



Whitburn Church of England Academy

Attendance Policy (Including Sixth Form Attendance Policy - (Appendix 2))

Preface

The Academy Vision and Values can be found here:

<https://www.whitburncofeacademy.org/about-us/academy-ethos.html>

This policy and its associated procedures are based on these key principles and values.

Policy

Whitburn Church of England Academy is committed to providing an excellent educational experience for all its students. We believe that good attendance is ‘everyone’s’ business and everyone’s responsibility. Furthermore, we believe that high attendance is key to student achievement. It is our intent to ensure maximum attendance for each student, as there is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance and low levels of achievement. For Whitburn Church of England Academy students, the GCSE results demonstrate a clear link between attendance and achievement.

Whitburn Church of England Academy is committed to ensuring that parents, carers and students understand the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents and carers have a vital role to play, and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

There will inevitably, be occasional issues that impede full attendance and these will be identified and addressed promptly. We will strive to work in partnership with parents/carers and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

The Senior Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer

The Senior Attendance Champion in Whitburn C of E Academy is Mrs D A Tenny (Assistant Headteacher and DSL) and the Attendance Officer is Mrs K Doyle. Both are contactable via the Main Reception at the Academy.

Responsibilities

At Whitburn Church of England Academy, we:

- Expect students to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped to learn.
- Will maintain an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to maintain or improve their attendance and timekeeping.
- Will encourage expected attendance and will communicate with parents and carers as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.
- Will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- Liaise with the Local Authority's Attendance Monitoring Officer to provide parents and carers with support and advice where necessary.
- Will work in partnership with parents, carers and students to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.
- Will include students' attendance in reports to parents on achievement at least annually.
- Will enforce the requirement to attend school punctually and reserve the right not to authorise absence for persistent offenders or where there is no reasonable explanation.

Whitburn Church of England Academy students will:

- Attend school regularly and on time.
- Attend every timetabled lesson – and on time.

Parents and carers of Whitburn Church of England Academy students should:

- Ensure their child regularly and punctually attends school, fulfilling their legal responsibility.
- Report their child's absence before 8.45 a.m., giving the reason and likely duration of the absence. A text messaging service is available via the MyEd app or direct to the Attendance Officer on 07975006988. The Attendance Officer will add a comment on the attendance register when such information is received.
- Work actively with Academy staff and relevant multi-agency staff, to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Not book family holidays during term time.

Registration Procedures

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 determine the admissions and attendance registers that all schools must keep. They also regulate the power schools have to grant leave of absence.

By law, schools are required to record attendance in the attendance register, once at the beginning of the morning session and once in the afternoon, whether the student is present, absent, engaged in an approved, supervised educational activity off-site, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Staff are required to register students at the start of the morning registration session and again at the beginning of each of the five daily lessons.

AM registration opens at 8.55 am Students will register by 9:00 am

PM registration is at the beginning of Period 4 at 1.20 pm

- Students arriving from 9:01 am or 1:25 pm must still register but will be recorded late.
- Students arriving after 9:01 am or after 1:20 pm must report to the Main Office, sign the late book and then should report to their lesson as normal; students will attend a 1 hour after school detention on the same day as their am late

Whitburn Church of England Academy expects its teaching staff to check the electronic register every lesson. On occasions where the computer system is unavailable, paper registers are taken and returned to the Attendance Officer in the Main Office, who manually adds them to the system at the earliest opportunity.

Only the Attendance Officer will alter the attendance register; there are only three occasions when the attendance register can be altered:

- If it is discovered that an error has been made.
- Where an unexplained absence has since been satisfactorily explained.
- Where a student's name has been legally changed.

Any alterations to the Attendance register must be recorded and include:

- Original entry.
- Altered entry.
- Reason for the alteration.
- Date on which the alteration was made.
- Name of the person who made the alteration.

A student cannot be removed from the attendance register unless they are removed from the admissions register at the same time.

