



Attendance Policy

Reviewed

Next Review Date: September 2024

At The Vale Academy:

- We work in partnership with parents
- We have inclusive principles
- We work in an atmosphere of mutual respect and consideration

In our academy there is the right to:

- **Learn** in an encouraging environment
- **Feel safe** and cared for in the academy
- **Achieve** the best qualifications possible
- **Enjoy** time in the academy
- **Know** that any adult in the academy can be approached for help, advice, or guidance

For students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they accept our minimal expectations which are:

- **Attend the academy regularly**
- **Be punctual:** arriving to the academy and lessons on time
- Have the correct equipment and attitude for learning

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching and learning routines, so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring regular attendance is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from the academy without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, students, and all members of staff. All staff have a clear understanding of the links between behaviour, attendance and student progress and attainment. To help us all focus on this we will:

- Report to parents half-termly on attendance and punctuality
- Celebrate and reward good attendance in several ways
- Work and meet with parents to raise attendance levels across the academy
- Support and guide parents with any issues

UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half day absence from the academy must be classified by the academy (not by the parents), as **either authorised or unauthorised**. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably by telephoning the academy on the morning of each day's absence. **Please note that the academy does have an answer machine service so that messages can be left out of academy hours and parents can also use the My Child At School (MCAS) app to message out of hours too.**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the academy for a reason like illness, medical or dental appointments (with evidence such as an appointment card or letter) which unavoidably fall in academy time. Any other unavoidable causes are at the discretion of the academy

in line with government legislation to authorise. However, wherever possible appointments should be made outside of academy hours to prevent missed learning. The academy requests students attend school before and/or after medical appointments, where possible. The academy can and does request medical evidence to support such appointments or absence if they are made on a frequent basis and will unauthorise if it is not received.

Illness of over 2 days may not be authorised without medical evidence. Unauthorised absences are those which the academy does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes: (Please note this list is not exhaustive)

- Parents/Carers keeping children from attending the academy without good reason
- Truancy before or during the academy day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive in the academy too late to get a mark
- Shopping, birthdays, hair appointments or looking after other children or family member.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Not having the correct school uniform
- Visits from relatives

If your child is reluctant to attend the academy or is having any problems which cause irregular attendance then this is best sorted out between the academy, the parents, and the child.

We do request that parents do not keep their child off with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold. If there are any concerns about your child’s attendance, please contact the attendance team or your child’s Learning Manager who will be pleased to help.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

A student becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ (PA) when they miss 10% or more of their attendance across the academic year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any young person’s educational prospects. As an academy we need parents’ fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Absence is monitored thoroughly. If any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards PA, parents/carers will be immediately informed. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we also combine this with academic tracking as absence affects progress and attainment. An Action Plan is completed for each student.

All our potential PA students and students with less than 90% attendance are automatically made known to the Local Authority every term

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If your child is absent, you must:

- **Contact the academy by 8.25 am on the first day of absence and any subsequent days they are absent.** This can be either by phone 01652 294511 option 1 (we do have a voicemail) or

using the academy text message service.

If your child is absent and we have not received a reason, we will:

- Telephone or text on the first day of absence, we may also make a home visit.
- After 2 or more days of absence, we will make a safe and well check, even if we have a reason for the absence.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, for example if your child is unwell or we need to make contact if your child has an unexplained absence, so we need to always have your up-to-date contact numbers. Please note no student is sent home unwell without contacting a parent or carer. We expect all students to be collected by an adult when they are unwell.

CONCERN WITH ATTENDANCE

If we have a concern regarding your child's attendance, we may: -

- Contact with you by either phone or email
- Send out a letter
- Make a home visit.

If attendance continues to decline, we will invite you into the Academy to complete an Attendance Support Plan. This will be monitored on a weekly basis by one of the attendance team. Following any further unauthorised absences, the academy will send out an education warning letter. If following this letter your child has any further time off from the academy which is unauthorised, a referral will be made to the Local Authority for statutory intervention. This could mean either an Education Penalty Notice or prosecution.

LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your son/daughter misses the start of the day, they can miss work and vital information and news for the day. Students who arrive late also disrupt the learning in lessons. It can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

- The academy day starts at 8.45am and we expect all students to be in school at that time.
- If a pupil arrives at the academy after 8.45am they MUST report to reception to sign in.

At 9.30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if a student arrives after this time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and will mean they have an unauthorised absence, this code is a U. This may mean that you could be issued with an Education Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Students who are late to the academy after 8.45am will be issued with a lunchtime detention on that same day. A detention sticker will be given to the student to put in their planner, If the student

already has a detention for that day, then it will be rearranged for the next available day depending on whether they have detentions already.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

In line with the Government's new legislation effective from 1st September 2013 no requests for holidays can be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. For the academy to consider exceptional circumstances a leave of absence form must be submitted at least four weeks before the proposed start of the holiday and before booking the holiday. For the academy to consider exceptional circumstances the request must be put in writing together with any supporting evidence. A meeting or phone call will then take place to discuss the request. All holidays will be classed as unauthorised, unless you receive confirmation in writing from the academy that the holiday has been authorised. There are no exceptions. All holidays that are unauthorised will be referred to the Local Authority to issue an Education Penalty Notice. When an Education Penalty Notice is issued, the penalty is £60 per child, per parent/carer when the payment is made within 21 days, after 28 days it will increase to £120. Parents may be prosecuted if the 28-day payment period has expired and full payment has not been made. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.

ACADEMY TARGETS

The academy aims to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence and you have a vital part to play in meeting these targets. Whilst we strive for every student to achieve 100% attendance, the minimum level of attendance for this academy is 97% and we will keep you updated regularly about how your child's attendance compares to this target.

Staff Responsible for attendance matters in this academy are:-

- Attendance Officer: Mrs Ransford
- Inclusion Co-ordinator: Miss Harding
- Y7 Learning Manager: Mrs Steer
- Y8 Learning Manager: Mr Metcalf
- Y9 Learning Manager: Mrs Clarke
- Y10 Learning Manager: Mrs Whitworth
- Y11 Learning Manager: Mrs Noon

SUMMARY

The academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All academy staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.