



Attendance Policy

September 2023

(Next review August 2024)

Safeguarding Statement

SupaJam is a post-16 specialist provider, specialising in Music, Maths, English and Life Skills. All staff, volunteers and partners are committed to safeguarding the welfare of every person within SupaJam. Our mission is to help young people to engage and achieve within a safe and inclusive environment.

Introduction

SupaJam Education in Music & Media (SupaJam) is committed to providing a high quality education and recognise that this can only be achieved by promoting high college attendance. By attending college regularly and punctually students will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's education and regular absence will seriously affect their progression and development. Student absence also disrupts teaching routines and may also negatively affect the learning of others.

The college community – students, parents/guardians and staff - has a responsibility for ensuring maximum college attendance and all have an important role to play to achieve this. The purpose of this policy is to clarify everyone's responsibilities regarding attendance.

SupaJam's roles and responsibilities:

All Staff

All staff (teaching and support) at SupaJam will promote high college attendance by providing an environment where all our students are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to college every day. Staff will set a good example with their own high attendance and punctuality. All staff will feel confident questioning students who are late to college and lessons.

Base Leaders

Base Leaders and their deputies will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the college. They will also ensure staff receive appropriate training on the registration process, regulations, and education law.

Attendance Team

SupaJam's attendance team will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the relevant staff and that students and their parents/guardians will be regularly reminded about the importance of good college attendance.

They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and will make sure that the correct support is in place to deal with any difficulties the students are having.

This will include:

- Operating a policy of reception calling all absent students by 11am to find out the reason for absence and support the student's welfare

- Where student attendance falls below 90%, the attendance team will create and implement an action plan to include strategies to support a student to improve their attendance.
- Celebrating positive attendance with incentives and rewards throughout the year.
- Rewarding every student who achieves 100% attendance with a trip at the end of the academic year.
- Will monitor registers regularly throughout the day.
- Lateness

Teaching and Delivery Staff

The teaching and delivery team will ensure that:

- All registers are marked accurately and in a time frame set within our policies and procedures.
- All students will be given details of their attendance in student reviews.
- Where a student is persistently late to their lessons, a discussion will be held by the teacher with the student to outline reasons and put strategies in place.
- They uphold their responsibilities in the Student Absence and Re-engagement Workflow.
- In the case of a student having a long term absence, the teacher will be responsible for arranging work to go home and be returned for marking.

Student responsibilities

- The student is expected to attend 100% of all scheduled lessons relating to their programme of study.
- If a student intends to be absent, they must call reception to let them know along with the reason.
- The college day starts at 9:45am. Students are expected to arrive at college, and be in the correct room for registration, on time at the start of every lesson.
- If a student arrives late to lesson by no more than 15 minutes they will receive a 'Late' mark **L**. Students arriving after this point when registers have closed will receive a 'Late after register closes' **U** mark that shows them to be on-site, but this will affect their attendance record.
- All students must sign in on arrival at reception using the iPad. For the same reason, it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment or at lunchtimes) must sign out at reception as well.
- Students will attempt to book any medical appointments outside of college hours.

NB Students who receive travel reimbursements via a bursary will only have the reimbursement issued if they attend a significant amount of the day.

If a student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, we will contact their parents/guardians as soon as possible if we are unable to locate them or they are unwilling to return to the college.

Parents/Guardians Responsibilities:

Parents/Guardians have a key role in ensuring students receive an appropriate and full-time education. SupaJam will endeavour to support them to address any concerns and we expect that parents/guardians will:

- Ensure students arrive at college on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day.
- Contact SupaJam reception before 10am, or as soon as possible after this time, on the first day of absence.
- Provide written or verbal confirmation from themselves or a health professional documenting the reason for the students absence.
- Contact the college without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of the student's attendance or punctuality.
- Ensure students attend the college regularly and support students' attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum.
- Not expect requests for absence to be automatically agreed and will not condone unjustified absence from college.

There are times when we need to contact parents/guardians with various information, including absence, so we must have up to date contact numbers at all times. It is the responsibility of our students and their parents/guardians to inform us of any updated contact details.

Registration:

SupaJam is required by law to complete a register of its students, and teachers are responsible for completing these at the beginning of every lesson. Students who arrive to registration on time will be written as present (code / or \) Students who arrive late but before the register closes will be given a late mark (code L).Registers close after the first 15 minutes of each lesson and any student who arrives after this time will be marked as late after the register closes (code U).

A mark will be given for each student during each registration and any student who is not present at this time will be marked as absent unless leave has been authorised by SupaJam in advance as a legitimate reason.

Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the college at a later stage, the register will be amended so that the original entry and the amendment are distinguishable.

If a student is absent, SupaJam will take steps to locate them. Students are aware that they must not leave the SupaJam bases outside of the lunch break, which is allocated between 1pm and 2 pm. In the case that a student leaves the premises without permission and/or outside of the designated lunch break and is either unwilling to return or we have been unable to locate them, we will inform the parents/guardians immediately.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences:

Authorised Absences:

Absence will be authorised in certain circumstances where leave has been granted by the Base Leader in advance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. If no explanation about an absence is received by SupaJam within two weeks it will remain unauthorised.

