

**ARK ACADEMY**

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# **ATTENDANCE**

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# **POLICY & PROCEDURES**

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*A Mathematics and Citizenship Rich School*



[www.arkacademy.org](http://www.arkacademy.org)

**2019 – 2020**

## **ARK ACADEMY MISSION STATEMENT**

**Ark Academy has at its core the pursuit of highest standards possible in education. We believe in high aspirations, high motivation and high achievement for all. Through our extended curriculum and community life we seek to meet the needs of the whole person. Civitas – Citizenship – is at our core. We will build a community of civic pride and social justice in which all members are equally valued. We are committed to the service of young people and to helping them play their full part in society.**

**In light of this we aim to:**

- Provide every student with the knowledge, skills, self-belief and motivation to be successful in their learning and lives
- Welcome, value and respect all who come to the school
- Build a community based on justice and a sense of personal responsibility
- Provide opportunities for all to experience CIVITAS whilst developing a spirit of tolerance and understanding for all cultures, traditions and faiths
- Promote dialogue and co-operation with the wider community

### ***Our Driving Principles are:***

- ***Excellence***
- ***Citizenship***
- ***Participation***
- ***Persistence***

### ***Our goal***

*Our goal is that all students should be able to access higher education and participate fully in our democratic society.*

# Attendance Policy and Procedures

## THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

- to ensure that pupils maintain good levels of attendance so that they make outstanding progress
- to ensure that all members of the school community regularly attend in order that the central purpose of learning is not disrupted or interrupted
- to encourage a positive approach to attendance and punctuality by having a clear system of regular rewards
- to ensure that the environment, curriculum, and other factors within the Academy's control are monitored to ensure the promotion of good attendance
- to ensure that where attendance and punctuality fall short of accepted standards, procedures are followed and sanctions are applied fairly and consistently

As a community it is essential that we recognise that this policy must apply to the attendance and punctuality of all its members and to all adults (teachers and all other adults) as well as to our pupils. Only by example can we teach and demand good standards of attendance and punctuality from those whose education is entrusted to us. We also recognise that the success of the policy depends on the full support of parents and ask that they encourage their children to maintain excellent standards of attendance and punctuality.

Regular attendance is crucial in securing every student's educational development and ability to achieve their full potential. Irregular attendance leads to educational disadvantage and also places children at risk. Ark Academy hopes that parents and staff work in partnership to ensure the good attendance of its pupils.

It is the parents' responsibility in law to ensure their children attend, and stay at school. It is the school's responsibility to support parents in this matter and to take seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance. In the case of the school, the responsibility will be held principally by the Attendance Lead, Attendance Officer, Heads of Year (HOY) and all the Form Tutors. Therefore, all unauthorised absence will be monitored by them.

All registers will be taken electronically on Bromcom. **Every period (including form time) will have a register allocated.** This will help ensure that potential pupil truancy is accounted for.

The following points and procedures clarify school attendance expectations:

1. Parents should limit their children's absences to cases of genuine and significant illness, which require medical attention.
2. No child will be permitted to take a holiday during term time. However, it is acknowledged that there may be special circumstances where a parent feels that their child needs to be taken out of school. In these circumstances, parents should write to Mrs. Smith, requesting absence, clearly stating the reasons for the proposed absence. She will then consider the circumstance and write in response. Where the decision is taken to refuse permission, the absence will remain unauthorised should the parent ignore this. In addition, the Academy will also refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) attached to the school, which could result in a fine being issued, or further legal prosecution.
3. Where a student is absent immediately before or after a school holiday, medical evidence is

required to authorise the absence. Without this the EWO will be informed of the absence. The Academy policy is in line with Brent Council's guidelines (2014) and will begin from the first day of unauthorised of absence.

4. Form tutors will monitor the attendance of their class constantly and carefully. Any absence of three or more days without communication will be followed up by Form Tutor or Attendance Officer. If they are unable to contact parents/carers, the school will complete a CME (child missing in education) referral to Brent Council.
5. On the first day of absence, parents must contact the school by telephone, before 8.15am, that day. A message should be left on the absence line, if you were unable to speak to someone directly.
6. Pupils who are absent without any communication from home will be sent a text message by the Attendance Officer that same day.
7. All letters concerning absences and/or medical evidence should be given to the Attendance Officer on the first day of their return. If the notes are written in planners these should be photocopied. Suspicious letters will be followed up accordingly.
8. All appointments for doctors, dentists, opticians, embassy, visas etc. should be made after school or during school holidays. Whenever this is not possible then appointments should be made at a time during the school day whereby a pupil is able to attend their P1 and P5 lessons/AM and PM roll call. **The school must be notified 24 hours in advance for all appointments to be approved.** If an emergency appointment was made, then the school must be notified immediately, either by email or phone. You may email the Attendance Officer, Form Tutor or Head of Year.
9. Please note the Academy does **NOT** give a whole day off for medical appointments. A pupil must attend school and be collected by a parent/carer on the pupil's contact details. **No pupil will be allowed to leave the school unaccompanied for appointments without verbal permission from parent/carer.**
10. The Attendance Officer, Heads of Year, and Attendance Lead monitors the attendance patterns across the Year groups, playing close attention to any emerging patterns or trends.

