

Fitness to Study Policy at Huntington Sixth Form

1. Introduction

Huntington School Sixth Form is an educational institution for full time students. Our staff provide outstanding care for all students, but there will be times when a student's physical, emotional or mental health are so affected that they are no longer able, despite support to maintain reasonable academic progress. We are not a distance-learning Sixth Form and, while it is reasonable for subject teachers and support staff to be flexible on a temporary basis, prolonged periods of absence cannot be sustainable. There are therefore occasions where it will be our judgement that, in the best interests of a student, continuing with a full programme of study or in their current year group is no longer the best option.

2. Studying in the Sixth Form

We will always seek to provide appropriate support to any student with ill health, whether the condition was pre-existing or commences during Sixth Form study. If the nature of the medical condition requires support or adjustment to the programme of study this will be done in negotiation with parents/carers and the student appropriate to each individual circumstance. The support or adjustment plan may also involve referral to or a request for documentary evidence from outside agencies, such as the student's GP. This is particularly true where the health condition causes significant concerns with regards to examinations.

3. Minimum expectations

Each case will be considered on its merits, but a minimum level of attendance needs to be maintained that will allow a student to realistically achieve. It is reasonable for teaching staff, on a short-term, temporary basis, to liaise with students via email but this cannot continue long-term. Academic success depends on engagement in classroom activity, so excessively long periods of complete absence or very poor attendance will make a student's studies untenable. With regards to coursework and homework, if students fall significantly behind with their deadlines, despite extensions being offered, then there comes a point at which catching up is not viable. The Sixth Form pastoral team will continue to monitor attendance levels and progress with work and coursework, with the addition of an attendance report that can inform prompt action and support. This attendance report will give students the chance, where possible, to rectify their academic position.

Any student who doesn't have an attendance figure of 90% may be withdrawn from their current course. The central reason for this is that a student who misses more than 10% of their lessons will not be able to perform to a satisfactory standard in an examination. Students will be given every opportunity to address any short fall in attendance levels.

4. Actions to address poor attendance

The following attendance trigger points will be adhered to:

1. **Below 93% attendance** – the student will meet with their form tutor to explore reasons for their low attendance rate and discuss solutions.
2. **Below 90% attendance (Persistent Absenteeism)** – the student will be interviewed by the Attendance Manager and a formal letter will be sent home.
3. **No improvement made** – parents called in to discuss solutions with the Attendance Manager and Head of Year.
4. **Attendance continues to be below 90%** - parents called in to discuss solutions with Head of Year and Director of Sixth Form.
5. **No improvement made** - withdrawal decisions made in consultation with the Headteacher.

When a student is withdrawn from examination entry it may be appropriate to offer a possible Sixth Form restart of either Year 12 or Year 13. Students can only restart once. A student must restart their studies in the following academic year and before they turn 19. Where the opportunity of a restart has been made, the onus is on the student and their parents or carers to ensure that they are recovered enough for the restart or extra year to work.

5. Exceptional Circumstances:

On rare occasions exemptions will be made to the 90% attendance criteria for exceptional individual circumstances. Careful consideration will be made in consultation with parents or carers. Any decision regarding an exemption will draw on evidence from assessments to determine whether a student can still succeed in their examinations.

There are occasions, however, when physical or mental health issues are so complex or so significant that this is not possible. Clearly each student needs to be considered on a case by case basis and the Sixth Form team needs to be kept fully informed of all pertinent medical evidence and the wishes of the student and the parents or carers. Ideally, a clear consensus would always emerge about the best way forward, but this will not always be the case. There will be occasions where the Sixth Form team believes that the student is unable to maintain their fitness to study and trying to catch up after a lengthy absence will be too stressful and likely to negatively impact on their health. The best interests of the individual student and their welfare are always at the centre of any withdrawal decision.

Parent and student acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understand Huntington School's Fitness to Study Policy:

Parent Name.....

Parent Signature.....

Student Name.....

Student Signature.....