



Saltash.net community school

Sixth Form Attendance policy

Whilst Sixth Form attendance is governed by different laws and regulations from attendance at compulsory school age, participation in some form of education or training remains compulsory up to the age of 18 and high attendance remains a critical part of this.

This policy applies equally to students who have reached the age of 18, in order to ensure consistency and fairness between all Sixth Form students.

Section 1: Rationale

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

The school is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all students and endeavours to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is the school's duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good Sixth Form attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find sixth form routines, work and relationships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying

- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between Sixth Form and higher education, employment or training.
- Sixth Formers set the example for younger students in the school, helping to establish positive attendance patterns for all.

Section 2: Operating the policy

1 Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good Sixth Form attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the students.

To help us all to focus on this the school will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance through our website and letters and phone-calls home
- report to parents/carers on how their child is performing in school, including what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance along with other positive learning behaviours such as high effort, resilience and attainment.
- set targets for the school and individuals for attendance
- have clear trigger points that may escalate to next stage as detailed:

Informal stage

All tutors and staff and are expected to challenge the majority of students on absence from school to achieve the schools wish that students attend school 100% of the time.

Sixth Form tutors review any uncleared absences with students during registration each week, and the Sixth Form administrator contacts home in the case of prolonged or regular absence, or on a spot check basis where the reason for absence has not been reported.

Formal Stage

Stage 1a - Sixth Form attendance is formally reviewed every half-term, and where attendance is below 95% parents will be contacted by letter unless there are clear exceptional reasons as to why this would be inappropriate. Where a significant attendance concern arises between half-terms this stage may be activated early.

Stage 1b – Where attendance is considerably below 95% without clear and compelling reasons, or where a secondly half-termly check suggests a long-term attendance concern, parents/carers will be contacted by phone to discuss the situation and impact. As this stage a meeting in person may also be appropriate. Students will also be placed on ‘attendance watch’ where any unexplained absence prompts contact home from the Sixth Form administrator.

Stage 2 – Where after stage 2 attendance remains below 90% without clear signs of improvement, or clear exceptional circumstances, the student and their parents/carers will be invited in to discuss the situation, resulting in an Additional

Learning Agreement agreeing the next steps. Except in exceptional circumstances this will include the loss of sign-out privileges for the student.

Stage 3 – If stage 2 does not result in appropriate improvement then, in line with the Sixth Form intervention framework, the student may be issued with a final warning, which could ultimately result in their removal from the Sixth Form.

1 Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Sixth Form Team

The Head of Sixth Form and Deputy Head of Sixth Form will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the Sixth Form's work in promoting regular and improved Sixth Form attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the Sixth Form. They will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed.

The Sixth Form Administrator will record absences, monitor staff registers for any missing marks, and make initial contact home. She will also keep and operate the Attendance Watch List.

Please note that a parental note or explanation from a student's home does not automatically mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of tutors and staff

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and encourage good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Sixth Form Team on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence to the Sixth Form Team
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school through discussions and supportive interventions offered in tutor times.
- Log interventions, contact with parents, discussions with students, letters sent etc.

Responsibilities of students

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time ready for morning registration first bell at 08:35am.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Swipe in and out when entering / leaving the school site.
- Follow the Sixth Form expectations with regard to home study and signing out during the day.

Responsibilities of parents/carers

- inform the school on the first day of absence
- discuss with the tutor/Sixth Form Team any planned absences well in advance and apply for these on an Absence Request Form. Please note that for approved Open

Days, Interviews etc a form is not necessary, and the student can approach the year team directly.

- support the school in aiming for 100% attendance from their child each year
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and every subsequent day of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments (these may not be authorised if it is for non-urgent appointments)
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Section 3

3.1 Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8.40am, and again for the afternoon session at 2 pm (unless subject to a reduced timetable).

3.2 Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If a student is late they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 08:35 and all **students are expected to be in school at this time**, except where students are excused attendance under the Sixth Form Expectations or by specific permission from the Sixth Form Team. Morning registration is at 08:40 am and it closes at 9:10am. The school reserves the right to bring forward the time of registration closing if students are continually late despite warnings.
- All lateness is recorded daily.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with Cornwall County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a student is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Additional codes used nationally can be found in Section 5.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence**.

Parents, guardians or carers of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved.

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

First day absence

A student not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If a student is absent the parent/carer must:

- contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- contact the school EVERY DAY the student is absent unless medical evidence has been produced explaining a longer term absence from school with clear dates of return

Second day absence

Parent/carers are required to contact school every day of a child's absence. The school will continue to try and contact parent/carer on this day.

Third day absence

Please note: If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school may have to start safeguarding procedures. The school will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the student, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family.

Section 4

Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013:

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, and the school applies these regulations to Sixth Form students in the same way as to younger students.

It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available on the school website or from Main Reception) in advance and before making any travel arrangements. The school reserves the right to only authorise one session for medical appointments during

school hours unless the appointment can be proven to be an exceptional circumstance.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and may result with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see Section 6 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and the school expects parents/carers to help the school by not taking children out during school time.

Section 5

Understanding types of absence

Students are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised
- unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes (but is not an exhaustive list):
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily
 - to go shopping
 - their own or family birthdays
 - to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorized Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorized absence

D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorized absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorized absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorized absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorized absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorized absence
O	Unauthorized absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorized absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorized absence
S	Study leave	Authorized absence
T	Traveler absence	Authorized absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorized absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Section 6

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Section 7

Various situations not covered above and FAQs from parents/carers.

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. The school will be more than happy to offer a meeting with The Sixth Form Team or tutor to see if there is something we can support with to encourage improved attendance.

We recommend that you contact the form tutor immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, perceived bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional (your child's GP for example).

What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

Study leave

The current policy of the school is to allow Year 13 students study leave during their final exams from the official 'last day' onwards. This is under continual review, and the school is entitled to insist on attendance through a students' Year 13 exams, either for individual students, groups of students, or all students.

Teenage pregnancy

Support will be directed to keeping a student in school and, wherever possible, their return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth. A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence may be treated as unauthorised.

Open days and interviews

The school will normally give permission for students to attend university open days, applicants days, interviews etc, including job interviews which cannot be arranged

outside of school hours. Such requests will not require an absence request form, and the student can ask for permission directly from the Sixth Form Team. Permission would only be refused where the school felt that the activity was either unnecessary or could be organised at a less disruptive time, or where the students attendance was causing concerns.

Work experience and volunteering

Students undertake work experience during Curriculum Enrichment week in Year 12, and the school encourages additional voluntary work experience during school holidays. The school will also usually give students permission to attend work experience or volunteering placements at times when they do not have lessons but would normally be expected to be in school.

In some circumstances the school will give permission for absence to undertake work experience during term time. This will be based on:

- i. The student having a high level of attendance and attitude to learning.
- ii. The work experience placement being important to the students' career plans. AND
- iii. The work experience placement not being available at others times.

Paid work

Paid work should not be undertaken during the school day, including at times where students are allowed to study at home: they need to be available for school work, including if asked to come back into school, throughout the day.

Driving lessons

Driving lessons should not be organised during the school day, including at times where , including at times where students are allowed to study at home. The school will in general give permission for students to attend practical driving tests during the school day, because of the limited time slots available, but students are expected to do their best to avoid these clashing with lessons.

Teenage pregnancy

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