

# Student Absence & Attendance Policy

Academic Year  
2026-27

Forth  
Valley  
College





# STUDENT ABSENCE & ATTENDANCE POLICY

## ACADEMIC SESSION 2026-27

### WHY IS THE ABSENCE & ATTENDANCE POLICY IMPORTANT?

While studying, you are expected to attend your timetabled classes, and placements if you have them, to make the most of your learning. However, the college understands that **at times you may need to be absent from class.**

If you are going to be absent from college you are expected to **tell your teaching department** and **cover your absence(s)** where it is suitable.

Being absent from class may not directly affect your progress or funding but it may affect your **engagement** level which could lead to **your funding payments being withheld.**

Therefore it is recommended that you address any absences in a timely way and beforehand where possible. You should also make sure that if you miss any coursework you should work with your department to find out how to catch up.

### TYPES OF ABSENCES AND HOW TO COVER THEM

There are a number of ways you can cover your absences depending on the **reason for your absence.** Below are the most common **ways to cover your absences, and when and how to use them.**

For each type of absence authorisation, there are a **limited number of days** given per teaching block. (If you are only absent for part of a day it will still count as using one of your days.)

There are two **teaching blocks** in each academic year. For 2026-27 the teaching blocks are:

- 24 August 2026 – 17 January 2027
- 18 January 2027 – 11 June 2027

### SELF-CERTIFICATES

Each student is given **5 self-certificates/days** to use in each teaching block. (Or 7 self-certificates/days if you are on a catering course, check with your teaching department if you are unsure if this applies to you.)

#### SELF-CERTS

**5 DAYS  
PER BLOCK**

**No extra self-certificates will be given.**

Self-certificates can be used to cover absences that either:

- Cannot be authorised (see the examples of absences which will not be authorised),
- Or is for an illness-related absence that covers a period shorter than 7 calendar days.

All self-certificates must be recorded online **within 7 days of your absence.** You will not be able to log it later than this.

You can submit your self-certificate via your **MyInfo page** via any device with internet access, either at college or at home. You will be shown how to self-certificate an absence as part of your college induction.

If your circumstances mean you were unable to self-certificate an absence within 7 days, you can contact Student Funding via email to let us know what has happened, and on some occasions, we may be able to log it for you. This is not guaranteed though, so in the first instance, you should log your own self-certificates within 7 days.

## AUTHORISED ABSENCES

There are certain circumstances where you will be absent from college due to unavoidable circumstances. On these occasions, up to **7 days**

**Authorised Absence** per teaching block can be granted by Student Funding. To ask for an authorised absence, you will need to **email Student Funding** with the details of your absence and the appropriate evidence.

See the table below for common reasons for absences which may be authorised, when you need to tell Student Funding and the supporting evidence you will need to give a copy of.

All evidence should clearly show that it has your name on it and the date the evidence relates to.

**AUTHORISED  
ABSENCES**  
  
**7 DAYS  
PER BLOCK**

Reason for Absence	Notification Period	Supporting Evidence
<b>Bereavement (fewer than 7 calendar days)</b>	At the time of the absence.	Email Student Funding to tell us that you are absent due to bereavement and how long you will be absent for.
<b>Funeral (of a close relative or friend)</b>	If possible, before your absence or within two college days of your return.	Email Student Funding to tell us the date you will be absent from college for the funeral.
<b>Your child/ dependant's illness – general illness, where there is no one available to care for them</b>	At the time of the absence, as soon as you know you will need to be absent from college.	A copy of a letter from the school/ childcare provider or GP saying that the child/dependant was ill.
<b>Appointment regarding your child/ dependant</b>	Before your absence.	Documents from the organisation (i.e. a headed letter or official email) showing your name details and the date of the appointment and that you need to be there with them.

<b>Religious holidays or observances</b>	Before your absence.	Email Student Funding to tell us that you will be absent due to a religious holiday or observance, including the date of the absence and which holiday/ observance you will be participating in.
<b>Job interview</b>	Before your absence.	A copy of your invitation to interview (i.e. letter or email).
<b>University or college interview</b>	Before your absence.	A copy of your invitation to interview (i.e. letter or email).

If you need **more than the maximum 7 days** of Authorised Absences in a teaching block, Student Funding will need to ask your Curriculum Manager for confirmation that they are happy with your engagement and for your absence to be authorised.

The types of absence below may also be logged as Authorised Absence but are not included in the maximum day allowance.

Reason for Absence	Notification Period	Supporting Evidence
<b>Court Appearance</b>	Before your absence.	Court citation, or letter from solicitor/ lawyer/court official.
<b>Jury Duty – first day/ selection day</b>	Before your absence.	Court citation.
<b>Jury Duty – following days</b>	During your absence, or within 2 college days of your return.	Court documents confirming the dates that you will be required to attend.
<b>Paternity Appointments</b>	Before your absence.	A copy of hospital/ scan appointment letters/cards.
<b>Paternity Leave – we can authorise up to two weeks' absence from the date the child is born</b>	Once you have your child's birth certificate.	A copy of your child's birth certificate.

## MEDICAL ABSENCES

**MEDICAL  
ABSENCES**

**14 DAYS  
PER BLOCK**

If your absence is for a **medical reason**, this can be logged as a **Medical Absence** by Student Funding so long as you are able to give evidence, and is for a period of absence that lasts **7 calendar days or more**. Student Funding can give up to a maximum of 14 days Medical Absence per teaching block. (If you require more frequent absences due to ill-health, see the section below on **Additional Authorised Absence Days**.)

