



**TULLAMORE FURTHER EDUCATION AND
TRAINING (FET) CENTRE**

Learner Attendance Policy

Reviewed June: 2021

Introduction:

The Learner Attendance Policy has been developed as part of Tullamore Further Education & Training (FET) Centre's commitment to providing a supportive learning environment which enables all learners to achieve their full potential. Attendance is a key component in learner retention, progression, achievement and employability. Regular attendance and academic achievement are closely linked. Learners who actively participate in their learning by attending classes regularly are more likely to:

1. Enjoy a rewarding experience in which their knowledge, skills and abilities are developed;
2. Successfully complete their course;
3. Achieve better results.

Tullamore Further Education and Training (FET) Centre expects all our learners to have full attendance in order to successfully complete their course. Attendance which falls below 80%, where there are no extenuating circumstances, is not acceptable.

Every course requires a commitment to attend all parts of the programme fully and punctually. Attendance is recorded on VS Ware for each class.

Where a learner has been absent without satisfactory explanation for 10 consecutive working days, Tullamore FET Centre will assume the learner has opted out of the course. Re-affirmation of enrolment can occur only by appointment with the Centre Manager.

Objectives of Policy:

The objectives of this policy are to establish guidelines for the attendance of classes in Tullamore FET Centre. It is to encourage compliance and to lay out a roadmap for learners and staff to follow when implementing the policy.

Attendance Policy:

- Learners are expected to attend all of their timetabled classes punctually;

- Learners must arrive at the start of the class properly equipped and prepared for the lesson;
- For online classes, learners are expected to dress appropriately, have their cameras on and engage in class;
- A teacher has the discretion not to admit a learner into their class in person or online if they are late and class has already commenced;
- A daily record of attendance for each class is recorded on VS Ware. If a learner is absent for any class in the morning, this is recorded as a half day absence. Similarly, if a learner is absent for any class after lunch, this will also be recorded as a half day absence. Two half days are deemed to be a full day of absence;
- Learners are expected to email their teacher before 9.30am on the morning of the absence explaining the reason for the absence and the expected number of days they will be absent;
- Any period of absence of **three consecutive days** must be supported by medical documentation;
- Learners must schedule medical and other appointments out of college hours where possible;
- For those learners in receipt of the SUSI grant, payment is made subject to satisfactory attendance on the course. Learners absent for **5 days or more in a monthly period (which may be aggregated to include partial absence)** without satisfactory explanation will not receive a grant payment;
- For those learners on VTOS, a minimum of 80% attendance is required in all timetabled activities and classes. Learners who have been absent without satisfactory explanation for **10 consecutive timetabled days** will be deemed to have self-opted out of their programme and their VTOS place and attendant payment will be terminated;

- Any learner who has missed **10 consecutive timetabled days** will be deemed to have self-opted out of their course. Re-admission to their course can only occur with the permission of the Centre Manager.

Extenuating Circumstances:

Tullamore FET Centre recognises that certain extenuating circumstances can impact on a Learners ability to attend, for example:

- Significant illness;
- Emotional Trauma;
- Recent bereavement of a close family member/friend;
- Terminal illness of a close family member;
- Tragic circumstances which directly affect the candidate eg. Severe accident;
- Domestic crisis.

Tullamore FET Centre will treat all genuine instances of reduced attendance, in such circumstances, in a reasonable manner and will seek to support the Learner concerned, in so far as is possible, to ensure that they can re-join their course/class fully without impacting negatively on their own or their fellow Learners' studies.

Tullamore FETC Responsibilities:

Tullamore FET Centre will record, monitor and report on the attendance of all learners for all their timetabled classes.

- Payment of PLC maintenance grants is administered by SUSI;
- BTEA payments are made by the Department of Social Protection.
- VTOS payments are administered by Laois & Offaly ETB.

All of the above payments are subject to Tullamore FET Centre confirming 80% attendance.

There are regular reviews of learners' progress on their programme, including attendance, completion of assessment requirements and academic achievement. Appropriate action is taken to support learners in achieving their academic aims. In the event of unsatisfactory attendance, Tullamore FET Centre is committed to advising learners of the support available to them, such as, our Guidance Counsellors and Learning Support Service.

Unsatisfactory Attendance:

Where a learner's attendance is unsatisfactory, the following steps will be taken:

- Tullamore FET Centre staff will contact the learner to seek an explanation for their unsatisfactory attendance;
- Learners will be invited to meet a member of the Tullamore FET Centre's Guidance Team to discuss how their attendance can be improved and any support that they may require to achieve this;
- If attendance does not improve, learners will be issued with a verbal warning about their attendance;
- If a learner fails to improve their attendance after a verbal warning they will be required to enter into a formal Attendance Agreement;
- Learners who breach the terms of their Attendance Agreement will be given a formal written warning.
- If attendance does not improve the learner will be asked to leave the course.

Where a learner has missed a significant amount of time, authorised and unauthorised combined, which will result in their being unable to participate effectively on the course, the learner may be advised against resuming their place on the course in the current year. In this regard, a period above 20 days would be regarded as a significant.

Appeal of Termination:

A learner who receives notice of termination of their course place has the right to appeal this decision to the Laois and Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) Further Education Manager. Such appeals must be made in writing and submitted to their Class Tutor within 5 working days of the decision. The Learner may be invited to present their rationale appealing their termination to the Further Education Manager.