



ST DOMINIC'S
Sixth Form College

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

St. Dominic's is a Roman Catholic Sixth Form College committed to the personal and spiritual growth of all its members based on Christian values, academic excellence and high-quality pastoral care.

Context

The Mission of the College is to promote 'academic excellence' within the context of strong pastoral and spiritual support. To achieve this, we must maximise students' learning opportunities by:

- Setting high expectations for attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions.
- Working in partnership with students and, where applicable, their parents and employers, to ensure high levels of attendance and excellent punctuality, embedding a culture of reliability and commitment.
- Monitoring and taking action to improve attendance and punctuality where necessary and ensuring regular follow up with parents and carers

Summary of College Expectations of Punctuality and Attendance

The College expects 100% attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions. This includes workshops, compulsory visits, core RE, enrichment, tutorials and 1:1s.

- Attendance of all students is continually monitored throughout the academic year. Any student who falls below 90%, and who is unable to provide a full justification, will face disciplinary action which could ultimately lead to their place at St. Dominic's being withdrawn.
- Parents/guardians are expected to provide clear reasons, backed up with evidence, for all absences using the reporting absence form via the website.
- Students will be challenged on punctuality and are expected to provide a reasonable justification for any lateness.
- Where absences/lateness can be foreseen in advance, the student should notify the Attendance Officer, following the published and appropriate procedure. Evidence should be provided in order for the absences to be authorised.
- An absence will not be authorised for any of the following reasons (other than at the Principal's discretion):
 - Holidays
 - Religious festivals

- Employment
- Babysitting/childcare
- Driving lessons
- Birthdays
- Leisure activities

If there is an absence without notification before 10:00am, the Attendance Officer will contact a parent/guardian to ascertain the reason for the absence as soon as practicable. Where possible the student should be asked to attend unless there is a valid reason for non-attendance.

- Should a pattern of non-attendance emerge; the Personal Tutor will follow this up at the earliest opportunity with the student.
- If the level of non-attendance is judged to be unacceptable then the College disciplinary procedure should be used to deal with the matter. As the policy states, we expect 100% attendance, anything below this, unless by prior agreement or with valid reason, is unacceptable. It would therefore be appropriate to use the disciplinary procedure as soon as problems become apparent, rather than leave the problems to grow without formally tackling them.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for ensuring the good attendance and punctuality of their students and for dealing with attendance and punctuality issues whenever they occur. There are some specific responsibilities attached to particular groups of staff as set out below:

The Teachers are responsible for: Reporting any persistent issues with students to the Personal Tutors and Directors of Learning.

- Promoting good punctuality and attendance through their own behaviour and teaching standards.
- Ensuring work is set for classes when they are absent.

The Head of Subject/Department is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance and punctuality issues at departmental meetings and taking early action to resolve issues.
- Ensuring that, in the event of a staff member being absent, work is set for all classes.

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Contacting a parent/guardian if no notification of absence is received before 10:00am to find out the reasons for the absence.
- Recording the results of any conversations and relaying this information to other members of the teaching team or support staff as necessary.
- Maintaining records relating to punctuality and attendance and details of any evidence produced to support absences and lateness.

Personal Tutor is responsible for:

- Following up any unauthorised absences and ascertain reasons.
- Working with the student to improve absence through 1-1s.
- Dealing with any personal/pastoral issues that affect poor attendance and punctuality.
- Liaising with parents or guardians in order to improve attendance and resolves issues.

Information for students, parents/carers/guardians and employers

Context

This policy is aimed at students but it is also of interest to parents/guardians. It will tell you about:

- Students' responsibilities for attendance and punctuality
- How the College collects data about attendance
- The procedures that are in place to report absences and attendance
- How the College will deal with poor student attendance and punctuality.

Why good attendance and punctuality are important

St Dominic's Sixth Form College is committed to providing high quality education and training. We want to support you to achieve well in your time at College. To do this we will:

Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality at all timetabled sessions - you are expected to have 100% attendance and always be on time.

