

## Why is good attendance important?

Evidence provided by the Government shows that students who attend school regularly make good progress and achieve good examination results. If students attend school regularly, they do not feel under pressure or at a loss if they have missed work. Children who are late or absent can copy notes or catch up on an assignment, but they can never recover what is most important, the discussion, the questions, the explanations by the teacher and the thinking that makes learning come alive. Whilst our staff will work hard to help students catch up, it will never be the same as being present at the missed lessons.

At St John Fisher, we believe that regular attendance is of paramount importance because:

- It promotes the effective and continuous learning of all students.
- It enables students to develop a more positive attitude to school and the world of work, learning the importance of being punctual and reliable.
- It enables students to build relationships and further develop their social skills.
- It enables students to further develop a sense of belonging to the St John Fisher Catholic community.
- It is more likely that students will achieve their potential and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults. **Before allowing students to participate in rewards trips, such as cinema trips and Alton Towers, their attendance and punctuality records will be taken into consideration. If it is deemed to be unsatisfactory, a student may not be allowed to go on the excursion.**

Students who have had a holiday during term time will NOT be allowed to go on a rewards trip. If a student's attendance has been impacted by a genuine medical condition, this will be taken into consideration on an individual basis.

## What is good attendance?

There is often confusion around attendance figures; they are not like examination results. A score of 90% in a test is excellent and would probably be the equivalent of a grade 8 or 9 at GCSE. However, an attendance of 90% is poor and is equal to 1 day of absence each fortnight. If this continued from Years 7 to 11, a total of 6 month's education would be lost.

**The school expects every student to aim for 100% attendance.**

If we improved our attendance figure by only 1%, students would be present an additional 1,800 days.

According to the DfE (Department for Education):

- Of the students who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and Mathematics.
- Students with an attendance of less than 90% have only a 35% chance of achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and Mathematics.
- 73% of students who have over 95% attendance achieve 5 or more GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and Mathematics.
- 17 days absence in an academic year results in a drop of one grade at GCSE.

- 5 or more GCSEs including English and Mathematics can increase wages by 42%.

Did you know that .....

- 80% attendance is one day missed every week.
- One school year at 80% is 8 weeks of lessons missed. This is equal to 200 one hour lessons.
- 80% attendance over 5 years of secondary school is a whole year of school missed.
- Students with an attendance of 90% or less are considered to be PA (Persistent Absence) students.
- An attendance of 100% means 190 days in school, with 175 days 'off' school.
- A consequence of non-attendance is a fine and/or prosecution for parents
- Young people who truant from school are very vulnerable – they are at risk of being harmed.

## **What does the school do to encourage good attendance?**

The school has implemented a range of strategies to support improved attendance. At St John Fisher, regular attendance is encouraged by:

- Delivering 'Attend to achieve' assemblies to promote and reinforce the value of attending school regularly and on time.
- Delivering half-termly attendance assemblies for all Year groups.
- Producing attendance and punctuality reports each half term for students.
- Providing rewards for students with good attendance and punctuality.
- Providing rewards for significant improvements in attendance and punctuality.
- Using a computerised registration system called 'Lesson Monitor' which allows the attendance of all students in all lessons to be monitored.
- Producing detailed analyses of attendance patterns for whole school, Year groups and individual students.
- Setting attendance targets for the whole school, Year groups and individual students where necessary.
- Closely monitoring students with attendance and punctuality issues and issuing consequences where appropriate.
- Providing a programme of support and intervention for those students with attendance concerns by our Pupil Support Manager, Mrs. Heyes.
- Supporting students and parents/carers where attendance difficulties are emerging.
- Working in partnership with Wigan Council Start Well Service.

Should your child's attendance begin to drop below 95%, it will be closely monitored by their form tutor and Head of Year. Please be aware that should your child's attendance continue to drop, you and your child will be subject to 'attendance interventions' which may include:

- Home visits by pastoral staff, SBPO (School Based Police Officer), Gateway staff.
- Small group interventions with the student.
- Requests for medical proof in order to authorise further absences.
- Fixed penalty warning letters / fines for all adults who have parental responsibility for the child.

## **How can parents support their child in achieving good attendance?**

At St John Fisher, we recognise the key role that parents can play in their child's education. We are committed to working in partnership with parents to ensure all of our children achieve good attendance and punctuality. Listed below are a number of suggested strategies which parents could use:

- Encourage full attendance.
- Make sure your child understands the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Make sure your child stays healthy by eating a balanced diet and getting sufficient exercise.
- Make sure your child gets a sufficient amount of rest and has a regular bed-time.
- Not allowing your child to take time off school for minor ailments – particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work.
- Take a keen interest in your child's education – ask about their school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities.
- Discuss any problems your child may have at school and contact your child's form tutor or Head of Year at the earliest opportunity.
- Arrange appointments, whenever possible, after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays. If this is unavoidable, an appointment card should be provided for your child's form tutor.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.

## **What should I do if my child is ill?**

If your child is too ill to attend, you should contact the school (01942 510715) before 9am on the first day, and before 10am on each subsequent day that your child is unwell. Upon their return to school, you should provide your child with an absence note to be handed in to their form tutor. Only then can the absence be authorised by your child's form tutor. On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from a parent/carer by 11am the school will endeavour to make contact that day by 'Truancy Call', an automated text message service, asking for verification of the absence. This is a safeguarding procedure and can potentially alert a parent/carer to truancy.

## Absence from School

Children are required to attend school for 190 days each year.

Attendance during one school year...	..equals days absent..	..which is approx. weeks absent...	..which means this number of missed lessons
95%	10 days	2	50
90%	20 days	4	200
85%	30 days	6	250
80%	40 days	8	200

## Punctuality

At St John Fisher we are committed to creating a positive learning environment for all of our students, supporting them in reaching their full potential. We believe that each day needs to start well and that means arriving on time for school. Employers and colleges look for students who are reliable, dependable and responsible and a good attendance and punctuality record also contributes to a positive reference.

Many children are likely to be late for school at some time in their school career. However, persistent poor timekeeping is disruptive to the individual and the work of the class and may be an early warning of other difficulties. Being late for registration means students miss their daily act of collective worship and can result in their missing important messages from their form tutor. Persistent breaches of punctuality will result in after-school detentions and a period of close monitoring on a 'Punctuality Report'. Punctuality to school and lessons is extremely important and is the responsibility of each student.

If your child is going to be late for school, please send a note of explanation with your child or telephone the school.

Of course, you may not be aware that your child is late for school – they may leave home in adequate time for school and delay on the way. The school will send a text message to parents/carers if their child arrives late for school. All students arriving after 8.45am should sign in at the school office.

Students are expected to arrive at school for 8.40am when the warning bell sounds, alerting students to move to registration. At 8.45am the bell sounds to signal the official start of registration. Students arriving after this time will be marked late.

Here are some effective strategies a parent/carer can use to help his or her child learn and practice a habit of always being on time:

- Place a large calendar in a prominent place and write on it reminders of upcoming events and activities.
- Try to establish a defined household routine on school days.
- After homework is completed each evening, pack everything needed for the following day in a schoolbag.
- If your child takes a packed lunch to school, prepare it the night before.
- Set the alarm clock approximately 15 minutes early to allow more time to get ready.

Should you have any questions about your child's attendance and punctuality or require any support in ensuring that your child gets to school on time every day, please contact your child's form tutor.