The Academy will not automatically remove a student from roll, even when notification has been given by a parent or carer, if it is suspected that the child is likely to become "missing from education". Liaison will occur with the Attendance Monitoring Officer to try to establish the child's whereabouts.

Records in the attendance register will be preserved for at least 3 years from the date it was entered.

Registration Symbols

The following symbols are used in registers in line with the Department for Education guidance:

| Code | Description | Student counted as if present in school for that session? |
|------|--|---|
| # | School closed to students | No |
| / | Present (AM) | Yes |
| \ | Present (PM) | Yes |
| B | Any other approved educational activity | Yes |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances | No |
| C1 | Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. | No |
| C2 | Temporary, part-time timetable (at the Academy's discretion) | Yes |
| D | Dual Registration | Yes |
| E | Excluded | No |
| G | Family Holiday (NOT agreed) | No |
| I | Illness | No |
| J1 | Interview | Yes |
| K | Educational provision arranged by a Local Authority | Yes |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Yes |
| M | Medical/Dental Appointment | No |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | No |
| O | Unauthorised absence | No |
| P | Approved Sporting Activity | Yes |
| Q | Lack of access arrangements | Yes |
| R | Religious Observance | No |
| S | Study Leave | No |
| T | Traveller Absence | Yes |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | No |
| V | Educational Visit or Trip | Yes |
| W | Work Experience | Yes |
| X | Non-Compulsory School Age absence | No |
| Y1 | Usual transport for students outside of the L.A is not available | Yes |
| Y2 | Widespread disruption to travel to national/international emergency | Yes |
| Y3 | School premises out of use | Yes |
| Y5 | Student is in criminal justice detention | Yes |
| Y6 | Incidence or transmission of infection or disease as published by Secretary of State | Yes |
| Y7 | Any other unavoidable cause of absence – emergency use only at the school's discretion | Yes |
| Z | Student not yet on roll | No |

*Updated codes effectual from 19th August 2024

Absence Reporting

First Day Absence

Parents/carers should ring the the Attendance Officer on 07975006988 to inform a child's absence. A text messaging service is also available via the MyEd app. The Attendance Officer will add a comment on the attendance register when such information is received.

The Attendance Officer will run an attendance report at 10.30 am each day to identify any absence where parents/carers have not contacted school. Contact will be made to these parents/carers via phone before lunchtime. Where contact has not been possible, a text message is sent. Where students are deemed to be vulnerable, calls relating to their absence will be prioritised, and the Attendance Monitoring Officer will be notified if a valid reason for absence is not obtained.

Students who have poor attendance at school, without medical reason, may be visited at home by a member of staff.

Continued Unreported Absence

If contact has not been made with the exception of students identified as vulnerable, and a note has not been received, the Academy will request that a home visit is made by either the Pastoral Lead / Inclusion Support Assistant or the Attendance Monitoring Officer; this is to ensure that the child is seen.

Intervention in cases of absence

Under 95% - A number of 'attendance alerts' are sent to parents/carers to alert them of the impact of absence on attendance percentage; form tutor discusses concerns with the student and if the situation persists then a follow up phone call is made home.

Under 90% - Persistent Absence - Contact is made with the parent/carer; a letter is sent to parent/carer regarding attendance concerns. Pastoral Lead discusses concerns with the student. Parent/carer will be invited to a meeting with the Pastoral Lead to discuss the attendance concerns. Where absence is classified as persistent, a letter will be sent to parent/carer and referral made to Services for Young people. A meeting will be arranged with the Attendance Monitoring Officer and Pastoral Lead. An **Attendance Action Plan** (*Appendix 1*) will be drawn up at the meeting; this can be part of a Behaviour Support Plan or Pastoral Support Plan.

Persistent absence is a serious problem for students. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these students at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career.

Where there is no confirmed medical issue identified by a medical practitioner in writing – a letter will be sent to parents/carers informing them that all subsequent absences will not be authorised unless covered by a medical certificate.

