



**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 son/daughter plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your son/daughter should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your son/daughter 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 son/daughter'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

Your child 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 son/daughter. Keeping Children Safe in Education (March 2015) 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 children and 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. For example, parents may choose to use the

'Absence Notes' pages in the Student Planner. Alternatively, parental authorisation may be emailed to attendanceofficer6thform@staidans.co.uk or 6thform@sjfchs.org.uk. All absences will be considered unauthorised unless a valid reason is given.

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/guardian.
- 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. In addition, there should be good attendance levels prior to the holiday).
- A driving lesson is arranged during the school day excepting lunchtime.
- A routine Doctor's appointment is attended.
- A routine Dentist's appointment is attended.
- 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 son/daughter 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. Students based at St Aidan's can sign in at Main School reception until 10.30am.

Illness

If a student feels unwell during the school day they must go to the Nurse, who will advise on whether they need to go home and will communicate this with the Sixth Form Office.

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

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your 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. Senior Tutors receive weekly attendance reports and will work with students to address any reported unauthorised absences. Whilst any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance should be resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the student. If your son/daughter is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Summary

St Aidan's and St John Fisher Associated Sixth Form has a legal duty to publish absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

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 Flow Chart

