above-mentioned reasons. *This could leave you liable to pay back any tuition fees to The Student Loans Company that were received for your studies. The right is reserved to communicate your enrolment and attendance history with The Student Loans Company so a fair assessment can be made.*

If you believe that the College has not been made aware of vital information regarding your attendance or academic progress, you may appeal this decision within 5 working days of receipt of this letter. Any appeal must be directed to myself in the first instance, and the grounds along with supporting evidence in relation to your appeal must be set out in full. You may wish to contact us on *<telephone number>* or *email <email ID>* to discuss the appeal procedures.

Please allow further 10 working days for appeals to be processed.

Yours Sincerely

Compliance officer of CECOS College