

St Mary's CE High School

Sixth Form Attendance Policy

Date of Review: Summer 2026

Date of Next Review: Summer 2028

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Ratified by Governors	July 2026
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"Our vision, as a school with a Christian ethos, is founded on The Parable of the Sower, where

Through God's love, we are the rich soil where seeds flourish and roots grow, based on the Parable of the Sower, Mark 4: 3-9

This underpins our motto, **We believe everyone is equal, everyone deserves the best**, and is key to what we do. We believe that we are all equal, irrespective of our background and beliefs. We provide a safe, nurturing environment in which we can all flourish. We have the very highest aspirations for our students, their families, our local community, and ourselves, and want nothing but the best. We challenge students by having a rich and exciting curriculum provision and by making learning practical, engaging and enjoyable. We enable students to succeed by providing the best possible personalised support."

Richard Vaughan – Headteacher

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1. Rationale

Students in the Sixth Form are given increased flexibility in their timetable to reflect the transition from compulsory school to Higher Education and/or employment.

Research from the DfE demonstrates that 'there is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement.' Attendance falling below 95% has been shown to result in an average reduction of one grade at A level per subject and this increases to two grades when attendance falls below 90%.

This policy therefore reflects the need to prepare students for the expectations of working life whilst ensuring that we provide a framework to support students to achieve positive outcomes. Furthermore, it clearly sets out our expectations of students, parents/carers and how St Mary's Sixth Form will support, monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality.

2. Expectations

All students sign a Home School Partnership Pledge at the start of each academic year, which additionally confirms that they have read the attendance policy summary in the Sixth Form Handbook and on our school's website.

Students in the Sixth Form should maintain a cumulative attendance record of above 95% with the aspirational target of 97%.

Our expectation is that students access the education that we provide by attending lessons within school. Although lesson resources are made available online through Google Classroom, this does not replace face to face learning. All sessions on a student's timetable are compulsory and as such students are expected to attend **ALL** of these sessions; curricular subjects, supervised study, enrichment, registration, Acts of Worship and interventions. It is the responsibility of the student to catch up on any work missed as a result of absence.

Students who arrive after the start of the lesson will be marked as late.

3. Attendance Concessions

Students should arrive in sufficient time for tutor time. Students are permitted to leave site for one hour per day when they are not in timetabled lessons (except for periods 1 and 5).

If a student wishes to leave school due to feeling unwell, they MUST inform the Sixth Form Team and attend Student Services. A parent/carer may be contacted to authorise the student leaving site if it is deemed necessary, and the student must sign out by Student Services using the Digigreet facilities.

4. Reporting Absence

Attendance is monitored by Mrs Auld, Attendance Officer. All absence should be reported to Mrs Auld by either telephoning the absence line 01992 629124 or emailing attendance@st-maryshigh.herts.sch.uk.

For absence that cannot be foreseen, this should be notified on **EACH** day of absence before 8.15am.

All absence, both foreseen and unforeseen, must be communicated by a parent/carer.

Authorised Absence (evidence will be required):

- Illness - medical certificate will be required for 7 or more consecutive days (including weekends) or where absence is a greater concern

- A hospital appointment
- Emergency Medical Care
- Court Attendance
- Religious observance (max 2 days per year)
- Funeral
- Difficult family circumstances
- University Open Days (max 2 days per year)
- University Interviews
- University Offer Holder Days (max 2 days)
- 1 hour driving lesson taking during study period

Unauthorised Absence (please note this is not a definitive list):

- Term time holiday
- 2 hour driving lesson
- Routine doctor/dentist/optician appointment
- Interview for casual employment
- Part-time job

5. Communicating Absence

In the Sixth Form absence is reported on a session basis (AM and PM). If a student is absent when the morning register is taken, and we have been given no reason for this absence, parents/carers will be contacted via MSP by 10.00am. We would ask that a parent/carer responds promptly to any absence message.

If a reason for absence hasn't been provided and we are unable to establish the reason for this absence it will be recorded as unauthorised.