At any time, if there is a change in the attendance pattern, unexplained absences or development of a pattern of absences, the above can be over-ridden.

Continued Persistent Unauthorised Absence

This is likely to lead to the issue of penalty notices and other legal consequences.

Truancy

Truancy checks will be carried out as part of the First Day Absence procedures and when the Daily Attendance report is run by the Attendance Officer using the attendance register.

Additional random checks will be run and checks will also be made when there is information that a student may be truanting from school.

When a student has truanted from school, the Pastoral Lead will:

- Interview the student and issue appropriate sanctions. The sanction for truanting is a detention being set to cover the time of lesson/s missed until the work they have missed as a result of the truancy has been caught up.
- Inform parents/carers and appropriate academy and education welfare staff in the case of persistent truants.
- Ensure the truancy is recorded on the student's record.
- Persistent truancy may result in Reflection.

Long Term Absence, Support and Reintegration Programme

Long term absence may occur as a result of injury, bereavement etc.

- Wherever possible, the Pastoral Lead, in conjunction with Heads of Subjects and the SENCO where applicable, will make arrangements for appropriate work to be sent home for any student who is likely to be absent for a long period. This may also include on-line units of work.
- Any student who has been absent for a long period will have a reintegration meeting. This will ideally involve parents/carers and may involve the Attendance Monitoring Officer and/or other external agencies; such as medical professionals.
- The Pastoral Lead will liaise with subject teachers to arrange additional time and support for students to catch up on missing work.
- A personalised plan and timetable will be created under the direction of the Pastoral Lead to ensure the seamless transfer back into lessons.
- The arrangements will be monitored and reviewed at appropriate times by the Pastoral Lead.

Authorising Absence

Parents and carers do not have the legal right to authorise absence, as this is the responsibility of the Academy Principal.

Student Leave of Absence

Parents/carers requesting a leave of absence for their child/children must obtain a “Student Leave of Absence” form from the Main Academy Office. The form should be returned to the Attendance Officer at least 4 weeks before the planned absence. Requests received within 4 weeks of the planned absence are likely to be refused unless under exceptional circumstances.

A Student Leave of Absence will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. The Pastoral Lead will consult with the Principal where the circumstances are considered to be exceptional. A covering letter must be provided to accompany the leave of absence submitted and should give details on the exceptional nature of the circumstances.

Absence for the following reasons **may** be **authorised** by Whitburn Church of England Academy where parents or carers have confirmed the absence results from:

- Illness – The school may request evidence from a medical professional involved with the treatment when necessary
- Religious observance.
- Family bereavement.
- An interview.
- A Medical appointment (appointments should be made out of school hours where possible. Appointments made within the school day should be accompanied by a medical letter or appointment card).
- Sporting activities at regional level or higher.
- Performances which are linked to approved Academy activities, e.g. musical performances organised by South Tyneside Music Service.
- Where a student attends alternative or off-site provision as part of a school programme their attendance should be recorded within that provision. The attendance information will be transferred to the Academy.

Absences may be recorded as **unauthorised** by the Academy when due to:

- Family holidays, unless in **exceptional circumstances** and at the discretion of the Principal.
- Truancy.
- Absences for reasons such as shopping, hair/beauty appointments, birthdays, no uniform, etc.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Performances or sporting activities other than those listed above.
- Absence for any commercial ventures.

It should be noted that the Academy reserve the right to contact the Attendance Monitoring Officer and inform the Local Authority of parents and carers who take their child out of school for unauthorised family holidays. The Local Authority will issue penalty notices to those parents/carers.

Changes to registration regulations from September 2013;

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended **to prohibit** the Principal granting leave of absence to a student except where an application has been made in advance and the Principal considers that there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application. If a parent does not apply, the leave of absence cannot be authorised. (The main purpose of this is to dispel a parental presumption that they have an entitlement to leave or that they can just tell the Academy that they are on leave).

