

# Southmoor Academy



## SIXTH FORM ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Sixth Form at Southmoor Academy places a key emphasis on high levels of attendance and punctuality. These are key characteristics of students who achieve highly, and are essential in the development of employability skills. We regularly review student attendance as we know that there is a direct link between a student's attendance and their academic achievement. Research shows that a student with 85% attendance or below will perform at least two grades lower than a student who has 95% attendance or above.

All students at the Sixth Form are expected to maintain a minimum attendance of 95% throughout the academic year. This includes: all form-time sessions; timetabled subject lessons; English and Maths resit lessons (where applicable); Aspire; enrichment; mentoring appointments; and additional wider study support sessions, when directed by their Head of Year or Head of Sixth Form.

We recognise that there may be genuine reasons for student absence, but unfortunately all level 3 courses are highly demanding - once a student starts to fall behind, it can be very difficult to catch-up, leading to a direct and highly detrimental impact upon a student's attainment and post-18 progression.

### Attendance Protocol

- **Signing in/off site**
  - It is the responsibility of all students to ensure they sign in and out of the Sixth Form every time they enter or leave the site using the Inventory system based at the Sixth Form reception. The system allows Sixth Form staff to quickly check if a student is on/off site and is key to implementing the school's safe guarding and health and safety protocols.
  - To ensure all those safeguarding and health and safety protocols can be met, students who do not routinely sign in/out of the Sixth Form in accordance with the policy will lose their privilege to off-site working during their designated free periods.
  
- **Illness**
  - The student's parent/carer should contact the Sixth Form reception on the morning of the absence, before 8.30am, with a specific reason for the absence. Any subsequent days of illness will require the parent/carer to continue to call each morning so the student's attendance can be updated accordingly.
  - A parent/carer may self-certify on behalf of their child for the first 7 days of an illness (weekends count as absence if the student is sick on the previous Friday), providing a student is not already on an attendance contract. For absences of longer than a week, students should see their GP to obtain a fit for work certificate, which must be submitted to their Head of Year upon return.

- If a student becomes unwell whilst at the Sixth Form and needs to leave the site early, they must speak to their Head of Year or Head of Sixth Form. Home contact will be made to confirm the student is leaving site and then the student may sign out via the Sixth Form reception.
  - Where we have concerns over a student's attendance and/or attendance patterns, the student will have a meeting with their Head of Year to discuss their attendance and see what further support may be needed. The student will be placed on an attendance contract to monitor attendance moving forward and the option to self-certify absences will be removed and the student will require a fit for work certificate from their GP for any following absences.
- **Fitness to study**
    - We do recognise that a small minority of our students may have significant medical issues or personal circumstances which may affect their ability to meet some of the expectations outlined in this policy. Each student is dealt with on a case by case basis and support will be implemented based on the needs of the student.
    - A student's fitness to study will be questioned and monitored if any of the following arise:
      - Health problems or personal circumstances disrupt a student's own study.
      - Health problems or personal circumstances affect the study of other students.
      - Health problems or personal circumstances place unreasonable demands on staff or other students.
    - The Sixth Form has a duty of care to its community and is bound by health and safety legislation, which means it is obliged to take action if a student presents a risk to themselves or others. We will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to our expectations and protocols in order to take an individual's condition or circumstances into consideration but students will still be monitored via attendance contract.
    - We expect students to accept and fully engage in any support offered, demonstrating that they are making every effort to overcome their barriers to learning. We are not a distance learning institution and thus, irrespective of a student's medical issues or personal circumstances, physical face-to-face presence in class is compulsory.
    - If a student does not make sufficient improvement following support and is still unable to meet expectations which have been adjusted to take their circumstances into consideration, a final attendance review meeting with parents/carers will take place. If issues persist, it will be deemed that the student is not 'fit to study' and, at this point, the Sixth Form reserves the right to withdraw the student from their external examinations and/or withdraw their place of study.
  - **Leave of Absence**
    - For a known absence (funeral, open day, interview) a leave of absence may be requested by a parent or carer by contacting the Sixth Form reception or via Class Charts.
    - Routine doctor and dentist appointments and driving lessons **must not** be organised during a student's timetabled lessons, Aspire or interventions. Such appointments should be made during a student's non-contact periods, after the end of the day or during holidays periods.

- **Holidays**
  - Holidays in term time are not permitted and will not be authorised. If a holiday taken during the term time results in a student's attendance dropping below 95%, the student will be placed on attendance contract for further monitoring.
  
- **Punctuality**
  - Students who arrive late to form time or to any lesson will be recorded as late on Class Charts, with a note and the number of minutes late recorded. The student will still gain their attendance mark. A late detention will be issued to make up the minutes and/or the student may lose their privilege to off-site working during their designated free periods.
  - Students with persistently poor punctuality will be placed on a tiered learning contract
  
- **Equality Statement**
  - This policy applies to all Sixth Form students regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. All individuals will be treated in a fair and equitable manner recognising any special needs where reasonable adjustments can be made. No individual will suffer any form of discrimination as a result of this policy.

**Last review date:** 25.03.26

**Next review due:** Spring 2027

**Person Responsible:** Director of Sixth Form