The Attendance Officer will meet with the HOY, Attendance Lead, and Educational Welfare Officer on a weekly basis to discuss those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. The academy will make a referral to the EWO where:

- i) there has been no parental response to communications from the school regarding absence(s)
  - ii) attendance continues to be unsatisfactory despite contact with parents
  - iii) there is 10% or more unauthorised absence
  - iv) the student's attendance has fallen below 85% and there are insufficient medical grounds to support this
11. Finally, HOYs and Form tutors celebrate attendance achievements by issuing certificates, displaying positives on the plasma and sending congratulatory postcards home. There will be a 100% attendance raffle every half term. All pupils who have 100% attendance for that half term will be included and two names will be drawn and an Amazon voucher will be given to each.

## **Attendance**

**At Ark Academy every pupil is set a target of 97% attendance.** To achieve this all pupils should aim to be in school every single day and should only be absent for exceptional reasons. There is a clear and established link between school attendance and pupil attainment.

### **95% Attendance**

If your child's attendance falls below 95% you will receive a letter of concern from the Academy and may be called in for an attendance meeting with the Attendance Officer and/or Form Teacher. Your child's attendance will be closely monitored so that their attendance does not decrease any further.

### **90% Attendance**

When a student's attendance level falls below 90%, they are considered a "persistent absentee". An absence level of 10% is the equivalent to a day off every two weeks! One school year at 90% attendance = approximately 4 weeks (120 lessons) of learning missed! Over 5 years of school = approximately half a school year missed!

Pupils with 90% absence will need to provide medical evidence for any further absences to be authorised. Parents/carers will be asked to attend an attendance meeting with the Head of Year and may be asked to sign an attendance contract.

### **85% Attendance**

When a child's attendance falls below 85% the Academy is legally obliged to inform and discuss their attendance with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) for Brent. This referral is a legal process and if attendance does not improve during the 8-week monitoring period, parents can be prosecuted.

### **Medical evidence:**

The Academy will accept a medical card or a copy of prescription as evidence to support ill health. Over-the-counter medicines are not proof of ill-health. Therefore, It is important that pupils are not absent for minor problems, such as a colds, coughs or minor injuries. Children must have a case of significant illness, which requires medical attention.

To maintain positive attendance levels, please arrange medical appointments out of school hours where possible.

Please note: Any absences of three consecutive days or more MUST be supported by medical evidence to be authorised. If your child has had 5 days off (which is equivalent to a week off school) we will require medical evidence for any further absences to be authorised.

**As a parent/carer, YOU are legally responsible for making sure your child attends school.**

**If your child shows any reluctance to attend school, TALK to us immediately.**

If we really want to drive attainment up, we have to ensure that pupils are in their lessons every day. The higher our attendance is, the higher our attainment will be. One of the key ways of tackling this is by establishing and maintaining efficient communication with pupils, parents, where attendance is a concern.

<b>Rate of attendance</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
100%	Certificate per term	Head of Year
90 – 95%	Meeting with parent and pupil	Form Tutor and Attendance Office
85 – 90%	Meeting and attendance contract	Head of Year/Attendance Lead
Below 85%	EWO referral	EWO/Attendance Lead/Attendance Officer

## **Punctuality**

All pupils should be in school for line-up no later than 8.20am. Students who arrive between 8.20-8.25AM will be sanctioned 15-mins for being late to line-up/lesson. Pupils who arrive after 8.25AM will be issued with a 45-min after school late sanction.

If the school gates are closed, pupils will need to sign in at main reception to be issued with a late slip, which is stamped or signed by the Attendance Officer. If a pupil fails to sign in they will receive a sanction of 90 mins.

**Pupils who arrived after 8.55AM – after Tutor Period - will be issued a 60-min detention.**

**Pupils who arrived after 9.50AM – after Period 1 – will be issued a 90-minute detention.**

Reporting your child's lateness does not mean they will not be given a late sanction. It is at the school's discretion whether the reason is valid or not. For example over-sleeping or tiredness and are not considered valid reasons for being late. Equally, students arriving late because of a medical/dental appointment that the school was not aware of (at least 24 hours in advance) can be sanctioned for lateness.

If an emergency appointment is arranged, the school must be notified immediately by email or phone. You may email the Attendance Officer, Form Tutor or Head of Year. Alternatively, you can leave a message with the school's receptionist or on the absent line. A student will be given a late sanction if we did not receive **prior notification**.