If leave is taken and is not authorised then the parent has committed an offence under S444 Ed Act 1996. This can be subject to prosecution in the magistrate's court under ss1 and ss1A of the Act.

Changes to penalty notices from 19th August 2024

New legislation comes into force on 19th August 2024 regarding the criteria and the issue of penalty notices to address school attendance to commence in South Tyneside September 2024.

The following changes have been made:

- the number of unauthorised absences to 10 unauthorised absences (5 days) in the most recent 10 school week period.
- the number of penalty notices that can be issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child to 2 within a 3-year period.
- It increases the amount of the penalty notice from £120 to £160 (if paid within 28 days) and £60 to £80 (if paid within 21 days) for the first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of the same individual child in a 3-year period.
- It sets the amount of any second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same individual child within 3 years of the date the first penalty notice was issued to £160 to be paid within 28 days. No discount is offered.
- Further absences will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court for the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the first penalty was issued.

Further information can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Children Missing in Education (CME)

A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The Academy will work supportively with students at risk of becoming CME to maintain engagement with education, working with outside agencies where appropriate (e.g. YOT, Medical needs team).

The Academy also pays due regard to 'Operation Endeavour' and will ensure that provision is made in school for the 'return to home' interview to take place with a person from the Local Authority and from school, where a child has been reported to the Police as 'missing from home.'

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future

Punctuality

Whitburn Church of England Academy also encourages its students to demonstrate excellent punctuality, which will be recognised and rewarded. If a student attends after 9.01am, they will be given a 1-hour sanction at the end of school on the same day.

Strategies for promoting attendance

The Academy will encourage excellent attendance by:

- promoting the benefits of expected attendance in: form class, assemblies, lessons and awards events
- contacting home to acknowledge those students whose attendance is exemplary
- holding an inter-form 'Attendance League' competition on a termly basis
- providing tangible rewards for those with improved attendance over time
- presenting students with an award and to be part of the '100% Club' if their attendance is exemplary

Monitoring and Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Academy Attendance Policy

Monitoring and analysis of attendance

The Academy will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at National and Local Authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Using data to improve attendance

The Academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school

The Academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent absence
- Implement an Attendance Action Plan in which the Academy, Parents/Carers and the student will agree on strategies to try and assist to improve attendance
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students who the Academy (and/or Local Authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Signpost access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

| Attendance Policy | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Linked to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Equality Policy • Special Educational Needs & Disability Policy • Student Behaviour Management Policy • Managing Medications & Supporting Students with Medical conditions at School | |
| Creation Date | Version | Status |
| 20 th June 2006 | 1.0 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| Revision Date | | |
| 7 th July 2009 | 2.0 | Approved by Policy & Standards Committee |
| 22 nd June 2010 | 3.0 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 22 nd November 2011 | 4.0 | Policy re-written and approved by the Governing Body |
| 26 th February 2013 | 5.0 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 28 th January 2014 | 6.0 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 27 th January 2015 | 7.0 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 6 th October 2015 | 8.0 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 24 th January 2017 | 9.0 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 10 th October 2017 | 10 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 23 rd January 2018 | 11 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 22 nd January 2019 | 12 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 24 th March 2020 | 13 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 23 rd March 2021 | 14 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 23 rd March 2022 | 15 | Governing Body requested further tweaks be made |
| 17 th May 2022 | 15 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 16 th May 2023 | 16 | Approved by the Governing Body |
| 13 th May 2024 | 17 | Approved by the Governing Body |

Legislation and guidance

- This policy meets the requirements of the **working together to improve school attendance** from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
 - Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
 - Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
 - Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
 - The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Approved by the Governing Body on 13th May 2024

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold:

- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
- Support for pupils where mental health issue is affecting attendance (Effective practice examples)

