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St. Joseph's Catholic Academy Sixth Form

Attendance Policy

2023 - 2024

Attendance at Sixth Form is crucial to a student's academic success, wellbeing and personal development. St. Joseph's provides a warm, caring and supportive environment, whereby each member of the community feels safe, appreciated and secure. The sixth form pastoral team work with families to ensure each student has good attendance and punctuality. An exemplary record of attendance says a significant amount about the student as a person: that they are dedicated, well-motivated, organised and someone who takes their responsibilities seriously. Good attendance also plays an important part when applying to higher education establishments or employment. When joining St. Joseph's Sixth Form, parents and students must sign the student handbook to show their agreement with the Sixth Form expectations.

All Sixth Form students are expected to attend St. Joseph's on time and prepared for a day of learning. Inline with whole school expectations, all Sixth Form students are set a minimum attendance target level of 97%. We make attendance and punctuality a priority for all students, parents, teachers and governors and have a clear staged process for our Sixth Form students.

Daily Routines

Sixth Form students can come into school from 7.30am onwards. At this time they must enter via the main student entrance and study in the Sixth Form block. Students can purchase breakfast from the refectory from 8.15am and they have access to the vending machines. Students are welcomed into school at 8.00 am at both the student entrance and Sixth Form entrance by members of the Senior Leadership Team and Sixth Form Pastoral Team. Morning Registration begins at 8.45am.

Morning registration is a crucial part of the school day. All key information is delivered by form tutors, such as exam timetables, key dates, trip information, etc. In addition, there is a robust and structured tutor time activity focus which includes: live web chats with GAP year companies, UCAS application guidance, 1:1 mentoring, wellbeing support, presentations from our Sixth Form alumni and assemblies.

All post-16 courses are intensive and students cannot afford to miss valuable teaching and study time. In addition to subject lessons, students also have compulsory enrichment, PSHE, core ethics and form time on their timetable. If students are working well in their subjects, have good attendance and manage their workload well, they are given the privilege to work from home from 1.15pm if they have no lesson after this time. Please note, this is a privilege which can be revoked at any time. Students must not arrange work shifts or driving lessons before the end of the full school day (3pm).

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Sixth Form students have the privilege of leaving the site to buy their lunch from external providers. Students must return on time for afternoon lessons, if they are late then this privilege will be removed. It is a legal requirement that we know who is in the school buildings at all times. Students must sign in / out using either the QR code or paper sign out book, this applies for both early finishes and leaving or returning from lunch.

Absence

If your child is unable to come to school, you must phone school to explain why your child will not be in. Note: 'feeling unwell' is not specific enough. Even if your child is 18 years of age, they cannot authorise their absence, their parent / carer must contact the school. If a child is absent from school for longer than 5 consecutive days due to illness, you will need to provide medical evidence to support the student's absence. The preferred option to report a pupil absence is through class charts. Alternatively, parents can phone the main school office on 0191 4282700, or you can also email the Sixth Form Pastoral Team.

If we do not receive information regarding your child's absence, an attendance text is sent first of all. If there is no response then you will receive a phone call. If we have had no information after two days, a home visit will be made for safeguarding purposes.

There are two types of absence, set by the Department for Education.

Authorised absences

- The student is too ill to leave the house (minor ailments such as 'headache' is not permitted).
- The student has a hospital appointment.
- An emergency dental appointment.
- A day of religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents / carer belongs.
- There is a close family bereavement.
- University open day.
- Interviews for university, employment or apprenticeships that will begin after the end of their time in Sixth Form.
- Work experience outside the work experience week will be reviewed on a case by case basis.
- Driving test.

Unauthorised absences

- Absences which are not properly explained.
- Students who arrive late to school and do not attend registration e.g. due to sleeping in; taking siblings to school; shopping; celebrating a birthday; looking after a pet.
- Holidays.
- Part time work.
- Driving lessons.
- Truancy (including internal truancy - see below).

Parents are reminded that they can monitor their child's daily attendance, attendance to lessons and punctuality on ClassCharts. Parents are also updated on their child's attendance at parents' evening and information evenings.

