



Attendance Policy

July 2025

EVERY CHILD MATTERS

Don Valley 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 a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents, students, and all members of staff.

There is a clear understanding by all staff 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 a number of 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**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably by telephoning the academy on the first day of absence, or a note from parent/carer. **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 Bromcom message service or gateway to send a message out of hours.**

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, However, wherever possible appointments should be made out of academy hours or towards the end of the academy day in order to prevent loss of learning. 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.

Any other unavoidable causes are at the discretion of the academy in line with government legislation to authorise.

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 off from the academy unnecessarily.
- 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
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If your child is reluctant to attend the Academy or is having any problems with 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' 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. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark, 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 01302 651035 option 1 (we do have a voicemail), email (Attendance@donvalleyacademy.org.uk) or using the BromCom text message service, using the My Child App

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

- Telephone or text on the first day of absence, we may also make a home visit.
- Make a home visit following a weekend (even if we have a reason)
- We will conduct safe and well home visits every 1 or 2 days whilst ever the student is absent from the Academy.

SAFE AND WELL HOME VISITS

Safe & Well home visits are conducted by our Attendance Staff when a student is absent from the Academy. We conduct these regardless of whether we have received notification from parents/carers in relation to the reason your child is absent from the Academy. This may be on the first or second day of absence. Please note if we are not able to conduct a safe and well visit and see the student after 48 hours, we will notify South Yorkshire Police.

EDUCATION PENALTY NOTICES

Education Penalty Notices (EPN)'s can now be issued for irregular attendance.

They can be issued if the child has had a 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and meets the terms of a prosecution under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 and the school/Council has previously issued a warning letter giving the opportunity to improve attendance over a 15-day period.

The child has taken leave of absence in term time without parents requesting authorisation from the academy.

Please be aware of the new legislation by the Government, from August 2024 the **PENALTY NOTICE**, for school absences across the country will be charged at **£160** if paid within 28 days, this will reduce to **£80** if paid within 21 days.

If a parent receives a **SECOND PENALTY NOTICE** for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the flat rate of **£160** if paid within 28 days. (no reduction if paid earlier)

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period for the same child.

Exclusion has taken place, and the parent has allowed the child to be present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a fixed or permanent exclusion.

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 either via phone or email.
- Send out a text message to make you aware of our initial concerns.
- Send out a letter informing you of our concerns.
- Make a home visit.
- Complete a 'Voice of the Child'
- Meet up with your child on a weekly basis to discuss any concerns re their attendance.
- **If attendance continues to decline**, we will invite you into the Academy to complete an Attendance Support Plan.
- **Complete an Attendance Review after 4 weeks, we may review earlier if a serious cause for concern.**
- Issue an Education Warning Letter immediately at this stage if we have serious cause for concern.
- Your child's attendance will be monitored daily by one of the attendance team.
- Invite you and your child to a meeting with the governor or principal of the academy.
- Or make a direct referral to the Local Authority for statutory intervention.
- This could mean either an Education Penalty Notice, Notice to Improve, Attendance Contract, Prosecution or Education Supervision Order

LATENESS:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Lessons begin at 8.25 am, so students need to ensure that they are punctual to the Academy in order to not miss any vital learning.

How we manage lateness:

All students are expected to arrive on time at the Academy ready for lessons, which begin as follows.

Year 7	8.25 am
Year 8	8.25 am

Year 9	8.25 am
Year 10	8.25 am
Year 11	8.25 am

If a pupil arrives at the academy after **their lesson has started at 8.25am they MUST** report to STUDENT RECEPTION to sign in.

At **8.55 am** 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 face the possibility of an **Education Penalty Notice** if the problem persists.

Students who are late to the academy after **their lesson begins** will be issued with an hour's detention the following day. A detention sticker will be given to the student to put in their planner, If the student already has a detention for that particular day, then it will be re-arranged for the next available day depending on whether they have detentions already.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME:

In line with the Governments new legislation effective from 1st September 2024 no requests for Leave of Absence (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 absence. For the Academy to consider exceptional circumstances the request must be put in writing together with any supporting evidence.

The Department of Education does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Please note: All leave of absence requests will be classed as unauthorised, unless you receive confirmation in writing from the Academy that the Leave of absence has been authorised. There are no exceptions.

All leave of absences that are unauthorised and meet the criteria will be referred to the Local Authority to issue an Education Penalty Notice or prosecution.

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If a parent receives a **SECOND PENALTY NOTICE** for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the flat rate of **£160** if paid within 28 days. (no reduction if paid earlier)

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period for the same child.

Once this limit has been reached, other action's may be considered like an Attendance contract, Education Supervision Order or Prosecution, these will be considered if the school attendance of the child is not secured.

ACADEMY TARGETS:

The academy has targets to improve attendance 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%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your daughter's/son's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful education.

Through the academic year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this academy are:

Attendance Manager: Mrs Hepworth

Attendance Team Miss Bills – Attendance Co-ordinator

Miss Powell- Attendance Officer

Mrs Griffin – Attendance Assistant

Year 7 Mrs King

Year 8 Mr Watts

Year 9 Miss Davies

Year 10 Mrs McMahan

Year 11 Mr Wallace

SLT lead Mrs Callaghan

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 level of attendance as possible.

Date of Policy: May 2009.

Date of Policy Review: [July 2026](#)

Registered Office / Head Office

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Company Number: 07386086 (England and Wales) Charity Exempt under the Academies Act 2010 VAT Number 115 811 243