Appendix 1: Attendance Action Plan Template

| Whitburn Church of England Academy Improving Attendance Action Plan | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|--------------------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Student | Parent/Carer | School contact | Start date: | Review date: | Present Attendance % | Target Attendance % |
| Reason(s) for absence | | | | | | |
| Actions to be taken | By | What will happen? (include milestones) | | How will we know it is working? | | |
| | School | | | | | |
| | Student | | | | | |
| | Parent/Carer | | | | | |
| | Attendance support services | | | | | |
| | Other agencies | | | | | |

Appendix 2

Sixth Form Attendance Protocol

Rationale

In any field of employment, attendance and punctuality are highly valued by employers. This Sixth Form attendance policy is written in such a way that our students are treated as young adults and many of the protocols mirror those that can be expected in the workplace.

It is expected that your young person's minimum attendance should be 95%. For most students, this is not an unrealistic target and we urge you to support your young person and the Sixth Form in trying to reach this target. Research shows conclusively that absence is the single most important factor affecting a student's progress and achievement. If there are concerns about your young person's attendance or factors that may impact upon their attendance please contact the Sixth Form Office in the first instance.

Registration

Students in the Sixth Form are expected to take responsibility for ensuring that they receive a mark. They are expected to arrive punctually and in full compliance with the dress code (including a lanyard and ID badge) ready for the beginning of registration at 8.55 am. Daily attendance is monitored by the Sixth Form Administrator and Attendance Officer and phone calls will be made and/or texts sent for any unexplained absences.

Unexpected Absences (illness, bereavement etc.)

All absences should be reported by 9.00am and by a parent/carer every day of absence.

If you need to report that your son/daughter is going to be absent, we offer several ways you can report it. You can either:

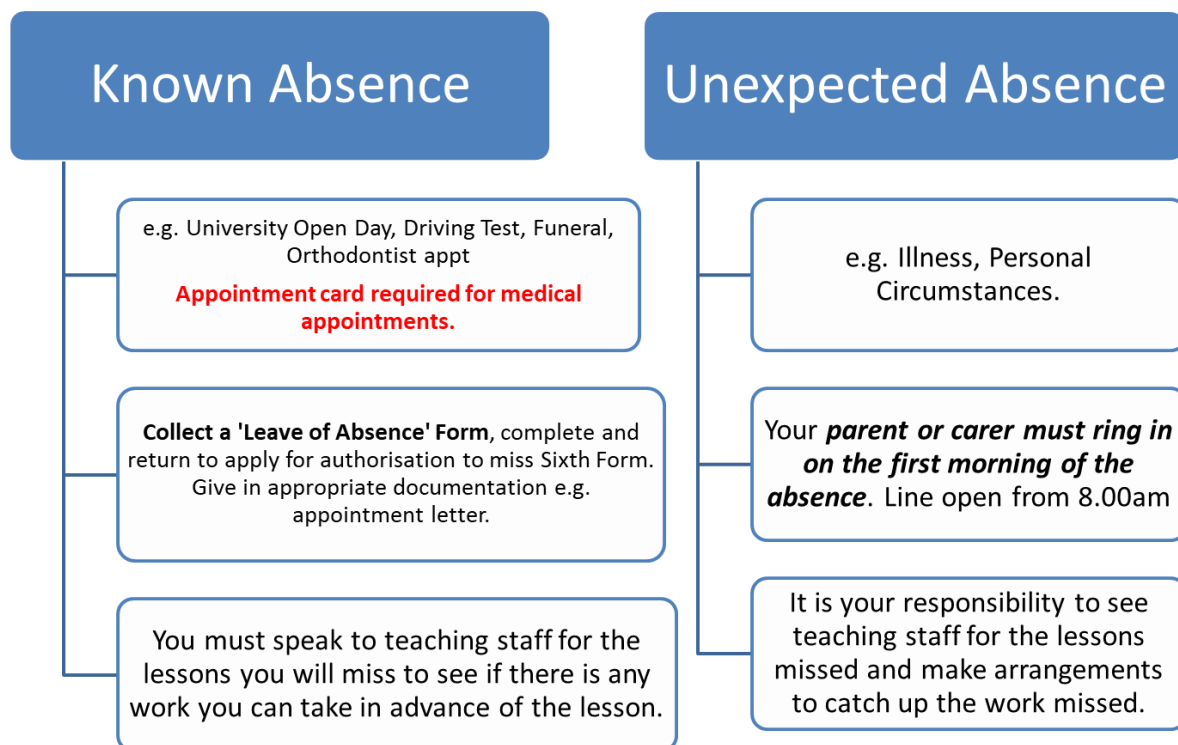
- **Call** the sixth form office on 0191 529 3712, option 2
- Send a **text message** to 07975 006988
- Download the **MyEd app** (available from your App store) and send a message via the messaging feature