Authorised absences include:

- Participation in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority. (Educational trip code **V** or Other authorised absence code **C**)
- Exceptional circumstances, such as a funeral – in authorising such an absence, the individual circumstances of the particular case and the student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered. (Other authorised absence code **C** or Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances code **Y**)
- Where SupaJam is satisfied that the student is too ill to attend, where medical evidence has been provided or where a previously diagnosed known medical condition exists. If a student's attendance falls below 95%, parents/guardians will be advised that SupaJam will no longer continue to authorise any absence due to illness without medical evidence (code **O**) unless a known previously-diagnosed medical condition exists. (code **I**)
- Where the student has a medical appointment supported by an appointment card/ hospital letter (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of college hours wherever possible and to return their child to college immediately afterwards – or send them to college beforehand). (Code **M**)
- Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions. (code **Y**)
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student or student's parents/guardians belong. (code **R**)
- The Local Authority provided transport for the student has failed to arrive. (code **Y**)

Unauthorised absences:

Unauthorised absences are those which SupaJam does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes when a student does not arrive at SupaJam or leaves before the advertised leaving time, which is classed as truancy. Internal or post-registration truancy is classed as an absence and will be dealt with through the Code of Behaviour Policy for Students.

Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/guardians keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive late at school after the close of registration
- Shopping
- Looking after other children
- Birthdays (All unauthorised absences code **O**)
- Day trips and family holidays not agreed to in term time (code **G**)

NB: SupaJam discourages avoidable absences and, as from 1st September 2013, changes in the Education Regulations 2006 Section 7 states that Headteachers may no longer grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Persistent Absenteeism:

A student becomes a persistent absentee when they miss 15% or more schooling across the academic year. Absence at this level has a negative impact on a student's educational prospects and we need parents/guardians' full support and co-operation to improve this. SupaJam will monitor all absences thoroughly and any case that has reached or is at risk of reaching the PA mark is given priority and parents/guardians/students will be informed of this immediately.

All persistent absentees and their parents/guardians/students will be given an attendance action plan which will include allocation of additional support through a variety of interventions and individual incentive programmes.

All persistent absentees are monitored carefully by our attendance team and we combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. If a student's attendance becomes a concern, we will not be able to authorise any absence due to illness unless documentation from a health professional is received to verify this. This can be a doctor's note, hospital letter or appointment card.

If a student's attendance falls below 85% and they receive bursary payments, their payments may stop with immediate effect until their attendance improves to 85% attendance or above.

Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance SupaJam

Following the procedure outlined below when dealing with unexplained absences:

- SupaJam will call or send a text/email to the parent/guardian on the first day a student is absent without explanation, to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage the students who do not have a good reason for absence, or who may be absent without their guardian's knowledge.
- On the second day of absence SupaJam will repeat the first step and in addition, if the reason for absence remains unidentified or is in relation to mental health or other difficulties engaging with the college, the student's teacher will attempt to make contact.

- If absence persists on the third day, the student will be referred to the Base Leader who will create and implement an individual action plan. This could include and is not limited to:
 - Support strategies and interventions,
 - A meeting with the students and their parents/guardians (and any other professionals supporting the student),
 - Team Around the Young Person (TAYP) Meetings,
 - Home /Welfare visit
- Should students have not engaged with the action plan and have not improved in attendance within 2 weeks, a meeting will be arranged by the Base Leader to agree the next steps. Should the parent/guardian be unable to attend any of the suggested dates for the meeting then the meeting will be held with the student only. The parent/guardian will then receive a follow-up letter stating that the meeting has taken place.
- If a student fails to attend the scheduled meeting without good reason, they will automatically be referred to the Safeguarding Team, who will discuss the next steps with relevant professionals. A placement review could also be discussed at this point, along with the Local Authority if they have an EHCP. Following a further investigation from the Safeguarding and SEN Team, an outcome will be shared with the relevant parties including the student and their parents/guardians.

Long-Term Absence

If a student with a diagnosed medical condition has a period of long-term absence, parents/guardians need to inform reception. The teacher will be responsible for arranging work to go home and be returned for marking. The teacher will arrange regular contact with the student or where appropriate their parents/guardians to go through the tasks that have been set. If meetings are conducted at SupaJam, it is advised that the student should attend in person to ensure that the student takes ownership of their progression and development.

Summary:

SupaJam has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/guardians and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/guardians have a duty to make sure that students attend regularly.

All college staff are committed to working with parents/guardians and students to ensure the highest level of attendance possible.

Useful Information:

SupaJam Swanley Reception: 01322 660845
 SupaJam Canterbury Reception: 01227 697976
 SupaJam Brighton Reception: 01273 447554

Attendance Team:

Sammi Hastie Swanley Base Leader
Lindsay Greening Canterbury Base Leader
Chelsea Evans Brighton Base Leader
Sarah Smith Administrator (Swanley)

Chloe Mitchell and Beatrice Pelling Administrator (Canterbury)
Charlotte O'Brien Operations Manager
Hannah Goslett Director Of Safeguarding