



The Aylesbury Vale Academy

A Church of England Academy

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Regular Attendance Requirements

Introduction

Regular attendance at the Academy is essential if students are to achieve their full potential. The Academy's statistics show a clear relationship between high attendance and good examination results. High attendance also enables students to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. **All parents/carers should aim to ensure that their children achieve a minimum of 95% attendance.** This means missing less than 10 school days per year for illness and all other reasons.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that **parents/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education.**

Parents/carers also do not have an automatic right to remove their child from the Academy during term time for the purpose of a holiday. Indeed new government requirements from September 2013 prevent the Academy authorising holidays during term times except in the most exceptional circumstances.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Academy believes that improved attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the Academy staff, governors, parents/carers, students and the wider Academy community. We request that parents/carers will:

- Talk to their child about the Academy and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular attendance at the Academy within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the Academy if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the Academy for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the Academy of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance

- Support the Academy; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with the Academy and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both the Academy and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child away from the Academy to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.

Support Systems

The Academy recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in the Academy. Parents/carers should make the Academy aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in the Academy, for example, bereavement, divorce / separation. This will help the Academy identify any additional support that may be required.

The Academy also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children.

The Academy will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents/carers and students
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and students.

Legal Sanctions

However, where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Academy will notify the Buckinghamshire Education Welfare Service of the irregular attendance. The Education Welfare Service or the Academy, may then invite parents/carers to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a **Penalty Notice**.

A **Parenting Contract** is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority, the Academy and the parent/carer; it can also be extended to include the child and any

other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly. The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

If attendance still does not improve a Penalty Notice will be issued (this sanction can also be issued for any unauthorised absences).

A Penalty Notice gives the parent/carer the opportunity to avoid a prosecution. A £60 fine, per parent/carer, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent/.carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 which could result in a considerable fine for parents/carers.

We do request your full support in ensuring excellent attendance for your child.

Fiona Froment
Principal

Gordon Joyner
Chair of Governors

3 April 2014