



**Hope Valley College**

Nurture - Enrich - Achieve

**A guide to  
attendance and  
punctuality**

**Attendance Matters!**  
“Every Learning Day Counts”

### Why is good attendance important?

Regular attendance at school means that your child can make the most of their education, improving their opportunities later in life. College can also help your child to develop their social skills such as making and maintaining friendships. A regular and punctual attendance pattern will help your child when they enter the world of work.

Research nationally has shown a clear link between good attendance at school and the quality of the qualifications that students achieve, and that pattern is also true at College.

The table below compares GCSE results, measured in terms of Progress8 for students at Hope Valley College in the last two years:

	2017	2018
Students with attendance above 90%	-0.11	+0.26
Students with attendance below 90%	-0.87	-0.56

In both years the gap is equivalent to about a whole GCSE grade in all but one subject.

Being late affects attendance:

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day adds up to over 4 weeks lost each year!
- If your child arrives after the close of the register, a U code will be recorded, which is an unauthorised absence and statutory action may be considered.

Being present in College but not attending lessons will impact upon a student's future success. It is important that students recognise the need to attend all lessons punctually and are prepared for learning. When a child is marked present in College but is not in a lesson without that absence being planned then parents will receive a text to alert them and students will be expected to make up the work missed in their own time.

Students should not expect to be able to turn up at the Pastoral office at the start of a lesson expecting somebody to see them. They need to make an appointment in advance.

### What are my responsibilities for my child's attendance at college?

- As a parent/carer it is your responsibility to ensure that if your child is of compulsory school age, they attend both regularly and on time.
- The Local Authority has a duty to make sure that all parents/carers fulfil this responsibility.
- Make sure you contact College **every** day that your child is absent to provide a reason.

Contact info: Tel no – 01433 620555.

Email – [attendance@hopevalley.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@hopevalley.derbyshire.sch.uk)

### **How can I help my child attend school regularly?**

- Talk to your child about College. Take a positive interest in their work, including homework.
- Attend Parents` Evening and other College events.
- All students should aim to achieve at least 96% attendance – this is the national expectation.
- Try not to make Dental/Medical appointments for your child in the College day. When this cannot be avoided, send them in to school for the rest of the day. You should send the appointment letter/card as evidence with a note signed by you.
- Only allow days off for genuine illness.
- Talk to the College straight away if problems are developing.

You are required to provide medical evidence to authorise your child`s absences. This can be an appointment card, letter from a medical professional or a copy of a prescription. For longer periods of absence, you may be required to obtain a doctor`s note. If possible, please confirm how many days off the doctor has signed your child off for and send evidence to your child`s Senior House Tutor or Mrs Sarah Mappin.

### **What will happen if my child does NOT attend College regularly?**

- The College will contact you in the first instance to raise concerns about your child`s attendance.
- You will receive letters updating you on your child`s attendance and punctuality, phone calls will be made to discuss any concerns and home visits may also be carried out.

The Education Act 1996 describes parents` duty in relation to their child`s attendance at school. Section 444 describes the offence that is committed if they fail in that duty:

“if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence”

There are specific defences in respect of this offence. Unless one of the defences listed in the Education Act 1996 applies, the offence is proven and the parent found guilty. The defences are summarised below:

- The parent proves the child did not attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause
- The child is absent with leave (permission given by the College)
- The child is absent on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his parent belongs
- The local education authority has failed to make suitable travel arrangements (where it is obliged to do so) to facilitate the child`s attendance
- The child is of no fixed abode and the parent proves his trade or business requires him to travel from place to place. The Local Authority will not take legal proceedings if it believes a legitimate defence exists.

If you continue to fail in your responsibility the Local Authority may take further action. You may:

- Receive a Penalty Notice. This is a fine of £120 to be paid within 28 days, which is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of the notice being served. The fine can be issued for truancy, holidays in term time or poor attendance/ punctuality. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution.
- Be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court. This could result in a fine of up to £2,500 per responsible adult or up to 3 months imprisonment.

### **Leave of Absence**

We ask for parental support in ensuring that family holidays are not taken during term time. The link between educational attainment and school attendance is well proven and we want to instil in our students the message that full attendance at College is extremely important for their future educational success.

- Holidays during term time WILL NOT normally be authorised.
- The Principal may consider requests for leave of absence ONLY in exceptional circumstances.
- A written request must be submitted by the Parent/Carer IN ADVANCE to the Principal who will send a written response. The form to request leave in these circumstances is available on the website
- Failure to request leave of absence will result in the absences being recorded unauthorised and you may be liable for statutory action from the Local Authority.

If your child is absent from College it is important that you inform us immediately and keep in daily contact until they return to College. This could be by phone initially but can also be reported via e-mail to [attendance@hopevalley.derbyshire.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@hopevalley.derbyshire.sch.uk)

### **Supporting good attendance**

If you feel you require extra support in regards to your child attending College please contact one of our pastoral officers:

Richard Robinson,  
Katy Salisbury (Monday, Tuesday and Friday) or  
Sue Daniel (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday).

Students whose attendance falls below 90% are identified as persistent absentees. This highlights a serious concern which will impact upon future attainment and success. We monitor the attendance of students on a weekly basis. If your child's attendance falls below 90% you will receive a standard letter highlighting our concern and informing you that if these absences cannot be authorised then you may be invited to an attendance panel.

Attendance panels will operate on a half termly basis to address concerns and help support both you and your child to improve their attendance.