



**Promoting Good Attendance
in the Sixth Form:
A Guide for Parents
and Carers**

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Introduction

St Aidan's and St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form is a highly successful Sixth Form and your student plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach their potential. Full attendance at school is the best way to ensure this happens unless there are unavoidable reasons for absence.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your student attends regularly and this booklet sets out how we will achieve this together.

Why Regular Attendance and Punctuality are so important:

Learning

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect learning. High levels of attendance and punctuality are characteristics of students who achieve above or in-line with their potential, with research showing that poor attendance and punctuality have a serious detrimental effect on outcomes. Ensuring your student's regular attendance and punctuality at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law.

Safeguarding

A student may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each student is everyone's responsibility and, within the context of the Association, promotes the welfare and life opportunities for your student. Keeping Children Safe in Education and preceding legislation places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State concerning safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students under the age of 18. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter.

Attendance Agreement

All students are expected to attend 100% of sessions including curricular subjects, tutorials, registration, assemblies and any other directed sessions. Attendance is defined as: participation in the programme of educational activities arranged by St Aidan's and St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form. In addition to actual attendance within the schools' premises, it covers:

- Work experience
- Educational visits (including foreign exchanges) organised or approved by the schools
- Day and residential visits to outdoor centres
- School/department study days
- Interviews and visits relating to further and/or higher education (up to a maximum of 3 Open Days per year)
- Debates, sports, musical or theatrical productions etc. arranged by, or in conjunction with, the schools

If, however, absence is unavoidable, the absence may be **authorised** and **appropriate evidence** should be brought in to the relevant Sixth Form Office. Alternatively, parental authorisation may be emailed to attendanceofficer6thform@staidans.co.uk or attendance6thform@sifchs.org.uk. All absences will be considered unauthorised unless a valid reason is given.

Monitoring attendance

Our strict attendance monitoring process allows for immediate awareness of absences - these will be communicated to you via email. If a student is not present when the class register is taken, an email will be sent to you and the student, advising you that your student is absent from the lesson. Registers are taken within the first 10 minutes of a lesson. If for any reason a student arrives late to a lesson, we would be grateful if they could check with the teacher that the register has been amended.

Students' attendance will be closely monitored by their Form Tutor, Senior Tutor (SA), Assistant Directors of Sixth Form (SJF) and Attendance Officer. The attendance protocol outlines the different thresholds of the monitoring process and the support, meetings and sanctions in place.

Understanding types of absence

Absence from school sessions will only be authorised if:

- A phone call or email, from a parent, is received in the Sixth Form Office each morning of any medical absence. Otherwise, a phone call, email or letter from a parent will be needed on return to school. Repeated absence for sickness, even if only for short periods of time, will be followed up and, where appropriate, be discussed with the student and/or their parent/carer.
- A Medical Certificate is obtained for absences of more than 10 consecutive school days.
- Written evidence is provided **beforehand** of a hospital or Specialist appointment.
- Evidence is presented that urgent (not routine) medical or dental treatment is required.
- There are school transport problems – this can lead to lateness but not to missing a whole day of lessons.
- An interview for a permanent job is attended, and invitation to interview is presented as evidence.
- Official Evidence is provided that a Court attendance is required.
- Official Evidence is provided that a Driving Test is to be attended.
- There are exceptional family difficulties.
- The wedding of immediate family is attended.
- The funeral of a close family relative or friend is attended.
- Religious observance is required.

Unauthorised absence will be recorded if:

- A student is absent from a session without obtaining authorisation for absence.
- A holiday/social event is taken during term-time (family holidays will only be authorised in term time where there are exceptional reasons why it cannot be taken during the holiday period).
- A driving lesson is arranged during the school day excepting **lunchtime** (you cannot organise a driving lesson during a core learning session or free period).
- An interview for casual/part-time employment is attended.
- A period of part-time job training is attended.
- A student is missing lessons to complete coursework/homework.
- A student is missing lessons if seeking to change/discontinue a course before approval has been officially given.

Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive on time for all lessons and timetabled sessions, including registration. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your student misses registration or the start of a lesson they can miss work and do not spend time with their teacher getting vital information and news for the day. If a student arrives after 9.00am they must sign in at the Sixth Form Office of the school that they register at. If a student signs in late (after 9.00 am) this will be recorded as unauthorised unless a valid reason is given.

Illness

If a student feels unwell during the school day they must go to the medical room (SA) or Sixth Form Office (SJF). No student should leave the school premises without following this guidance.

A medical note will be required for 10 consecutive school days absence or long-term medical conditions which result in regular absence.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about a range of matters, including absence, so we need to have the correct contact numbers at all times. It is important that you ensure we always have an up-to-date number – if we don't, then we may be unable to contact you if there is an emergency.

Please note also that attendance data is often requested by prospective employers or tutors in references, so it is important that records of attendance in lessons are accurate; students are responsible for attending all lessons punctually in order to be registered accurately. Tutors receive weekly attendance reports and will work with students to address any reported unauthorised absences. Any problems with regular attendance should be resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the student. If your student is struggling to attend school then please notify their Senior Tutor (SA) or Head of Year (SJF) to discuss the reasons for this.

Summary

St Aidan's and St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form has a legal duty to advise parents/carers of absences and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their student attends school.

All our staff are committed to working with parents/carers and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every student's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Attendance Protocol

Attendance

Reports will be run on a half-termly basis as part of the monitoring of attendance (although if concerns exist contact between home and the Sixth Form will be more regular). At the end of each half term attendance will be re-set. Whether emails are sent home and meetings take place will depend on the judgement of the Sixth Form leadership team.

Threshold 1

Attendance is above 90% across Form Time and timetabled lessons for the half term.

GREEN – no concerns at this stage. No contact with home to raise concerns.

Threshold 2

Attendance is between 80% and 89% across Form Time and timetabled lessons for the half term.

AMBER – there are concerns about attendance. An email will be sent home informing student/parents/carers that there are some concerns relating to attendance. The Form Tutor and Senior Tutor (at SA), Head of Year (SJF) will be copied into this email. This will be kept on a student's file. Student to meet with appropriate member of Sixth Form team to discuss concerns/support. For Year 13 students this may affect decisions relating to the granting of Home Study.

Threshold 3

Attendance is below 80% across Form Time and timetabled lessons for the half term.

RED – there are significant concerns about attendance. An email will be sent home informing student/parents/carers that there are significant concerns relating to attendance. The Form Tutor and Senior Tutor (at SA), Head of Year (SJF) will be copied into this email. This will be kept on a student's file. Student to meet with Senior Tutor (SA), Head of Year (SJF) to discuss concerns/support. For Year 13 students this is likely to affect decisions relating to the granting of Home Study. If the Sixth Form team are not already in contact with parents/carers and aware of reasons for low attendance, parents/carers will be invited in for a meeting. The meeting will discuss support being put in place to support improved attendance, course completion, exam entries and future study options.