## ABSENCE CODES

### The codes are:

- B** (Educated off-site – e.g. guest pupils at another school, vocational course at college, work experience as part of an alternative curriculum, but not the 2 week work experience in yr 10)
- C** Exceptional circumstances. **These would need to be approved by HOY or SLT before coding.** Examples: wedding of family member, family bereavement, public performances or a crisis for a young carer
- D** Dual registration. Placements at the PRU or another institution. For instance, during the trial period of a managed move
- E** Excluded
- F** Extended family holiday of more than 10 school days. (only code after approval by the Principal/School Attendance Officer)
- G** Family holiday not approved or days in excess of agreed authorised holiday
- H** Family holiday authorised by Principal/School Attendance Officer
- I** Illness (not dental or medical appointments)
- J** Interview
- L** Late arrival after 9.00AM
- M** Medical & dental appointments
- N** No reason yet provided
- O** Unauthorised absence - no reason provided after a period of time and active efforts to obtain one. Unacceptable reasons – truancy, shopping, family birthday, and closure of sibling's school.
- P** Approved sporting activity supervised by school staff
- R** Religious observance
- S** Study leave
- T** Traveller absence
- U** Late after 9. 50 a.m. for no reason that can be given a code, such as a medical appointment.
- V** Educational visit
- W** Work experience
- Y** Enforced closure of the school. (e.g. snow day)
- Z** Pupil not yet on roll, but admitted in a 'pre-admission group'.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Attendance concern letter**

Date

Dear Parent

Re: (pupil's name)

Thank you for meeting with me to discuss my concerns regarding (name of pupil's) attendance. Currently their attendance stands at % which is well below our target of 96%. We are therefore very worried about the impact that this will have on their academic progress.

You confirmed that your child's absence is due to: (state reasons)

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To avoid your child's attendance falling any lower than, please make medical appointments for after 4pm where possible and only keep your child off school when illness means they are unable to attend school. If we are to authorise any future absence, we will need to see a medical appointment card or letter from a GP.

When a child's attendance falls below 80% we are legally obliged to inform and discuss their attendance with our Educational Welfare Officer. This referral is a legal process and if attendance does not improve during the 8 week monitoring period, parents can be prosecuted.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and we look forward to a sustained improvement.

If you would like to discuss the contents of this letter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Name  
Head of Year X



## Safeguarding Children Missing Education Process for Schools

Day One: The school identifies that a child is not in school. A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent/carer that the child is safe at home.

Result of call	Action
There is no answer at the home or on mobile number s	Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is safe with them	Ask for reason for absence and record
The person answering is not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe	The school's designated lead for child protection consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned.	<p>School to advise the parent to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child</li> <li>• Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment</li> <li>• Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing</li> </ul> <p>Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing</p>

If the judgement on Day One is that there is reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm the school will contact Police and /or Brent Multi-Agency Front Door on 020 8937 4300 immediately.

Telephone referrals must be followed up with an on line referral.

If the judgement on Day One is that there is no reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm school continues to make enquiries and informs Education Welfare Service on Day Three that the child is missing in education.

## School Risk Assessment for Children Missing Education

Assessing vulnerability requires a combination of professional knowledge and experience of child welfare issues and knowledge of local circumstances. Considering the following questions could assist the process. If in doubt always consult with managers or other services.

Criteria	Risk	Action
Is there good reason to believe that the child may be the victim of a crime?	High	Inform Police.
Does the child have a formal child protection plan?	High	Brent Multi –Agency Front Door Telephone 020 83937 4300
Is the child in care i.e. looked after by the local authority?	High	
Is there planned or current LA children’s social care or LA adults’ social care services involvement? e.g. section 47 enquiry about to start.	High	
Is there a person present in or visiting the family who poses an on-going risk to children, or who is suspected of previously harming a child?	High	
Is the child at risk of sexual exploitation ?	High	
Has there been LA children’s social care or LA adults’ social care or Criminal Justice System involvement in the past?	Medium	
Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? E.g. FGM or forced marriage.	Medium	
Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?	Medium	
Is there any known history of domestic violence?	Medium	
Is there concern about the parent/carer’s ability to protect the child from harm?	Medium	
Was there any significant incident prior to the child’s unexplained absence?	Medium	
Has the child been a victim of bullying?	Medium	
Does the child need essential medication or health care?	Medium	
Was the child noted to be depressed prior to the child’s unexplained absence?	Medium	
Has the child gone missing with their family?	Medium	
Have the parents been subject to proceedings in relation to attendance?	Medium	
Is there a history of poor attendance?	Medium	
Has there been any change in the child/family’s financial circumstances?	Medium	
Age of the child	Medium	