

**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)

**2019-20**

# **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

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## 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. Every pupil is set a target of 97% attendance. Absence of 10% is considered "persistently absent" and is the equivalent of a day off every two weeks.

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 Primary Attendance Lead and the Headteacher. Whilst AM and PM roll calls will be taken by subject teachers, these registers still remain the responsibility of class teachers and The Primary Attendance Lead. Therefore, all unauthorised absence will be monitored by both.

All registers will be taken electronically on E-Portal. **Every period (including reading and enrichment) will have a register taken.** Only then will we be able to keep a track of any possible truancy.

The following points and procedures clarify the precise responsibilities of each:

1. Parents are asked to limit their children's absences to cases of real illness.

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 Mr Watkins, requesting absence, clearly stating the reasons for the proposed absence. She will then consider the circumstance and respond. 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 EWO attached to the Academy which could result in a fine being issued or further legal prosecution. Where a student is absent immediately before or after a school holiday, medical evidence is required to authorise the absence, without this the Education Welfare Officer 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.

2. Appointments for doctors, dentists, opticians etc, should be made out of school hours as much as possible.
3. Pupils who arrive after the gate closes at 8.30AM will have to sign in late.
4. On the first day of absence, parents are expected to contact the school by telephone, by 8.30am, that day. Written confirmation is not needed if verbal confirmation is needed but either a verbal or a written message must be given to the school office. Without this, the absence is unauthorised. If there are attendance concerns, additional written evidence will be requested.
5. Class teachers will monitor the attendance of their class constantly and carefully. Any absence of 3 days or more without communication from home will be followed up immediately by either class teacher or the Primary Attendance Lead contacting parents. The Primary Attendance Lead will also contact parents whenever there is any doubt or concern regarding a student's absence. Even if notes are received, cases of frequent absence or other areas of concern, should be brought to the Headteacher's and EWO's attention.
6. All requested evidence concerning absence should be given to the Primary Attendance Lead. Any areas of concern will be followed up.
7. The Primary Attendance Lead and class teacher should monitor the attendance patterns across the school, and be watchful for signs of individual absence.

The Primary Attendance Lead will meet with the Educational Welfare Officer on a regular and frequent 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.
  - ii) attendance continues to be unsatisfactory in spite of 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 for this non-attendance.
  - v) the pupil was absent at the start or end of term, indicating unauthorised holiday
1. The Primary Attendance Lead will send letters of concern to pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. Which pupils are sent letters will be agreed with the Headteacher during their regular meeting. She will keep a record of all action taken and agreed at these weekly meetings and any interim action with dates and up to date attendance %.
  2. All referrals to the EWO and any other causes for concern which are not improving should be discussed with the Headteacher and Primary Attendance Lead before being passed to the EWO.
  3. The Primary Attendance Lead will chase pupils who have an unexplained absence on a daily basis by communicating with the class teacher, pupil and parent, involving the headteacher wherever necessary.

### **Attendance**

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 our culture of working in close partnership with the families, maintaining a dialogue and a shared concern for the education and success of the child.

<b>Rate of attendance</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
90 – 95%	Discussion with parents	Class teacher at parents evening
80 – 90%	Meeting with Headteacher and EWO Letter sent from headteacher	Primary Attendance Lead and Headteacher
Below 85%	EWO referral	EWO/Attendance Officer

### **Procedures for Registers, Lateness and Absence**

- Teachers will be expected to take a register at 8:30am and immediately after lunch
- If a pupil arrives after the register has been taken then their mark will be amended to a "P" to show they are present. If they arrive after 9am, they are marked as "late".

- If a child is absent, the class teacher marks the absence as “N”. The Primary Attendance Lead will correctly code the absence based on the reasons given by the parent.
- When the Attendance Officer is clear that the absence was without school authorisation or no evidence or explanation has been given, the code for unauthorised absence (O) should be entered.
- Not all absence covered by note or telephone call has to be authorised. If the Primary Attendance Lead has concerns, the absence may be entered as unauthorised until the matter has been investigated. Concerns that remain will be reported to the Headteacher.
- If the MIS is not working for whatever reason, subject teachers must complete a paper register which has been dated and signed, detailing who is present in the lesson and return to the office immediately in order that the data can be entered at a later date.

**Attendance registers are legal documents and should be treated as such. It is essential that they are accurate.**

Any student not present at the time the register is called should be marked absent. **No blanks should be left.**

The Headteacher as well as the Primary Attendance Lead has final responsibility for the authorisation of absences and the investigation of reasons for absence. Therefore, any member of staff should refer any concerns around absence to these two key members of staff. If the Primary Attendance Lead requires clarification s/he will speak to the Headteacher or EWO.

The appropriate code for absence must be entered. (See below). This may only be done when you have received a note or direct telephone communication from parents. A ‘blanket’ letter covering several absences is not generally acceptable, or is ‘he/she wasn’t well’.

School response to absence:

- If there are attendance or safeguarding concerns around a pupil who has an unexplained absence, the school will contact home in the first session of absence
- If there are no standing concerns around a pupil who has an unexplained absence, the school will contact home within a maximum of 3 days of absence.

## 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 before 9.55
- 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’.

**Students who arrive later than 9.50 am** will be counted as **absent** for the a.m. session. They should be coded **U** if there is no acceptable reason or with the appropriate code, for example **M**, if they came in late because they have been to the doctor’s.

All pupils who are believed or discovered to have truanting must be reported to their Head of Year. They will then issue an appropriate sanction, such as a 1 hour detention or time

spent in the LSU. Students who arrive after 8.25 will have to sign in late at school reception. This list will be distributed to all staff by the receptionist each day.

### **Off-site PE, school trips or visits**

If a group of pupils is off-site for any reason the department will send an email out to all staff in advance of the trip, detailing how long they will be off site and which pupils are going.

### **Permission to leave school early**

Parents are required to request such permission in writing. An appointment card alone is not sufficient. When this has not been done, pupils will not be allowed to leave the premises unless the parents/carers have been contacted to verify the request. Letters should be sent to the Head of Year or Attendance Officer so that she can enter an appropriate code for the time they were absent. Permission to leave may only be granted by a Form tutor or Head of Year. Alternatively, the pupil's planner will be signed and this should be shown to front reception. It serves therefore as authorisation and enables



## 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  Follow up with on line referral
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	