Planned absences should be communicated at least 24hours in advance, with evidence via MSP.

6. Monitoring

A student's attendance record will be accessible via MSP to students and parents/carers. This will provide a summary of sessions missed. In the Sixth Form we celebrate those students who maintain the very best attendance each term; through for example celebratory Acts of Worship and prize draws.

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic we will respond as set out in the stages below. During this process we will listen to and understand the barriers to attendance that the student/family is experiencing and agree actions or interventions to address these barriers. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, our aim is to work together to support students/parents/carers and may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide additional support.

Ultimately, a poor record of attendance may lead to the withdrawal of attendance concessions, exam entries and finally a place within the Sixth Form being reviewed.

Where necessary advice is sought from the CME (Children Missing in Education) Team.

Escalation of Concerns

Stage 1 - Occasional absence – between 95% - 100% – this will include:

- Informal conversation between student and the Form Tutor
- Parents/carers informed

Stage 2 - Recurrent absence – between 90% - 95% – this will include:

- Meeting with the Sixth Form Year Lead, student and parents/carers
- Action plan discussed
- Agreed monitoring period will follow
- Form Tutor Attendance report

Stage 3a - Persistent absence – below 90% – this will include:

- Meeting with Year Lead, student and parents/carers
- Outcome letter will confirm expectations of attendance
- Attendance Improvement Plan actioned with fortnightly updates for 6 weeks
- Year Lead Attendance report

Stage 3b - Persistent absence - failed Attendance Improvement Plan – this will include:

- Meeting with Director of Sixth Form, student and parents/carers
- Agreed monitoring period will follow
- Director of Sixth Form Attendance Report

Stage 4 - Continued persistent absence – continued below 90% – this will include:

- Meeting with Director of Sixth Form, DHT, student and parents/carers
- Outcome letter will confirm expectations of attendance
- Agreed monitoring period will follow
- Formal written warning

Stage 5 - Review of Sixth Form place:

- If despite all intervention, no improvement is seen, a student may lose their Sixth Form place through a permanent exclusion.
- All factors will be considered before this decision is made and a Headteacher/Governor panel will review this decision

Depending on the outcome of the monitoring period for each stage, a student would either remain at that stage without further escalation or would move to the next stage.

Please note that where the required attendance has not been achieved the school reserves the right to charge for the examination fees in line with the DFE Funding Guidance [Advice: funding regulations for post-16 provision 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations-for-post-16-provision-2024-to-2025). Where attendance falls below 80% at subject level the school reserves the right to withdraw a student from the exam entries in that subject.

7. Vulnerable Students

Where students identified as vulnerable are not present this is followed up immediately. The parent/carer is contacted to check on their whereabouts and followed up as necessary with the DSL.

8. Home Visits

If a student does not attend school for more than 4 consecutive days and no contact can be made with parent/carer a home visit will take place.

9. Punctuality

Where concerns regarding punctuality arise, either to school or to lessons, these will be addressed as follows:

Stage 1 - A student has more than 3 lates in a week – this will include

- Informal conversation with student and the Form Tutor
- Parents/carers informed

Stage 2 - A student has repeated more than 3 lates in a week OR has more than 10 lates within a half term – this will include:

- Meeting with Form Tutor, student and parents/carers
- Punctuality report to Form Tutor

Stage 3 - Punctuality does not improve following stage 2 report - this will include:

- Meeting with Year Lead, student and parents/carers

- Outcome letter will confirm expectations of punctuality and agreed monitoring period will follow
- Punctuality report to Year Lead

Stage 4 - Punctuality does not improve following stage 3 report – this will include:

- Meeting with Director of Sixth Form, DHT, student and parents/carers
- Outcome letter will confirm expectations of punctuality and agreed monitoring period will follow to the Director of Sixth Form
- Formal written warning

Stage 5 - Review of Sixth Form place:

- If despite all intervention, no improvement is seen, a student may lose their Sixth Form place through a permanent exclusion.
- All factors will be considered before this decision is made and a Headteacher/Governor panel will review this decision