



The South Wolds Academy
& Sixth Form

**The South Wolds Academy
And Sixth Form**

Attendance Policy

**Adopted September 2015
Review September 2019**

1) Introduction

The South Wolds Academy is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

High attainment depends on good attendance. See Appendix 1. Poor attendance can also be a threat to the safety of individual students.

The whole school community has a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and has important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's role in this.

2) Academy's roles and responsibilities

All staff at The South Wolds Academy have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

A member of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, the **Inclusion Manager**, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with Key Stage leaders and in turn Year Performance leaders and Tutors; and that intervention is targeted to improve attendance as appropriate.

3) First-day messaging

The South Wolds Academy has in place a system of first-day text messaging as an important safeguarding measure. This means that parents will be sent a text on the first day a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

We also send a text message home if any student arrives at school after the gates are closed at 8:55 and has to report to the late gate.

4) Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Tutors and Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes – see Appendix 2. The register will be called promptly at 8.55 am and 1.25 pm by each tutor and class teacher.

Students who arrive after 9.00 am and 1.30 pm will be marked as late. The number of minutes that the student is late will be recorded in the register and dealt with in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Registers close at 9:15 am and 1:40 pm. Any student who arrives after the closing of the register will be marked as Late.

A mark will be made in respect of each student during registration. Any student who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended by the Tutor or Student Reception.

5) Term-time Holidays

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that schools may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Schools should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

High Attainment depends on good attendance. Term-time holidays can have a significant impact on achievement and progress and therefore our policy is not to authorise any other than in the most exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By unavoidable we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

In these circumstances an application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, to the Inclusion Manager in advance of booking the intended holiday. The Inclusion Manager will respond with a decision in writing within one working week. Even in exceptional circumstances we are unable to authorise any more than 10 school days absence for term time holidays in one academic year.

If a holiday is taken during term time without being authorised as described above – then the absence may be referred to the Local Authority who may issue a warning fine or a penalty notice in line with the Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices Issues In Respect of Truancy and Excluded Pupils.

6) Authorising Absence

We recognise the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. The inappropriate authorisation of an absence can be damaging to a student's education and welfare. Therefore, it is important that it is understood that a note or explanation from a students' parents or carers does not automatically mean an absence is authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Academy.

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance or sporting activity
 - a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the students' overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- where the student has a medical appointment (although parents are encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible)
- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parents belong;
- in other exceptional circumstances (eg a family bereavement) and for a limited and appropriate period.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the student is staying at home to mind the house;
- the student is shopping during school hours;
- the student is absent for unexceptional reasons, eg a birthday;
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday which has not been authorised

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence may remain unauthorised.

If a Tutor or Student Reception feel that a reason given by a parent or carer for an absence cannot be authorised then this will be discussed with the Inclusion Manger who will make the final decision on the status of the absence. The Inclusion Manager will also ensure that parents/carers are contacted where the absence is unauthorised.

7) Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

Staff organising educational trips for the Academy will ensure that a final list of attendees is left with student reception before the trip.

8) Lateness and punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. If the lateness is persistent, the parents will be requested to give an adequate reason. If this is not sufficient to resolve the problem, a referral to NCC Targeted support will be considered.

Students arriving at school after morning registration or after 1:30 should report to student reception.

9) Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a student who registers in the morning or afternoon:

- leaves the premises without permission; or
- fails to attend a lesson without good reason

This means the student will not be receiving a full-time education, and also potentially renders him/herself vulnerable to harm. In these instances we will contact parents/carers immediately and will impose sanctions in line with our behaviour policy.

10) Staff Training

The **Inclusion Manager** will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

11) Collection and analysis of data

Attendance is monitored by class, tutor and year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

12) Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at The South Wolds Academy and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are displayed prominently in school.

Good attendance is rewarded throughout the year by VIVO rewards and at the end of the year through achievement assembly awards

13) Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents and carers who will be supported and encouraged by The South Wolds Academy.

The South Wolds Academy expects parents and carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify the Academy on each day of any absence, by telephoning the school before 9.00am – explaining the reason for the absence
- ensure their children arrive at school on time
- contact the Inclusion Support Unit without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's welfare.

Appendix 3 sets out a reminder for parents of key elements of the policy.

14. Students' responsibilities

All students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to Tutors or Inclusion Support as soon as possible. Students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn.

15. Governors' responsibilities

The governing body of The South Wolds Academy shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people who are pupils at the school.

Governors will monitor overall attendance and the attendance of vulnerable groups of students as presented in the Headteachers' report.

Related Policies Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Behaviour Policy, Anti Bullying Policy

The following information shows how school attendance can affect your child's future progress.

Above 97%	Fewer than 6 days absence a year: Excellent attendance! Pupils with this attendance should achieve the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for work, college or university.
95%	Fewer than 9 days absence in a year: Pupils with this attendance are likely to achieve their target grades and have good opportunities for work, college and university.
90%	19 days absence over the year: Pupils with this attendance are missing a month of school per year and may drop an exam grade: it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
85%	29 days absence in a year: these pupils are missing 6 weeks of school a year, it will be very difficult for them to keep up and do their best.
80%	Pupils with this attendance are missing a year of school over the five years of secondary education, it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of pupils with this level of attendance could be issued with a penalty notice.

Registration Codes

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Educated off site (Not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (Not covered by another code)
D	Dual registration (Pupil attending other establishment)
E	Excluded (No alternative provision made)
F	Extended Family Holiday (Agreed)
G	Family Holiday (Not agreed or in excess of agreement)
H	Family Holiday Agreed
I	Illness (Not in dentist or Dr. etc appointments)
J	Interview
L	Late (Before registration)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Absence (Not covered by other code)
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Lat (After registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work Experience
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age absence
Z	Pupil not on role
-	All should attend / No mark recorded

**The South Wolds Academy
ATTENDANCE POLICY**

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in School?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called promptly at **8.55am** and the afternoon register at **1.25** . Warning bells ring at 8:50 and 1:20 to signal that students should start moving to their classrooms.

2. What happens if my child is late?

They will be marked in the register as late and dealt with in line with the behaviour policy. We will seek to work in partnership with you to improve punctuality where it is a consistent problem. Registers close at 9:15 am and 1:40 pm. Any child who arrives after the register closes has to be marked as absent for the session. If you are unable to give a legitimate reason then the absence will be unauthorised.

3. Does the School need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We would expect a parent / carer to telephone the school on every day of absence, before 9.00am preferably to notify us and explain the absence. If this is not possible then we will need a written explanation. If we require more information about the reason for an absence we will contact you.

4. Will you authorise all absences?

No – the circumstances when we will authorise absences are explained in the Attendance Policy.

5. Can I take my child on a holiday during the school term?

No. Only in very exceptional circumstances will we authorise holidays in term time. These are set out clearly in the Attendance Policy.

6. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will contact you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward. We would also encourage you to contact the Inclusion Support Unit if you wish to discuss any aspect of attendance or punctuality.

7. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's Tutor or Inclusion support immediately. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.