

12. Student Conduct

Most students appreciate an atmosphere that values them as maturing individuals, imposes only the minimum rules, ensures mutual respect and consideration and helps them to meet the requirements of their chosen courses. Students are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own progress and behaviour in preparation for life after college including for Higher Education and employment. Upon joining the College, students are made aware of the disciplinary procedures as part of their induction programme and these are also contained within the Student Course Handbook.

The College policy on alcohol and illegal substances is simple: these substances must not, under any circumstances, be brought onto any of the College sites. Smoking is not allowed. There is a wealth of student policies ranging from anti-harassment to equality and details can be found on the College website www.belfastmet.ac.uk. Serious breaches of the College rules and regulations may result in suspension or expulsion.

Belfast Metropolitan College adopts a disciplinary procedure, which is essential for the conduct of the College's affairs both in connection with its obligations to the public and for the safety and well-being of its students.

13. Belfast Metropolitan College's Attendance and Punctuality Procedure

Belfast Metropolitan College regards attendance and punctuality as a fundamental part of the College Charter and an important prerequisite for the highest levels of achievement.

All College staff adopt a consistent and transparent approach and expectations are clearly communicated to students and, where appropriate, parents or carers.

14. Student's Roles and Responsibilities

Students are expected to attend all their classes punctually. If students are late it is their responsibility to enter the class quietly, so other students are not disturbed. However there may be circumstances where it may be inappropriate to enter a class, for instance during exams and presentations, so the onus is on the student, to use their best judgement. Additionally, students are responsible for explaining the reason they were late to their tutor and for catching up on any missed work at a later date, since it will not be repeated during the lesson.

Explanations of absence must be phoned in to the Student Records Officer for their particular course (students should have their student card and timetable to hand when reporting an absence) before the first class they were due to attend begins.

Medical certificates are required to support evidence of longer periods of absence due to illness. If a student is absent for four weeks without producing a written explanation, they will be regarded as having left the course.

Poor standards of attendance can affect payment of EMA as well as invoking disciplinary action culminating in dismissal. Students should be aware that if they are at any time absent without good reason or explanation for any part of their course, the College has an obligation to inform you the parents, or the carers with whom they reside, or examination boards. In the case of part-time sponsored students, employers will be notified of any unexplained absence from College. Students are expected to maintain 100% attendance during the whole of their course.



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

2009 - 2010



1. Evening for Parents of Students

During the time of your son or daughter's study with us, you will be invited to attend parents' evenings. These are important to your son and daughter and to their teachers. These evenings are designed to enable parents to meet their son or daughter's Personal Tutor, teachers and the Belfast Metropolitan College. At these events parents are able to gain more information on careers and professional routes available for your son or daughter. They can also be an opportunity for parents to give us information as well as to ask questions. We encourage you to attend and staff greatly welcome the opportunity to meet with you.

Full information about parents' evenings will be forwarded directly to parents and carers.

2. Progression after Belfast Metropolitan College

The College is rightly proud of its outstanding record in developing employment and employability skills of its students. Therefore during the academic year, your son or daughter will have the opportunity to attend careers events and talks such as information days, employer, careers and UCAS talks and specific information sessions on Higher Education opportunities at the College, including our guaranteed progression scheme. Your son or daughter will be given support to develop their employability and enterprise skills in a variety of ways, including support from our E-Zone facility and our Insight Entrepreneurs Club. They can also speak to one of our experienced Careers Advisers to discuss progression opportunities and the next steps in their future.

3. Guidance for Parents

Our commitment to parents and carers of students under 18 years of age means that you will:

- Be given the opportunity to discuss your son or daughter's progress with his or her Personal Tutor or other appropriate person;
- Be informed at an early stage if significant problems arise;
- Be informed of unexplained absences and persistent lateness.

At Belfast Metropolitan College we encourage parents to support their son or daughter by taking an active interest in their College work. The courses are often intensive and students benefit greatly from having parental support.

4. Timetables

We provide students with a timetable at the beginning of the year. It is recommended that you become familiar with your son or daughter's schedule as we feel a parent's access to timetable information can help the student manage their education. Timetables can be made available to parents upon request from the College, although it is hoped that your son or daughter will share their timetable with you.

The College timetable generally spans Monday – Thursday, 8.30am-9:00pm, Friday 8.30am-5.00pm and Saturday 9.00am-1.00pm. However full-time students normally have a timetable running from Monday to Friday between the hours of 9.00am and 5.00pm, though some courses may have twilight sessions between 5.00pm and 7.00pm. Full-time Further Education students normally have a timetable of 17²/₃ hours per week. Main buildings in the College are normally open every evening Monday – Thursday and two of our buildings on Saturday mornings during term-time. This is supplemented by additional study time, the use of Learning Resource Centres and work placements where appropriate.

Timetables can change during the year. Your son or daughter will be given notice of any changes. Several courses have work experience. Students will be notified in advance of any work experience periods where necessary.

5. Holidays

We advise students do not take holidays within term-time as this adversely affects their work and progress.

It is important to note that the end of Summer Term is crucial for assessment.

6. Part-time Employment

Many students have part-time jobs which provide some income and also encourage independence. However, it is essential that college work comes first. If a student takes on too much, it can affect their academic progress.

7. Contacting your Son or Daughter at the College

Contacting students can be difficult because students' timetables contain 'free' or study periods as well as timetabled sessions so finding them on-site is not always easy. Therefore for routine arrangements, we ask parents and students to make their own plans for contact through mobile phones for example. Calls are not permitted during class. (Please see section below on mobile phone usage when at the College).

However if you do need to ring the College switchboard on tel: 028 9026 5000, in an emergency, please remember to include all the following points:

- Date and time
- Student's name, course and year if possible. Plus if you have a copy of their timetable, the building and the room number or class you believe they are currently attending
- Your name
- Contact number, if you wish to be called back.

In emergencies we will, of course, make every effort to locate your son or daughter.

8. Contact with Parents and Carers

We encourage you to contact us if they have any concerns or queries about your son or daughter whilst at Belfast Metropolitan College.

We will also contact you if we have worries about your son or daughter.

9. Mobile Phones

All mobiles phones must be switched off during lesson times.

10. Belfast Metropolitan College Course Handbooks

Your son or daughter will receive a Course Handbook and a copy of the College's Guide to Student Services, which gives details of the content and the assessments related to their course and general College information respectively. You may like to read these documents – ask your son or daughter for a look at their copy.

11. Belfast Metropolitan College Student Charter

Belfast Metropolitan College has a charter detailing the College's rules and regulations and it is expected that all students will follow this charter, but it also emphasises what our students can expect from us.