

Higham Lane Sixth Form Attendance Policy

1. Introduction and Philosophy

At Higham Lane Sixth Form, we believe that high attendance is one of the single most important factors in academic and professional success. There is a clear and proven link between attendance and attainment; students who attend school regularly are significantly more likely to achieve the top grades at A Level, securing their preferred destinations for university or employment.

We are committed to the principles outlined in the Department for Education and OFSTED guidance on "**Working together to improve school attendance.**" We take a "support first" approach to working with parents and carers. We aim to build strong relationships with families to understand barriers to attendance and work collaboratively to resolve them, rather than relying solely on punitive measures. However, we also maintain rigorous standards to ensure our students are prepared for the professional world.

Higham Lane Sixth Form broadly follows the Higham Lane School Attendance Policy, but with the necessary adaptations resulting from the differences in procedure.

2. Attendance Expectations

At Higham Lane Sixth Form we have high expectations for all students.

- **Target Attendance:** As for Years 7-11, we expect all Sixth Form students to maintain an attendance figure of **above 97%**.
- **Timetabled Lessons:** Attendance at all timetabled lessons is compulsory, including registration when a student has a lesson period 1, Personal Development and Enrichment sessions.
- **Monitoring:** Attendance is monitored weekly. If a student's attendance drops below this threshold, we will follow our graduated approach to support students with their attendance (see Appendix 1).

3. Reporting Absence

If a student is unwell or unable to attend school for a valid reason, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the Sixth Form office

1. **Contact:** Please telephone the Sixth Form (024 7638 8123 Option 3) or report absence via the Class Charts app.

2. **Duration:** You must contact the school on **every subsequent day** of illness unless a doctor's note has been provided for a set period.
3. **Evidence:** Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carers will be notified of this in advance.
4. Please note, if no reason for an absence is received, the following process will be followed (please note, this is a guide only and can be adapted for individual circumstances, particularly if there are safeguarding concerns surrounding an individual student):

Day 1	Text message sent home as soon as absence is identified. If no reason is received by lunchtime (or Period 5 if the absence is in the afternoon), a phonecall is made.
Day 2	Phonecall made as soon as absence is identified. This is followed up by an email.
Day 3	Phonecall made as soon as absence is identified. This is followed up by an email. If no reason is received by lunchtime (or Period 5 if the absence is in the afternoon), a phonecall is made to all emergency contacts held on SIMs.
Day 4	Sixth Form will continue to attempt to contact parents using a variety of communication methods. If no contact can be made a voicemail will be left making it clear that a home visit will be carried out if we do not receive a reason by the following morning.
Day 5	A final phonecall will be made and if no reason is received then a home visit will be made. If the home visit has not allowed contact to be made with the student to ensure wellbeing, the school may escalate the matter to other agencies, including the Police.

5. **Planned Absence:** Parents / carers or students can request a Leave of Absence for medical appointments or other academic or personal reasons (e.g. University open days, Work Experience, etc) by completing a Leave of Absence request as far in advance as possible. However, please note this will only be granted at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form in the following circumstances:
 - Medical appointments (see below)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs.
- Attending work experience or an organised programme designed to assist the student with their desired next step (e.g. University programme)
- Attending a University / apprenticeship / employment interview.
- Attending an organised University / company Open Day.
- Attending a Driving Test – please note this does **not** include driving lessons, and tests should be booked outside school time where possible
- Other exceptional circumstances.

Any absence which does not meet these thresholds will be classed as Unauthorised. A student's attendance (including the number of unauthorised absences) may be provided as part of a reference.

If a student's attendance is a concern, we reserve the right not to authorise any absence, even if it meets the conditions listed above.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised absence as long as the Sixth Form is notified in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parent/carers and students to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and should return to school following the appointment if this is within the school day.

4. Exam Entries and Attendance Thresholds

The Sixth Form invests heavily in the exam fees for our students. It is a condition of this investment that students engage fully with their learning journey and follow our code of conduct.

Policy on Exam Funding: If a student has **below 90% attendance** calculated cumulatively from when they started in Year 12 up to Easter of Year 13, **the school reserves the right not to pay for entry to examinations.**

In such cases:

- The cost of exam entries will have to be covered by the parents/carers or the student.
- This decision will be communicated in writing prior to the final exam entry deadline.
- Exceptions may be made for students with documented serious medical conditions or exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Head of Sixth Form.

