

# VivoMiles

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**VERDICT:**  
 A rewarding investment  
 VivoMiles is a low-stress high-impact option for simulating a token economic system based on positive reinforcement. Check out the success stories on the website.

Some large secondary schools are spending thousands a year on rewards to keep order in the classroom and cut truancy. It's the way of the world. Once upon a time if you worked hard and behaved well it was good enough to get a 'well done' from your teacher to spur you on to greater things. Then at some point a reward culture developed and so we thought it was a good idea to give students loads of points and cover them from head to toe in stickers. Now if you knuckle down, remember your manners and eat your greens then you get a speedboat. Happy and motivated students are a different kettle of fish these days.

This brings me on to VivoMiles, a national award winning web-based reward system launched in 2007 that takes rewarding students to a whole new level. In a nutshell, each student

gets a Vivo account. Teachers and support staff give or 'pay' them Vivo points worth a nominal 1p each. This could be for opening the door, opening their books or opening their minds. You decide what points are given for and you add them electronically to a student account. Students then check online using their own PIN to see how many points they've earned and if they want they can spend them on an online shop, save them or donate them. It's deliciously simple and it works. Big time. It's been proven to dramatically improve student motivation, raise attendance, boost attainment and help foster school values.

The system provides statistics, league tables, and the ability to track staff usage to ensure rewarding transparency and fairness. It also has a Parental Engagement Platform so parents and guardians can set up their own personal Vivo account and view information relating to their child's rewards as well as receive updates by email and set pledges towards which students can work.

Vivo HQ lists plenty of reasons why its reward system is the bee's knees. The revamped website is worth visiting to read more but for me what stands out is that it has the potential to make a real contribution to personal finance education, cut down on all that admin associated with more traditional reward systems, and encourage students to go the extra mile. The good thing is, you define your reward categories and how many Vivos each behaviour or achievement is worth. You can also customise the shop, so you can select the rewards you want to appear. So if you want to set up automated reward points for attendance then the system links to your school MIS and you can dish out additional rewards for whatever you see fit. I can certainly see VivoMiles having impact (although personally, I'd only link them to proper achievement rather than for underlining work or remembering a PE kit – a stance with which I'm told most schools using the system agree).

Now, some schools manage behaviour and motivation without the need for gifts and

rewards. So do you actually need something like

VivoMiles? Well this system does have its critics and it has weathered some bad press relating to raffle tickets being sold as rewards. Some argue that this type of system amounts

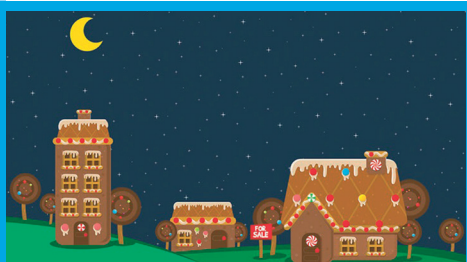
to bribery and a large number of students will play the system without actually changing their spots. Perhaps – but many students interestingly opt for donating their points to charity or for non-material rewards like a lunchtime fast-track jump the queue pass. It also encourages saving.

And then there are those that say rewards for this and rewards for that don't match the world of work. If students expect rewarding every five minutes for mundane achievements, the critics insist, when they start work then they will have a rude awakening. Some of the arguments do depend on which side of the moral divide you position yourself. I think that a sensible rewards system has a place, and with over 500 schools using VivoMiles, I'm clearly not alone. Schools can use Vivo's bronze, silver and gold certificates to mark consistent attainment, and there's a league tables section on the system, as well as an optional 'gold club' that students can get into through earning a certain number of points, entitling them to further privileges.

To be fair Vivo is pretty good at responding to feedback. New system features such as SIMS write-back and a group rewarding matrix are now available and there are smartphone applications for teachers, parents and students.

A school ethos and culture of praising, encouraging and rewarding students is central to achieving high standards of behaviour and that is no easy task. It could be that you are looking to refresh and revamp your whole-school rewards system. If you are then take a look at what people are saying on video. You can even chat to a Vivo school if you want or join an insight session hosted by a school. Consider the costs carefully, though. Schools typically spend £4-£6 per pupil and you could spend a whole lot more.

What do points make? Prizes... oh, and potentially a highly motivated school population as well.



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80,000 children will wake up homeless this Christmas. Help end this outrage by hosting a Great Gingerbread House Sale and raising money for Shelter. Gingerbread-themed lesson plans linking to the Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum have been created especially for secondary school teachers, so it couldn't be easier to get involved.

From cosy gingerbread chalets to towering gingerbread town houses, the money raised from each sale will go towards helping homeless children this Christmas, and ensuring that Shelter can continue its vital work keeping a roof over the heads of families in need.

To sign up simply visit [www.shelter.org.uk/gingerbread](http://www.shelter.org.uk/gingerbread)