

ST CUTHBERT MAYNE SCHOOL
Joint Catholic and Church of England 11-18 Comprehensive School
Dioceses of Plymouth and Exeter



St Cuthbert Mayne School
Sixth Form Attendance policy

Approved by Full Governing Body: November 2023

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Contents

1. Mission Statement
2. School Ethos
3. Aims and objectives
4. Areas determined by the Governing Body
5. Expectations of partnership working - students, parents / carers and staff
6. How we will celebrate good attendance
7. Absences
8. Appendices

Appendix A - Attendance visual

1. Mission Statement

Educating for life in all its fullness – John 10:10

It is our ambition to provide an inspirational Christian education that enables all students to live life to the full, both now and in the future.

2. School Ethos

St Cuthbert Mayne School takes attendance in the Sixth Form very seriously and we acknowledge that good school attendance plays an essential part in academic development for post 16 students.

All post 16 courses are intensive and challenging meaning students cannot afford to miss valuable teaching and study time.

As well as timetabled lessons, students also have non-contact periods on their timetables for private study, extended reading, research and enrichment activities.

Where privilege passes are granted as a reward (based on good effort and attendance), we would expect students to be committed to spending their time effectively. This privilege may be withdrawn if a student is not meeting their work commitments or if their attendance were to decrease. In such cases, students will be scheduled to remain in school to study.

Sixth form students should strive to achieve consistently excellent attendance as poor attendance will significantly affect academic attainment. Students should therefore aim for at least 95% attendance for the year. An exemplary record of attendance says a huge 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.

The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. To meet these objectives, St. Cuthbert Mayne School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

3. Aims and objectives

Our vision of joint Catholic and Anglican education calls us to acknowledge that the Body of Christ is in the school community. We believe that God is incarnate (present) in the day to day life of our school. Our understanding of Christian spirituality is therefore as much about dealing with each other as it is about meeting God.

We believe that each member of our community has a divine origin and an eternal destiny.

We believe that through his incarnation, Jesus affirmed us as whole people and redeemed us through his resurrection.

We believe, therefore, that the intrinsic dignity of each member of our school community is to be honoured in spirit, in word, in deed and in law.

These beliefs underpin our approach to attendance and thereby commit us to encourage all members of our community, staff and students alike, to grow towards human wholeness.

The Governing Body aims to meet this responsibility by:

- Affirming, consolidating and celebrating the achievements of our teachers (Challenge, affirmation, evaluation, consolidation, celebration and prayerful reflection will be important characteristics to our approach in this school and will be an accepted part of the process)
- Challenging ourselves, staff and students to recognise the unique contribution that each of us can make and work towards making that contribution in the fullest sense.

4. Areas determined by the Governing Body

Official registration period:

The governors of St Cuthbert Mayne School have established the school day as starting at 8:40am and this is the time by which all students should be in school. It has been decided by the Governing Body that the morning registration period will run until 9:00am. In the Sixth form, afternoon registration is from 14:00pm to 14:05pm.

In addition to the above, staff will complete an electronic lesson register in SIMS every period and this will be completed within the first 10 minutes of the lesson. If an electronic register is not accessible then a paper register should be taken (written by the teacher) and returned to the Attendance Administrator.

5. Expectations of Partnership Working - Students, Parents / Carers and Staff

What the school expects of students:

Attend regularly, on time and ready to learn

Attend registration, tutor time and enrichment events

To sign in if they arrived after registration time

To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school

Make every effort to make dental/medical appointments outside of school hours

Complete an absence request form if they need to leave early or will be absent from school for a full / half day. This will need to occur at the earliest possible opportunity. This form must be signed by all teachers where lessons will be missed, as well as, your tutor and the Director of Sixth Form.

To use all non-contact time effectively by:

Using independent study facilities including the library and available departmental areas

Engaging in reviewing lesson content, wider research and further reading around the subject

Working collaboratively with peers within subject areas

There will also be occasions when students will be required to register with a member of staff during Independent Study periods in order to support catch-up. These expectations will be clearly communicated to students.