5. Punctuality

Punctuality is a fundamental requirement for the workplace and adult life. Arriving late to lessons disrupts the learning of others and demonstrates a lack of professional respect.

- Students are expected to be on site and ready to learn by the start of their first lesson, or prior to 8:45am if they have a lesson Period 1. Sixth Form students are allowed on site from 8am and can remain on site until 4pm. They can enter/leave the school site via the Shanklin Drive entrance during these hours, or via the Higham Lane gate between 8.15am and 8.40am or between 3.15pm and 3.25pm.
- Any student arriving late will be marked as such on the register and they will receive an SF1 on Class Charts. This will only be waived in exceptional circumstances where the lateness is deemed to be beyond the reasonable control of the student.
- Persistent lateness will be treated as a conduct issue and sanctions may be applied in line with the Sixth Form Code of Conduct

6. On-Site Procedures and Study Leave

We treat Sixth Form students as young adults and grant privileges regarding Private Study lessons, provided these privileges are treated with responsibility.

Signing In and Out

To ensure the safety of all students and to comply with fire regulations and safeguarding protocols, it is mandatory that students **'sign in'** when they arrive at the school site and **'sign out'** when they leave. This applies every time a student enters or exits the premises.

Leaving During the School Day (Exceptional Circumstances)

If a student has a timetabled lesson but needs to leave the school site for an unavoidable reason (e.g. a medical appointment that could not be scheduled outside school hours) they **must** gain prior permission by completing a Leave of Absence request.

If they need to leave for any other urgent, unforeseeable reason where they have been unable to complete a Leave of Absence Form (e.g. illness during the day) they **must** gain permission before leaving the school site. The Sixth form administrator will make a phonecall to a parent/carer to inform them that the student is unwell.

Permission can only be granted by:

1. Head of Sixth Form
2. Assistant Head of Sixth Form
3. Other SLT member / Sixth Form tutor / Sixth Form administrator (in the absence of the HoSF / AHoSF)

Leaving a lesson without this specific permission will be recorded as truancy.

Study Leave

In the run up to all exams (both trial and external), the Sixth Form provides a programme of high quality organised revision lessons. Therefore, Study Leave is not routinely awarded to students.

During **trial exam** periods, students are expected to attend all timetabled lessons unless they are in an examination. The Sixth Form may temporarily remove the need to attend Personal Development and Enrichment lessons during the examination period.

During **external exams** in Year 13, students are expected to attend all timetabled lessons for each subject up until their last exam in that subject. Personal Development lessons will not run during the external examination period. We realise that some students value additional revision time at home before exams and as such students will not be required to attend Sixth Form in the morning if they have an exam that afternoon and can leave after Period 3 if they have an exam the following morning. Any absences beyond this will be recorded as unauthorised.

7. Removal from roll

If a student is absent from Sixth Form for a period of 20 consecutive days with no auditable evidence to return then they will be removed from the school's roll. This is in accordance with the DfE's 'Funding rules for 16 to 19 provision 2025 to 2026'.

Every attempt will be made to contact parents / carers to establish whether the student has an intention to return before the decision is made to remove them from roll.

Appendix 1

Attendance Actions Flow Charts

Descriptor	Threshold attendance	Actual attendance	Whole days of absence	Learning Hours Lost
Excellent	100%	190 days	0	0
	99%	188 days	2	10
Good	98%	186 days	4	20
	97%	184 days	6	30
	96%	182.5 days	7.5	37.5
Cause for Concern	95%	180.5 days	9.5	47.5
	94%	179 days	11	55
	93%	177 days	13	65
	92%	175 days	15	75
	91%	173 days	17	85
Unsatisfactory	90%	171 days	19	95
	89%	169 days	21	105
	88%	167 days	23	115
	87%	165 days	25	125
Serious cause for concern	86%	163 days	27	135
Critical	85%	161.5 days	28.5	142.5
	84%	159.5 days	30.5	152.5
	83%	158 days	32	160
	82%	156 days	34	170
	81%	154 days	36	180
	80%	152 days	38	190