Planned Absences

Planned absences include appointments, open days, interviews, funerals, surgery, and young carer's events. Leave of Absence Forms can be obtained from a leaflet dispenser in the Sixth Form foyer. Students are to complete the form fully, including a parental signature, and submit it at least **24 hours prior to the absence. Late requests may not be authorised.**

Routine medical appointments (GP, dentist) need to be made outside of Sixth Form hours. Specialist appointments (medical specialists, orthodontist) may be made during Sixth Form hours due to the difficulty of getting these appointments. All medical appointments must be supported with a copy of the letter or appointment card.

Driving lessons must be booked outside of Sixth Form hours, although theory and practical tests may be authorised. A maximum of four University Open Days will be authorised in any academic year. No paid employment must be agreed to or undertaken during Sixth Form hours as we claim funding for our students on the basis that they are in full-time education. Any student found to be 'at work' during Sixth Form hours may be asked to leave the Sixth Form.



Work Setting for Absent Students

If there is a long-term absence due to serious illness, or hospitalisation, a parent or carer should contact Mr Craggs to discuss if setting work might be appropriate to help the student keep in touch. This will obviously depend on the nature of the absence. Work will not be set for short-term absences and in these cases it remains the responsibility of the student to catch up work on their return. Students should **not** contact staff and ask them to send work via Teams.

Monitoring of Attendance

The Sixth Form Administrator and Attendance Officer will routinely send letters home where a student's attendance has raised cause for concern. Punctuality concerns will also trigger contact with home. Where attendance becomes a concern an attendance review meeting with student and parents or carers may be arranged.

Punctuality

Punctuality forms an important part of most references and is a crucial aspect of a professional attitude to work and study. Students arriving late to Sixth Form – after 9.00 am – will receive a late mark from their form tutor. Arrivals after 9.15 am must sign the late book and give a reason for their late arrival. Punctuality is monitored alongside attendance and frequent late marks would trigger an attendance review meeting with student and parents or carers.

Illness at School

If a student is unwell during the school day they are not to leave the site without permission. Students must report to the Sixth Form Reception where the staff will grant permission/contact parents for a student to go home unwell.

Leaving the Site

Students are only permitted to leave the site at lunchtime. Any student leaving the site during the academic day (for an appointment or having been signed out ill) **must** sign the signing out book which is held at Sixth Form Reception. This book will be our record of who is on site in case of emergency so it is **crucial** students adhere to the protocols as laid out in this policy.

Study Periods

Students are expected to fully utilise these periods of time for self-regulated study. Any student who is unsure what they can be doing in these periods is to speak to subject staff in the first instance to seek advice and guidance. Having a study period does not mean a student can arrive to Sixth Form late, or leave Sixth Form early.

Year 13 may be offered home study in the event that they have a ‘double free’ on their timetable. A form will be issued which requires a parental signature.

Holidays

The Principal will not authorise requests for holidays in term time except in exceptional circumstances. Should you wish to request a leave of absence for a family holiday, please submit your request in writing for the attention of the Principal stating the dates and reason for the request and outlining the exceptional circumstances.