



ATTENDANCE POLICY & PROCEDURES

Policy adopted	Principal & Directors Oct 2019
Review Schedule	Annual
Last review	Sept 2025
Next review	Sept 2026

Valley College strives to provide a welcoming environment in which learners feel safe and secure. We seek to ensure that all learners are able to develop the skills they need to be fully included in their own community. Valley College staff will work with learners and their families to ensure learners attend college regularly in order to maximize the opportunities each individual has to realise their true potential.

Attendance is used to mean being physically present in college or at an alternative learning opportunity, arriving on time and staying for the duration of the session.

ESFA funding conditions for provision for learners including those aged 19 to 24 and have an Education and Health Care (EHC) plan, stipulate that a learner who has not returned to learning after being absent for 4 weeks could be withdrawn from their programme.

Purpose

- To highlight and ensure that all learners and advocates understand the importance of a learner attending and engaging with learning opportunities, including any work experience/placements/internships.
- To highlight and ensure that all learners and advocates understand that a learner's failure to attend college disadvantages them and may negatively affect successful outcomes.

Safeguarding

As per government guidance on attendance, Valley College staff will follow up any absences of learners who have not arrived in college. This is in order to

- ascertain the reason
- ensure any proper safeguarding action is taken where applicable (being mindful of vulnerable adults missing in education)
- identify whether the absence was authorised or not; and,
- identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the college's electronic management information system.

Valley College has a defined agreed framework of recording attendance.

- Learners are registered each morning and afternoon on Arbor (MIS)
- Learners are marked as present only if they are physically in attendance at the registration period. In all other cases they are registered using the N code (no reason yet provided), unless staff have prior knowledge of the reason for non-attendance.

- Where absence is unavoidable, the learner or advocate will notify college before the start time of 9.00am on 01706 214640 option 2.
- Registers will close at 09:30am at which point a Late mark will be recorded and a DSL informed.
- If a learner has not arrived in college by 09:30am, and there is no reason for absence given, then a member of college staff will contact the learner and/or advocates immediately to ensure that the learner is safe.
- The N code will subsequently be amended by the teacher/tutor when a reason has been determined.
- Learners who need to leave during the college day for appointments must show the appointment card or a letter from the advocate to the teaching staff before leaving. Learners arriving late due to medical appointments must also show on arrival their appointment card or letter. This is to ensure the safety of all learners.

Advice and guidance for learners and advocates

- Attendance is reviewed on a weekly basis and any concerns passed to the Principal. Attendance would not be expected to fall below 90% during each academic year
- Holidays should not be taken in term-time and will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Absences in term-time can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. This could be up to 15 days per academic year. 'Exceptional' circumstances are those which do not happen regularly or are not expected.
- The learner or advocate may make a specific request for absence in writing in advance to the Principal who must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.
- Any learner refusing to engage in learning who leaves the college/work experience/placement during a session will be marked in the register as absent.

Religious absence

The college will authorise one day per religious festival eg Eid (ie the day set aside by the religious body of which a learner and/or parent/carer is a member). This will be marked in the register with an R mark. Any additional leave must be requested in advance, and this can only be authorised if it is fitting that exceptional circumstances apply. (marked as a C mark)

Attendance below 90%

- If attendance falls below 90%, a meeting will be arranged with the Principal to ascertain issues surrounding attendance with the learner and parents/carers/advocates and to discuss any appropriate support.
- If attendance does not improve, a further meeting will be arranged to ascertain difficulties with attendance and strategies to improve attendance. If attendance does not improve after the 2nd meeting a verbal warning will be issued by the Principal.
- If attendance does not improve after the verbal warning has been given a meeting will be arranged and a written warning will be issued and the learner maybe withdrawn from the programme at Valley College. The College will inform the local authority of any withdrawal.

Reintegration of learners following a significant period of absence

- Valley College recognises and is sensitive to the needs and circumstances of learners who return following a period of significant absence.
- The learner and advocates will be consulted in this process.
- All relevant staff will be involved and informed of the process.
- A timescale for a plan of reintegration should be agreed if applicable.