When teachers are not in school a student should check Google Classroom for cover work and work independently in the Library. There will be occasions when a teacher asks the student to collect worksheets from their teaching room and to sign to say this has been done. Any questions can be raised on the day in the Sixth Form Office.

What the school expects of parents / carers:

To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and are well prepared for the day

To contact the school on the **first day** their child is absent for any reason

To contact the school on **all** subsequent days if the student is unable to contact school him/herself.

Make every effort to make dental/medical appointments outside of school hours

To **avoid** taking holidays in term time

To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may prevent their child from attending school

To provide evidence to support absence such as an appointment card / letter, a copy of a prescription slip with name and date visible or medication packaging with name and date visible. Alternatively if none of the above are available, a note, signed by the parent / carer, to the school, explaining the reason for absence.

What parents / carers and pupils can expect from the school:

A Sixth form education that is dependent upon regular attendance at school

Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and rewards

Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of absence

Prompt action when a problem has been identified

Regular communication with students and parents / carers

6. How we will celebrate good attendance

Tutors will use weekly updates of those students that have maintained 100% attendance and those students that have improved their attendance and offer weekly verbal feedback

Each term, students achieving 100% attendance will receive a Certificate of Attendance to include in their portfolios for prospective employers from the Director of Sixth Form

The highest performing tutor group will also receive a termly trophy to celebrate their collective achievement

Sixth Form will share out half-termly prizes to students consistently achieving 100% attendance or if they have made a significant effort in the area of attendance

Students with good attendance AND Independent effort grades will be offered a Privilege Pass allowing them to study at home when their lessons and Collective Worship have finished for the day

7. Absences

Acceptable reasons for being absent from school, set by the Department for Education:

- The student is too ill to leave the house
- The student has a hospital appointment
- The student has toothache and has an emergency appointment
- A day of religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs
- The student is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
- There is a close family bereavement
- Interviews for courses/employment that will begin after the end of their time in Sixth Form. (Students should not miss lessons to attend interviews, shifts and inductions for part-time work)
- University and Employer Open Days
- Work experience – requests for term-time leave for essential work experience (e.g. medicine, law) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. These requests should be submitted at least a month in advance

Unacceptable reasons for keeping a child away from school are:

- ❖ To mind the house
- ❖ To look after siblings
- ❖ To go shopping
- ❖ To celebrate a birthday
- ❖ Sleeping in
- ❖ One child is ill, so all are kept off school
- ❖ Minor ailments such as a tummy ache or headache
- ❖ Because it is the end of the week or term
- ❖ Driving lessons or tests
- ❖ Adverse weather conditions
- ❖ If a student is absent from school longer than a period of 5 days due to illness, parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence to support the student's absence.
- ❖ Leave of absence may not be given to enable a pupil to undertake employment during school hours unless it is to engage in work experience arranged through school.

Signing In and Out

It is a legal requirement that we know who is in the school building at all times.

Students must make sure that they sign in each time they are late to school and sign out each time they leave the campus throughout the day.

In-school procedures

We are keen to identify attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity to give parents/carers, students and the school the ability to intervene early and prevent further decline. We will do this by following the procedures outlined below.

Additional information for students in receipt of the Discretionary Bursary

For students eligible for Discretionary Bursary the following attendance criterion is stated in the Discretionary Bursary Policy:

“At least six weeks Attendance — Attendance above 95%. No unauthorised absences, including holidays.

The discretionary allowance may not be paid if attendance or behaviour is not satisfactory, at the discretion of the bursary committee. Students will be notified verbally if a payment is to be stopped at least 5 working days before the payment is due wherever feasible. This will be confirmed in writing and the reason stated.”

Unexplained absence process

If a student is absent from school and we have received no communication from either the student or a parent/carer, a text message will be sent on the morning of students' absence requesting a reason.

A letter/email detailing any unexplained absences will be sent to the parent/carer if no communication has been received. A reply is requested stating the reason for the students' absence to enable attendance records to be updated; if no reply is received, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Cause for concern process

Cause for concern letters will be sent home to parents/carers when attendance is below 95%. Please refer to **Appendix A** for further context to the impact which falling attendance has on a students schooling.

