

# ADDINGTON VALLEY ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY

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# Attendance policy

## Introduction

Addington Valley Academy is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our students. We recognise the importance of regular attendance in maximising the benefit of any educational opportunity. Encouraging and supporting excellent attendance is a crucial part of supporting our students to learn effectively.

This policy is written with reference to DfE guidance on ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) and ['Keeping Children Safe in Education'](#) as well as ['Children Missing Education'](#).

## Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all members of the Addington Valley Academy community including students and parents/carers understand the importance of regular attendance at school and their roles and responsibilities regarding attendance. Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between school absence and overall achievement. Poor attendance also affects young people's ability to make and sustain friendships and can interrupt the routine of school life, making it hard to settle when they do attend.

## Parental responsibility

Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (5 to 18 year olds) with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan attend an establishment authorised by their Local Authority (LA). This includes a legal obligation to ensure children attend regularly and on time. Ensuring regular attendance is essential; permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by law and may result in prosecution.

Addington Valley Academy will always seek to work collaboratively with families in order to support regular attendance.

## Roles and responsibilities

### The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

### The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

## Staff

### **The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance is Joe Shepherd and Anna Huzzey and can be contacted via [jshepherd@addingtonvalley.org](mailto:jshepherd@addingtonvalley.org) , [ahuzzey@addingtonvalley.org](mailto:ahuzzey@addingtonvalley.org)

### **The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mitch Peterswald and can be contacted via [MPeterswald@addingtonvalley.org](mailto:MPeterswald@addingtonvalley.org)

### **Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office twice a day, during registration.

### **School Admin staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the phase leaders or assistant head for Student Support in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

## Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Notify the school in the event of lateness e.g. delayed transport.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08.30 on the day of the absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with at least three emergency contact numbers for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

## **Recording attendance**

### Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by **08.45** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **09.00** and will be kept open until **09.15**. The register for the second session will be taken at **1300** and will be kept open until **13.15**.

### Unplanned absence

The students parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by **08.30** or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff. A call must be made for each day of absence.

When a student is absent due to illness or a medical appointment, this will be marked as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Evidence may be requested e.g. appointment card, letter, prescription, prescribed medication packs or boxes with the pupil's/student's name printed on them. 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 parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Should school staff become concerned about the amount of school missed due to illness, information may be shared with external agencies such as social services (see 'Safeguarding', below).

### Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

**Parents must contact the school office and send in a copy of the appointment letter.**

Parents/carers should ensure that every effort is made to make or arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Addington Valley Academy recognises that students' additional needs may include significant health concerns and involve regular or unexpected medical support e.g. admission to hospital or attendance at specialist clinics. We will always seek to work with our students and their families to support good attendance and, where this is not possible, to support continued learning through initiatives such as home learning programmes.

### Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Addington Valley Academy will work with parents and Transport agencies to support any issues arising from taxis being delayed or arriving late.

### Following up unexplained absence

Safeguards in place to prevent children missing education at Addington Valley Academy include:

- Addington Valley Academy holds a minimum of three emergency contact numbers for each student, unless there is a genuine reason why this is not possible e.g. parent fleeing domestic violence.
- Any child going missing from education will always get immediate attention from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff are trained to be alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- When a student is absent without notification, the attendance administrator will record the absence in the register and the school will endeavor to contact the parents/carers and other emergency contacts in order to determine the reason for the absence. This will happen for every day of non-attendance where no call has been received informing the school of absence and reasons why.
- Any unexplained absence of a student with a Child Protection Plan will be reported to the student's social worker within one day.
- Where a student does not present for school as expected, the school will endeavor to ascertain that student's whereabouts and wellbeing without delay, using all available parent/carer and secondary/emergency contact details. Where no contact can be made with either the student or any named emergency contacts, a member of school staff should generally attend the student's home. If the student or a named contact still cannot be contacted, the school must report this to relevant personnel in the Local Authority and, where deemed necessary, the police. However, it is acknowledged that in some exceptional, local circumstances, such action may be counter-productive and it is for the school to risk assess such a scenario on the first day. Regardless of this, if a student is absent for a second consecutive day without notification from a named contact, the school **must** report this to relevant personnel in the Local Authority and, where necessary, the police.
- Staff will always report to the Local Authority the name of any child who has been newly registered to attend the school but does not arrive on the expected day.
- Staff will always report to the Education Welfare Service the continued absence of a child known or thought to have been taken overseas if the child does not return to school on the expected return date.
- Addington Valley Academy maintains accurate attendance and admissions registers (all students are on both), in line with statutory requirements. This includes paying careful attention to off-rolling students in association with the Local Authority and knowing, and recording, student destinations consistently on the admissions register. Where a student destination is unknown, and unable to be established after significant follow-up, the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service and/or Social Care Services will be informed.

- Students will not be deleted from the admissions register. Staff will alert the child's Local Authority immediately if:
  - the student has been taken out of school by their parents/carers and is being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
  - the student has ceased to attend school
  - the student has been certified as medically unfit to attend school or is in custody.

Keeping Local Authorities up to date is crucial so that they can check if children of compulsory school age are missing education, and might therefore be in danger of not receiving an education and be at risk of abuse or neglect.

On the rare occasions that Addington Valley Academy students are excluded for a fixed term, the school will confirm this in writing to both the family (and the placing Local Authority where this exclusion exceeds five days). While staff will provide the student with work to complete during their external exclusion (and mark it), Addington Valley Academy is not responsible for the students safety and welfare during their time at home.

### Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via Annual Reviews, and if necessary weekly phone calls or Termly reports.

### **Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a bereavement or similar event where the student cannot reasonably be expected to be in school.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The school may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the students parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.



- Traveller student travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider essential and for which no authorisation has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority becoming involved. Support will be offered initially but if unauthorised absences continue, the LA has the right to apply a fine or legal proceedings.

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school to go shopping, to care for a sibling, for a family birthday.
- Refusal by the student to attend an allocated session.
- Absences that have never been explained.
- Children who arrive too late to get a mark.
- Illness without medical evidence.
- Holidays in term-time.

If a child is reluctant to attend school, parents/carers must communicate this as soon as possible to their school's Senior Leadership Team in order that support strategies can be put in place.

Parents/carers can support their child's attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times, appropriate to the age of the child.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly.
- Retaining open and honest communication with the school.
- Having a positive attitude towards school attendance.

### Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason



If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

Addington Valley Academy celebrates good attendance daily through circle time and half termly in celebration assemblies.

The school ethos, close and constant communication with parents and a child centred ASD approach ensure that students attend regularly.

### **Attendance monitoring**

#### Monitoring attendance

##### **Addington Valley will:**

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

#### Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

#### Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Engage Early Help or CIN referrals with the local authority if necessary.

### **Safeguarding and confidentiality**

Addington Valley Academy has a duty to effectively safeguard all our students. Supporting regular attendance is part of this safeguarding duty. Poor attendance and unexplained absence can indicate a possible safeguarding concern including (but not limited to) physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, female genital mutilation (FGM), child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, substance misuse or peer on peer abuse.

Addington Valley Academy staff will always seek to work with families to minimise absence and ensure clear communication regarding any absence that might occur. Where safeguarding concerns are raised, these will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and approved annually by the Local Governing Body.

### **Related policies and procedures**

Anti-Radicalisation Policy

Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy

Exclusions Policy

Positive Behaviour Policy

Remote Education Policy

Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer

Supporting Students with Medical Conditions in Education Policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

<b>z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day