To ask for a Medical Absence to be logged, you will need to **email Student Funding** with the details of your absence and the right evidence.

See the table below for common reasons for medical absences which may be allowed, when you need to tell Student Funding, and the supporting evidence you will need to give a copy of.

All evidence should clearly have your name on it and the date the evidence relates to.

Reason for Absence	Notification Period	Supporting Evidence
<b>Hospital/ clinic/ orthodontist appointments</b>	Before your absence.	Hospital letter or appointment card.
<b>Hospital stay/ unexpected in-patient stay</b>	As soon as you have your evidence.	If you were admitted to hospital unexpectedly you will need to email us a copy of your discharge paperwork once you have been released from hospital.
<b>Emergency doctor or dentist appointment</b>	Within two college days of your return.	Your evidence should clearly show that the appointment was an emergency and not routine.
<b>Medical illness (7 calendar days and over, including COVID 19)</b>	As soon as you have your evidence	Medical certificate/ Doctor's letter.

<b>Hospital/ clinic appointment(s), or stay related to gender-affirming healthcare processes.</b>	Before your absence.	Hospital/clinic letter or appointment card.
<b>Your child/ dependant's illness – serious illness/injury</b>	As soon as you have your evidence	A letter from the doctor/GP, discharge paperwork from a hospital, or other evidence to show the child/ dependant was ill/ injured.
<b>Your child/ dependant's hospital appointment</b>	Before your absence.	Hospital letter or appointment card.
<b>Bereavement (7 days and over).</b>	As soon as you have your evidence.	Medical certificate/ Doctor's letter.

If you need more than the maximum **14 days** of Medical Absences in a teaching block, Student Funding will need to ask your Curriculum Manager for confirmation that they are happy with your engagement and for your absence to be authorised.

The types of absence in the table below may also be logged as a Medical Absence but are not included in the maximum day allowance.

Reason for Absence	Notification Period	Supporting Evidence
<b>Maternity Appointments</b>	Before your absence.	A copy of hospital/ scan appointment letters/cards
<b>Maternity Leave – we can authorise up to two weeks' absence from the date the child is born</b>	Once you have your child's birth certificate.	A copy of your child's birth certificate

## ADDITIONAL AUTHORISED ABSENCE DAYS

If you either have an **ongoing medical condition** or **personal circumstances** which mean that you need **extra absence days** throughout the year, you can apply for these.

Your application should be based on **either** an On-going Medical Condition or Personal Circumstances.

To apply for these, you should **email Student Funding** to outline your condition or personal circumstances and suggest how this may affect your ability to attend your classes. You should also give **evidence** of your diagnosis or personal circumstances to support this. You can also be referred to us for Additional Authorised Absence Days through your Learner Development Worker or Curriculum Manager.

This will be looked at by **Student Funding** and your **Curriculum Manager**. If we feel you may have short periods of absence which are due to your condition/circumstances then we may give you a set number of extra days' **authorised absence**. We will then contact you to advise how you should use these.

Please note these **Additional Authorised Absence Days** would be for short absences only. If you are absent to go to any appointments we would still need appointment letters, and if you were absent for a period of a week or longer we would still need a medical certificate or doctor's letter to update your absence.

If you would like to ask about Additional Authorised Absence Days, please email Student Funding for further information at [funding@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:funding@forthvalley.ac.uk).

## UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

The list below are some examples of reasons for absence that Student Funding **would not authorise**:

- Community service,
- Weddings, Christenings, etc.,
- Routine dental or doctor appointments,
- Illness that lasts fewer than 7 calendar days,
- Work-related activities, e.g., going to work, or going to paid training,
- Any absence where you have not emailed Student Funding, or have not given the right evidence that is needed to authorise your absence.

If your absence from college falls under one of the above reasons, it would not be authorised by Student Funding.

You can use one of your **self-certificates** to cover the absence.

If you do not have enough self-certificates left, or you do not wish to use one, your attendance will stay marked as 'absent'.

## HOLIDAYS

Holidays during term time are generally discouraged. However, if you have one booked, we can record it on your attendance register. Please be aware that this won't contribute to a positive attendance mark. To cover a holiday, we require the following evidence:

- Flight details indicating your name or that you are a named passenger (including departure and arrival dates).
- Accommodation details with your name on the booking confirmation (including the dates you'll be away)

### EMA Student Holidays

To be eligible for EMA, you must actively cover any absences. This can be through self-certification or one of the other absence types mentioned above, provided sufficient evidence is submitted.

Please be aware that taking holidays during term time will result in non-payment, following the rules set by the Scottish Government. If you have **any holidays** logged in a calendar week, you will not be paid EMA for that week.

For example, if you log a holiday from Wednesday in 1 week to the Tuesday the following week – you will not receive payment for either week.

## NEED ANY MORE HELP?

If you need any more information about how to request an authorised absence, or if your reason for absence has not been mentioned here you can **contact Student Funding** at [funding@forthvalley.ac.uk](mailto:funding@forthvalley.ac.uk).

Please remember to give as much information as possible and include your Student ID number in your email so we can help you.



# MAKING LEARNING WORK



[www.forthvalley.ac.uk](http://www.forthvalley.ac.uk)

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