This early notification is intended to share our concerns with you and give you the opportunity to intervene/contact the school so that early support/intervention can be put into place, if needed.

If attendance continues to fall then the following process will be implemented in an effort to improve school attendance and remove all attendance related concerns;

STAGE 1: Part 1 – Tutor Intervention

Attendance below 95%

Should attendance decline to 95% or below, the tutor will meet with the student concerned and offer support whilst explaining the impacts of falling / poor attendance.

NB: Please see Appendix A for a visual which explains the impact of specific attendance percentages as referenced above and throughout this document.

This meeting will be recorded through the school's Attendance tracker.

Attendance will be monitored closely.

STAGE 1: Part 2 – Attendance Improvement Officer

Attendance below 92%

Should attendance decline to 92% or below, the Attendance Improvement Officer will meet with the student concerned with the aim of removing / solving barriers whilst explaining the impacts of falling / poor attendance.

This meeting will be recorded through the school's Attendance tracker.

Attendance will be monitored closely.

STAGE 2 – Attendance Improvement Officer

Attendance below 90% - Persistent Absence

A phone call to parents raising concerns will take place.

Should attendance decline to 90% or below students will be invited to attend a meeting with the Attendance Improvement Officer and a phone call will be made to the parent / carer.

This practice is an opportunity to discuss any issues / barriers that are impacting your child's attendance to school.

Attendance will be monitored closely for 6 weeks.

STAGE 3 – Director of Sixth Form

Attendance below 90% Continued Persistent Absence

A letter will be sent to the parents/carers of the student informing them of the situation and inviting them into school for a meeting with the Director of Sixth Form where we will address the main issues and agree targets and support actions to help improve your child's attendance.

An attendance agreement will be issued and action points put into place that are agreed by the Head of Sixth Form and the student.

We will monitor and review your child's attendance over the following weeks to identify any significant improvement in their attendance. If this has been achieved then no further intervention / action will be taken at this stage.

A written warning will be issued, if no improvement is evidenced or if the agreed targets are not met.

STAGE 4 – Director of Sixth Form

Failure to meet requirements of attendance agreement

The student will be removed from their Sixth Form courses and support offered to find an alternative Sixth Form / training provider

Requests for absence in Exceptional Circumstances

Government legislation does not permit parents/carers to take their child/ren out of school during term time as this can have a detrimental effect on their academic progress.

From 1st September 2013, Headteacher's will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as circumstances that could not be reasonably foreseen and for which there was insufficient time to take the necessary action to resolve the situation arising from those circumstances.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least a week before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the link below:

[St Cuthbert Mayne School ABSENCE REQUEST IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES FORM](#)

The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical / dental appointments (please note that a absence request in exceptional circumstances form is not necessary in these instances, instead, an email or phone call into the attendance line will suffice)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Family bereavement or where an immediate family member has entered end of life care

Absences from school that **will not be authorised**, include:

- Holidays in term time
- Birthdays
- Shopping
- Attending a music festival or concert
- Looking after family members
- Visiting relatives

The law does not grant parents / carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent / carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactorily up to the date covered by this request.

If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Appendix A

Excellent Attendance	190 days in school	100% Attendance		Provides children with the best possible opportunity for success, achieve their potential and meet all their targets
	180 days in school	95% Attendance	10 days missed	
Persistence Absence	171 days in school	90% Attendance	19 days missed (almost four weeks of school missed)	Provides children will less chance to achieve their potential, meet their targets and make the most of their time at school
	161 days in school	85% Attendance	29 days missed (that's about half a term missed)	
	152 days in school	80% Attendance	38 days missed (that's 8 weeks of school missed)	Provides children with a reduced chance to achieve their potential, meet their targets and achieve in their examinations
	143 days in school	75% Attendance	47 days of absence (almost 10 weeks of school missed; approximately one quarter of the school year)	
Severe Absence	95 days in school	50% attendance	95 days of absence (this is the same as missing 3 half terms)	Provides children with a limited chance to achieve their potential

