

Aquinas College Attendance Policy

Our Mission Statement states that 'we share in each other's strengths, support each other in our weaknesses and strive for the highest standards of achievement in all we do.' For this to happen, we must first establish that good attendance and punctuality play an essential part in our students' academic and personal development. It also demonstrates important character traits such as organisation, dedication, motivation and a mature and responsible attitude to study that can be included by college in references sent to Higher Education through UCAS, or when providing a reference for employment.

Students should aim for 100% attendance. Research shows that a 4% drop in overall attendance results in the loss of a grade in one subject, and a 10% drop in overall attendance results in your grades dropping by one grade across a whole study programme.

We provide a breakdown of a student's attendance data on the Parent Portal. The attendance percentage includes presence and authorised absence. The presence percentage identifies how much time a student has spent in class receiving valuable teaching and support. Therefore as a college we are mostly concerned with a student's presence mark and the practical matter of how much time they have spent in the classroom. If presence falls below 97% we consider this a concern to be addressed.

A good attendance and punctuality record requires a successful partnership between students, parents/carers and college which will be explained in this policy.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM COLLEGE

Attendance monitoring

- Student attendance is monitored in the first instance by subject departments and the pastoral team.
- College will follow up unauthorised absences with students, parents and carers to ensure an accurate record of attendance and presence.
- Ongoing concerns regarding attendance will be escalated to the student's senior tutor who will determine whether the attendance concern is a result of poor behaviour or a fitness to study issue. Ultimately any student with ongoing attendance concerns will not be capable of adhering to the college's core values and therefore will be unable to make progress in their studies.
- If a student is absent for a period of 4 weeks without explanation and/or sufficient engagement that demonstrates an intent to continue and complete their studies, they will be withdrawn from college.

Attendance and assessments

- Attendance figures will be displayed on all subject reviews and highlighted at consultation evenings.
- If a student does not attend an internal formal assessment, there will be a 2 week window in which the student can sit the missed assessment.
- If a student misses an external exam, they will be responsible for paying for any subsequent attempts to sit the exam, with the following exceptions:

Vocational qualifications (unitised)

- Absence without extenuating circumstances will result in a student being marked as absent by the exam board and means having to pay for the next resit opportunity.

- Absence with extenuating circumstances must be supported with evidence e.g. note from GP so that special consideration can be explored in the first instance.
- If special consideration is an option, an application will be submitted to the exam board and the student pays for any subsequent resit;

General qualifications (linear exams)

- If a student misses the external exam for a valid reason as outlined by the exam board, evidence must be provided e.g. note from GP in order to support a special consideration application.
- If a student does not have a valid reason for their absence, the student will be marked as absent and lose marks for the missed paper.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM STUDENTS

Lanyards

- Students must wear a college lanyard holding their student I.D to attend college.
- Students who arrive at college without their I.D. can be sent home to get it. Any lessons missed will be marked as unauthorised.

Attendance monitoring

- Attendance in all timetabled lessons is compulsory. This includes General RE, 10.10 tutorials and 1:1 meetings, Aspire, Core Maths, EPQ and Triple A classes.
- Students are responsible for keeping their attendance record accurate. Best practice is to check both MyAquinas and emails daily to ensure the record is accurate and relevant information is received promptly.
- Students can request an attendance change via MyAquinas if they identify an error on their record i.e the student was in the lesson but it has been recorded as an absence.
- Attendance marks cannot be changed once a period of 2 weeks has passed.

Punctuality

- Lateness is disruptive and persistent lateness will result in disciplinary sanctions.
- If a student arrives significantly late to a lesson, the teacher can decide whether it's appropriate for them to join the class. If it is not appropriate, the student will be sent away from the class and is expected to return at the end of the lesson to explain their lateness and collect the work missed. This will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Signing out of college

- If a student becomes unwell during the college day and has to leave before their lessons finish, they must sign out of college at Student Information.
- A registered parent/carer must then contact college to authorise this absence.

Guided Study

- If a teacher is absent, they will set guided study on MyAquinas, which is work to be completed in lieu of the lesson. This work can be completed in college or at home so long as working from home doesn't affect attendance at other lessons that day.
- Students must complete the work set in order to achieve an attendance mark for this lesson. If the work is not completed it will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM PARENTS/CARERS

Attendance monitoring

- Parents and carers can monitor student attendance on the Parent Portal.
- Parents and carers will receive a weekly alert identifying any unauthorised absences from the last seven days.

Reporting absences

- Absences can only be authorised by a registered contact on MyAquinas. Students cannot self-authorise.
- Absences should be reported to absencereport@aquinas.ac.uk
- Absences must be reported on a daily basis for safeguarding purposes, unless a period of absence is known in advance.
- Attendance marks cannot be changed after a period of two weeks has passed.

Acceptable reasons for absence (authorised absence):	Unacceptable reasons for absence (unauthorised absence):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sickness ● University open days (3 maximum) ● University interviews ● Hospital / orthodontist appointments / serious illness supported by appropriate evidence ● Practical driving test ● Bereavement / funeral ● Religious holidays ● College trips and visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Routine medical and dental appointments as they should be booked outside of class times ● Driving lessons ● Driving theory tests ● Holidays taken in term time

Attendance record codes:			
/	Present	M	Medical appointment
O	Absent	N	Need not attend
L	Late	P	Awaiting parental authorisation
A	Authorised absence	R	Religious holiday
D	Driving test	S	Sickness
G	Guided study	T	Teacher-set task
H	Holiday (unauthorised)	U	Unauthorised absence
I	Independent study	V	Trips and visits

Attendance and bursary payments

- Bursary payments are made to support students with the cost of attending college.
- For payment to be guaranteed, bursary students must ensure that their attendance record from the previous week is accurate on MyAquinas by 3pm every Monday.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their attendance record is accurate.
- Bursary students can have up to 2 periods of authorised absence every half term. 3 or more periods of absence will result in the bursary not being awarded for the week where the third absence(s) occurs.
- Where a student is absent for several consecutive days, this is counted as one period of absence. However, if a student is absent one day, in college the following day and then absent the day after that for example, this would be counted as 2 periods of sickness and the student would only have one period of authorised absence left in that half term.
- Where a student is absent for a full week, the bursary will not be paid for that week.
- At the start of the next half term the student is permitted a further 3 periods of authorised absence.