Work in partnership with you to make sure you attend regularly and are punctual – so that you can demonstrate to future employers, or Universities that you are reliable, committed and hard working.

Take action to improve attendance and punctuality where necessary – this includes our right to take disciplinary action against students and even to exclude them from the College if attendance is poor.

Students' responsibilities

You are expected to:

- Attend 100% of all scheduled classes relating to your programme of study as confirmed on your learning agreement
- Ensure a parent/guardian reports any absence due to illness or other reason to the College by 10:00am on the first and every subsequent day of absence
- Do everything possible to avoid necessary absences by making medical appointments outside class time unless it is an emergency
- Avoid going on holiday during term time
- Provide medical evidence for absences of more than 5 consecutive days
- Tell us in advance if you know you are going to miss a lesson
- Catch up with any work you have missed

How attendance is recorded at the College

Students use their ID card to register in to every lesson. The data is stored on our student information system (SiD), and this can be viewed by students and parents/guardians on-line.

You can check your own attendance record by logging onto SiD.

Registers are marked as follows:

- / for present
- O for absent
- L for late (after the teacher/tutor has begun the lesson)
- Z for no register (e.g. you are not required to attend the lesson)
- C for cancelled lesson
- V for educational trip
- P for absence authorised by Principal

- D for work experience
- I for University Interview
- M for medical appointment
- N for Notified absence (e.g. illness)
- E for Exam
- S for Study leave
- Q for off timetable
- J for present in another lesson
- R for remote learning

NB – Attendance of all students will be reviewed after the first five weeks of the academic year. If at that time you have not achieved AT LEAST 90% ATTENDANCE, and are not able to provide a full justification, you will be withdrawn from the College. Attendance will be regularly monitored throughout your time at St Dominic’s Sixth Form College and if you fail to maintain the required level of attendance you will be dealt with through the College disciplinary procedure.

What to do about visits or open days

We will know the names of students who are going on College trips and visits. However, as a matter of courtesy, you should still inform your teachers in advance of these absences.

Reporting on your attendance

We monitor your attendance closely and your tutor will have an overview of your attendance. They will discuss any concerns during tutorials and 1:1. Any absences and late marks will be shown and your tutor will ask you about these.

We strongly recommend that **you check your own SiD record carefully** as your attendance rate will be included on all reports about your progress and in all references that are written to potential employers or to other Colleges or universities. If you have a genuine reason for a high absence rate we will comment sensitively about this in any reference. We aim to be fair to students but, in line with our values, if attendance is unsatisfactory for no good reason we will be honest about this.

What if your attendance is poor?

If your attendance rate is unsatisfactory you can expect this to be followed up by your tutor initially and senior staff if required, for example the Directors of Learning or SLT. Parents/guardians of students are always contacted if poor attendance becomes a problem.

If you have worries or personal problems that are affecting your attendance, please discuss these with teaching staff or your personal tutor.

Frequently asked questions

What will be accepted as an authorised absence?

Absences will only be authorised if we know in advance there is a good reason, such as:

- Medical appointments which cannot be made outside of timetabled hours
- Attendance at a funeral
- Severe disruption to the transport network
- Responsibilities for caring for a close family member (If this is likely to affect your learning please discuss this with your personal tutor)
- A visit to a University either to attend an open day or for an interview
- A work experience placement where this is a requirement of the course.

What are not acceptable reasons for absence?

The following reasons for absence would not generally be acceptable:

- Holidays/Leisure activities
- Religious festivals
- Part time employment
- Birthdays
- Driving Test/lessons
- Shopping

What about unplanned absence?

In the case of an unplanned absence the College will take into account:

- the number of absences you have already taken (especially for the same reason)
- whether you can back up the absence with some evidence
- whether we feel it is reasonable.

Your parent/guardian must tell the College as soon as possible on the day of absence that you will be missing lessons, otherwise we will treat the absence as unauthorised (other than in cases such as an emergency situation involving a family member).

What happens if it snows or if the weather is really bad?

We will use the College website and emails in the unlikely event of College closures.

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