

## Statement of Policy on Education Maintenance Allowance

*[Reviewed and agreed at Governors' Sixth Form Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2004]*

### 1. Attendance

- 1.1 100% attendance is the criteria to award weekly EMA payment.
- 1.2 Only attendance can be used as a criterion for awarding weekly payments.
- 1.3 All schools and colleges should register absences from **every** lesson. This may lead to payments being withheld.

### 2. Absences

#### 2.1 Unforeseen absences

- 2.1.1 In general isolated periods of genuine sickness **need not** preclude payment of EMA. Students should phone the school or college on the day of their absence, within each institution's agreed time scale. Schools and colleges are to use their discretion concerning how they collect **auditable** information about absences. For example, self-certification of sickness, logged phone call, letter from parents or a doctor's note.
- 2.1.2 Schools and colleges should use their own discretion concerning unforeseen travel conditions causing students to miss lessons.
- 2.1.3 Students cannot receive EMA payments for absences which last longer than a reporting week.
- 2.1.4 Schools and colleges are entitled to turn down applications for authorised sickness if they have reason to doubt the validity.

#### 2.2 Acceptable/Authorised Foreseen absences

- 2.2.1 A medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside of school/college hours (eg. specialist appointments)
- 2.2.2 A particular need to look after a family member or another person for whom the student has caring responsibilities. However, schools/colleges should not regularly be authorising absences for a student for this reason. Where such responsibilities are regularly interrupting attendance patterns, there is a need to explore solutions personally with the student.
- 2.2.3 A religious holiday (max. 3 per academic year)
- 2.2.4 A visit to a University either to attend an open day or for interview, or a career related interview (full-time only).
- 2.2.5 Work experience that is an integral part of the course, or for which the student does not receive a wage.
- 2.2.6 Participating in a significant extra-curricular activity, such as drama, music, sport or volunteering, whether in or out of the school/college. Authorised absence should only be granted where the activity reflects a significant level of personal achievement (eg. taking part in a regional or national event) or for some other one-off events. These authorised absences should be used sparingly, and where a pattern of frequent participation in such activities is proposed, there is a need to explore solutions personally with the student.
- 2.2.7 Attendance at a probation meeting or youth court.
- 2.2.8 Attendance at a funeral (max. 1 day).
- 2.2.9 A practical driving test (morning or afternoon only).
- 2.2.10 School/college representative meeting.

This list is not exhaustive and responsibility lies with the schools or colleges to assess reasons and any patterns in absences.

### **3. Contract Part 2**

- 3.1 Schools and colleges can use their current learning agreements, where appropriate, to assess progression towards individual bonus payments.
- 3.2 Can be linked to the following:
  - a) Behaviour
  - b) Punctuality
  - c) Abiding by the school's/college's rules and regulations
  - d) All work to be submitted on time
  - e) 'Satisfactory progression towards agreed learning goals'
- 3.3 Schools and colleges need to ensure that someone sufficiently connected to the student's academic progress is able to make a judgement as to whether or not the student has met the learning goals set out. Given the nature of these goals, there may be an element of judgement in this decision.

### **4. Non-Payments**

- 4.1 Schools/colleges to set in place procedures to inform students of non-payments. Example formats: to set up e-mail to student e-mail accounts (where applicable) or mail merge letter(s) set up. Students to be told of non-payment before the Friday of the following week.

Experience from the pilots highlighted problems of students failing to correct their attendance records and requesting several months of back payments. For ease of administration of EMA, it is strongly recommended schools and colleges could use discretion for individual cases. Students would need to be informed of this at the start of the year.

### **5. Queries Procedure**

- 5.1 Schools/colleges to make students aware that a queries procedure is in place, and how and when they can access it.
- 5.2 In the unlikely event that a query cannot be resolved, the final decision rests with a nominated person, outside of the payment decision-making process.

### **6. Over Payments**

- 6.1 Where a student did not qualify for payments that they have received, no more than two week's worth of overpayments should be recovered from future payments. The reason for this is to give protection to the incentive effect of the weekly payment.
- 6.2 Schools and colleges should use their own disciplinary procedures if students have falsely claimed any EMA payments.