

December 10th 2015

Dear Parents/Carers,

ATTENDANCE GUIDANCE

Each school has to agree an attendance target which all children should aim for, and at Ark Academy we have set this target to 97% for attendance and 100% for punctuality.

START OF DAY AND LATENESS

At Ark Academy line up begins at **8.25am** and any pupil arriving to school after this time is marked late and given a 20 minute lunch time detention. Pupils will be marked as **late**, if they arrive to school after **9.00am** and given a 1 hour detention after school. Any pupil arriving after **9.50am** and without good reason will be marked as **unauthorised late** for the morning session.

Obviously we want to try and encourage all families to arrive at school on time as, upon looking through our attendance records for last year, it has been noticed that some pupils are consistently late. This means that they miss the beginning of the school day and instructions for the start of a lesson. If they are marked as having unauthorised lates, this will go on their attendance record and any statistical records/data we have to send to Brent or the Department of Education will read as unauthorised absences. It is therefore important for parents to realise this and to make every effort to reach school by **8.25am**.

In case of any adverse weather (such as heavy snow) the school can agree to the registers being closed at a later time. The EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) has stated that if the school is open on such a day, all families within walking distance should make the effort to come to school. Parents will continue to be informed by text messages if the school will be closed for any exceptional reason.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

We have been informed that pupils who attend a medical appointment in the morning (e.g. doctor or dentist) and arrive after 9.00am should be marked absent for the whole morning, even if they arrive just a few minutes after this designated time. We will enter the medical code (which will read as ½ day absence). **We would also re-iterate that all medical appointments must be put in writing with medical letter/appointment card attached at least 24 hours before the appointment.**

If possible, we would ask parents to try and make medical appointments in the afternoon or after school and routine checkups in the holidays.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

As a school we are not authorising any holiday leave during term time as advised by the Department of Education. The Assistant Principal (Attendance) can only authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and parents need to put this request in writing giving plenty of time for us to respond. At the end of the summer term, quite a few families went on holiday early without asking for permission from the school or filling in a leave of absence form. All of these have been marked on the attendance register as unauthorised and could be followed up by the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer).

In addition, it has come to our attention that a number of students are taking unauthorised holidays immediately before and immediately after the school holidays. Any student who is absent immediately before or following school holiday time will be asked to provide a medical note in order for us to authorise this absence. If a medical note is not provided, the absence will remain unauthorised and the EWO will be informed.

ABSENCES

Parents should contact us on the first day of absence and speak to reception (**which is open from 7.30am**), giving the pupils name/class and reason for not being at school. It is a legal requirement that every absence is followed up with a letter on their return.

In accordance to Brent Council Guidelines measures can be imposed on parents who are consistently late, have a low attendance record or who take holidays during term time, this could be in the form of a penalty fine or further legal action. This can be imposed from the first day of unauthorised absence. Obviously as a school, we are hoping to avoid any sanctions that may occur and would ask all parents to help us and their child to achieve the set attendance targets.

If you have any concerns regarding your child about attendance or lateness, please contact the office and make an appointment to see Mrs Morton (Attendance Officer). In addition, the Academy's Attendance Policy is available to parents on our website.

I fully appreciate that this letter contains a huge amount of information. However we are required by Brent to clearly state the regulations surrounding attendance and punctuality. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the huge number of families who ensure their children arrive at school on time, dressed in full uniform and are obviously ready for the day ahead. Your support is invaluable both to your child and to us as a school.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Smith', written in a cursive style.

Delia Smith
Principal.