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Internal truancy and punctuality

Students must attend all lessons on their timetable and any supportive interventions a subject teacher puts in place. It is common practice for subject teachers to assign students to work with them or in their subject area during free periods so that staff are on hand for any questions a student has. Many subject teachers put in place small group or 1:1 support when a student is finding a concept difficult, following an absence or if grades are not where they should be. During year 13, if a students' timetable permits, students may be invited into year 12 lessons to revisit prior learning. All of these interventions are to support pupils in their learning and are not a punishment. Students must attend any intervention assigned, it is not optional.

If a student truants from a lesson, the sixth form pastoral team will immediately be alerted and class charts registers will reflect this. The first time a student truants a lesson, they will be set a detention to catch up the work by the subject teacher. If a student persistently truants lessons, their parent/carer will be invited into a meeting to discuss their place at sixth form. Truancy on any level is not tolerated.

If a student is late to a lesson, the minutes they are late is logged on ClassCharts. If a student is regularly late to a lesson, their subject teacher may set a detention to catch up with missed time. If lateness is repeated then the pastoral team may look at further intervention.

It should be stressed that the Sixth Form pastoral team always seek to work with students and parents to ensure they attend all lessons and are punctual to them. We value support and partnership above any form of sanction.

Procedures for students following long periods of absence

Parents / carers are expected to arrange for their child to come to school everyday, even if there are on-going medical or other difficulties. If a child is recovering from an illness or injury and not strong enough to stand the full rigour of a school day, we would work with you to support your child at this time. Parents/carers are required to contact the Sixth Form pastoral team, provide any medical documentation and work with St. Joseph's to support their child's academic progress.

If a student is absent for 5 days or more due to genuine illness or injury, a support plan will be put in place to ensure they do not fall behind on their studies. These are dealt with sensitively and on a case by case basis. If a long term illness is known in advance, e.g. an operation, parents/carers are expected to contact school so that a plan can be created in advance.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

The DFE term 'persistent absence' as 90% and below; 'severe absence' as 50% and below. Much of the work missed during days off from school is never made up, leaving these persistently absent students at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. Moving forwards, St. Joseph's may be asked to comment on their attendance in a reference and low attendance is not attractive to a potential employer or course provider. Where a student is identified as having persistent absence, we would always want to work with parents/carers and students. If a student falls below 90% attendance, they run the risk of:

- Not being entered for their qualification
- Having their exam entries withdrawn
- Foregoing free examination and will need to pay for their own entry cost

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- Losing their place at sixth form.

If a student is absent for four consecutive weeks, the ESFA insist funding is removed for that student, meaning they will automatically lose their place at sixth form. The ESFA does not distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence.

We would, once again, like to stress that we want to work with families to ensure attendance is inline with school expectations of 97% rather than resort to consequences. We want all our students to attend school, attend their lessons and be fully prepared for their post-18 choices. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the Sixth Form pastoral team if there are any issues or concerns.

Appendix 1:

Pastoral Structure for attendance

Step 1

Your child's attendance is between 97 and 100%. Any absence not authorised by 9am will result in an attendance text being sent to parents/carers to contact school. The learning support mentor will be available to work with your child to support catching up.



Step 2

You child's attendance is between 90 and 96%. Any absence not authorised by 9am an attendance text will be sent to parents/carers to contact school. The head of year will write to parents, outlining our concerns, the number of lessons missed for each subject and minutes late to lessons in total if appropriate. A support plan will be put into place for students which will likely include supervised study sessions with the learning support mentor and/or subject intervention. It is likely their privilege to leave at lunchtime if they have no afternoon lessons is removed.



Step 3

Your child's attendance falls to 89% or below. Any absence not authorised by 9am, an attendance text will be sent to parents/carers to contact school. The Head of Sixth Form will now write to parents, outlining their concerns. If an improvement is not made within a set time frame, generally two weeks, then parents will be invited in for a meeting to discuss their child's place at sixth form. A support plan will be put in place for students to ensure they are supervised during free periods. Their privilege to leave at lunchtime if they have no afternoon lessons is automatically removed.



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Step 4

If no improvement is made in attendance it is most likely your child will lose their place at sixth form. The pastoral team will work with parents/carers to help find their child a place elsewhere.

Appendix 2

