

## **Shimna Integrated College**

### **EMA Attendance Policy**

The Education Maintenance Allowance is a government funded scheme using public money, and has been put in place for specific purposes. Because EMA is paid from public funds, payments are subject to frequent audits by the relevant government department. It is important that you understand how the system works.

- EMA is paid primarily to support students in staying on in education past the age of 16, and to ensure that they do not need to take away from study time by having to work too many hours at a part-time job;
- EMA is structured to support good habits of attendance, punctuality and study and high standards of work, which are an excellent preparation for the demands of working life;
- EMA is paid in two sections: a weekly payment is made when you achieve perfect attendance and punctuality; a bonus is paid twice a year if you achieve your aspirational targets in your work and effort.

#### Attendance and Punctuality

Full attendance and excellent punctuality at school are all important. Lost school days and lost opportunities can never be made up to you.

Full attendance is essential:

- (a) for you to cover the full programme of study and achieve your full potential in every aspect of school life;
- (b) because your attendance record will appear on your record when you leave school. Your attendance record will be read by any admissions officer, and by any prospective employer when you apply for university or college or for a job or training place. Fairly or unfairly, a bad attendance record will count against a person in any application.

You will receive a weekly payment in every week in which you achieve 100% attendance and a good record of punctuality, being on time to school and to class. Being late on more than one occasion during one week will result in non-payment of EMA unless an explanation can be given of circumstances out of the student's control e.g. bus late.

Where a student is dealing with, for example, a specific, ongoing medical difficulty, a date for a driving test, a flight cancellation, each case will be dealt with on its merits and according to the documentation provided by the student e.g. hospital appointment cards/letters, driving test confirmation letters etc.

The arrangements for medical and dental appointments are the same as the arrangements for staff, and appointments should always be made outside school hours.

Where an unavoidable hospital appointment is scheduled on a school day, a copy of the hospital letter should be provided to the scheme administrator and the form teacher. Such days will not count against a student's attendance percentage.

In the case of weddings and funerals, the same policy will apply as for staff ie, not recorded as absence in the case of a close family member.

EMA is not paid over holiday periods nor over periods of long term illness.

**It is essential that each student recognise that it is their individual responsibility to understand the system and:**

to register at 9.00am and in each class/study session thereafter;

to produce hospital or other documentation where required and to submit absence notes as required, a copy of each to the system administrator and a copy to the form teacher;

to use and respect the appeal system where any dispute arises;

to consult the system administrator if they are unclear about any aspect of qualifying for EMA.

### **Appeals**

Students have the right to appeal a decision in which a weekly payment of EMA has been stopped, by completing the appeals form provided by the scheme administrator, Danella Goodman.