



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## PURPOSE

The aims of the Attendance Policy are to raise the importance of good attendance in line with Ofsted requirements, ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently, to improve punctuality, promote opportunities to celebrate and reward children for attendance and punctuality achievements.

Date of last review:	September 2019	Author:	Education Directors
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Type of policy:	<input type="checkbox"/> Network-wide <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tailored by school	Approval:	Management Team
School:	Ark Alexandra Academy	Key Contact Name:	Claire Bessa
Key Contact Email:	<a href="mailto:info@arkalexandra.org">info@arkalexandra.org</a>	Key Contact Phone:	01424 439888

## POSITIONING WITHIN ARK OPERATIONAL MODEL

Component	Element
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Leadership & Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data <input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment <input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community <input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates <input type="checkbox"/> Our People	Behaviour Model

## **1. Introduction**

All children of school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability or any special need they may have. Regular academy attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Ark Alexandra Academy takes the responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its students very seriously. It acknowledges that irregular attendance can disrupt continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, can lead to underachievement/low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendship groups within the academy.

Regular attendance is a crucial factor in students' educational development and ability to achieve their full potential. Much of the work persistent absentees miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these students at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement:

- Of students who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve 5 Grade 4's and above at GCSE including English and maths.
- Of students who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve 5 Grade 4's and above at GCSE including English and maths.
- Of students who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve 5 Grade 4's and above at GCSE including English and maths.

The whole academy community takes responsibility for attendance. This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of academy attendance are aware and informed.

## **2. Aims**

The aims of the Attendance Policy are to:

- a) Enable all students to have the best opportunities to access an excellent education
- b) Raise the importance of good attendance in line with Ofsted requirements.
- c) Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- d) Instil excellent punctuality.
- e) Promote opportunities to celebrate and reward children for attendance and punctuality achievements.

### **3. Guidelines**

#### 3.1 Reasons for absence

Parents and carers are asked to contact the Attendance Team by phone or in person if their child needs to be absent from the academy. Parents and carers must contact the school before 8.3am on the first morning of absence.

#### 3.2 Authorised absences

Acceptable reasons include sickness, hospital appointments, recognised religious holidays (1 day per holiday only) and funerals. Medical appointments should be arranged outside of the academy day, if possible. Where this is not possible, we would expect students to miss only part of the day.

#### 3.3 Unauthorised absences

Unacceptable reasons include, but are not exclusive to, shopping, going to an appointment, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent/carer unwell and taking holiday, for example by acquiring cheaper flights outside of academy holidays.

#### 3.4 Holidays/Trips

The academy supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents/carers from taking holidays during term time. Holidays in term time will not be authorised.

### **4. Action taken when students are absent**

4.1 There are occasions when absence is unavoidable. These include: a) Illness. b) Urgent medical or education appointments.

4.2 If a parent knows in advance of absence due to an appointment, the academy should be informed and the appointment card shown.

4.3 If a child is ill, the parent or carer should ring the academy to inform us on 01424 439888 before 8.30am and on return present a written note explaining the absence. If your child is absent and has been prescribed medicine by the doctor, please bring the medicine (clearly labelled with your child's name and tutor group) or prescription into the academy so we can

photocopy it for our records.

4.4 A text message/email will be sent on the first day of absence, if there is no answer or no information has been received, the parent or carer will be phoned. In certain circumstances a home visit will be conducted.

4.5 Letters will be sent to the parent or carers requesting an explanation of the absence. If no reply is received (or the reasons are not acceptable); the absence is counted as unauthorised.

## **5. What happens if Attendance is unacceptable**

5.1 The Attendance Team reviews the attendance of all students weekly. If the attendance of a student falls the reasons for the absence are investigated.

5.2 The reasons for absence are discussed. If there are no extenuating circumstances the following procedure is instigated:

- a) The Attendance Team will contact the parent or carer (call, letter or home visit) to raise a concern over their child's attendance. The situation is reviewed at the next weekly monitoring.
- b) If no improvement is seen the Attendance Team will request an appointment with the parent or carer. The situation is reviewed at the next weekly monitoring.
- c) If no improvement is seen the Attendance Team will make further contact requesting an appointment and ask for medical certificates to be provided for each subsequent absence to be authorised.
- d) If the attendance does not significantly improve, a referral to the East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service will be made. In non-improving situations a penalty notice may be served.
- e) A home visit may be conducted at any point where a concern is raised.

5.3 If your child's attendance is unsatisfactory (below 96%) you are at risk of a referral to the East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service and may be liable for fast track court prosecution, prosecution and/or a fixed penalty notice under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

***See Appendix 1***

## **6. Lateness**

6.1 The academy day starts at 8.30am and all academy gates are closed by 8.40am.

6.2 Students who arrive after this time must enter the academy through the main student

entrance. They must then be signed into the late book.

6.3 Registers will close at 9.30am. Children who arrive after this time will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence).

6.4 The procedure for consistent lateness is the same as for absence.

6.5 'Cause' for Concern' registers for absence and punctuality are kept and monitored for intervention purposes.

## **7. How will this information be collated?**

A register of absence and punctuality referral is kept. The Attendance Team manage this register and meet regularly to decide necessary action.

## **8. Student absence and extenuating family circumstance**

If parents or carers need to remove their child from the academy for any reason, they must complete a Term Time Absence Request form. No absences for holidays will be authorised unless in extreme or exceptional circumstances. Permission for absence will only be given if there are extenuating circumstances. If the absence is not authorised, the parent or carer may be liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## **9. Registers**

These are important legal documents which must be completed carefully and promptly at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Children entering the classroom via the academy office are late and should be marked as such, even if the register has not been taken yet.

## **10. Rewards, repair and consequences**

The tutor group with the best attendance for the previous week is recognised and rewarded in line with the Rewards, Repair and Consequences Policy. Students with 100% attendance are presented with a certificate at the end of each term/half term. Further prizes and awards may be presented for attendance i.e. End of Year Reward Trip. Consequences in the form of detentions will be applied for persistent lateness (if a student is late more than once in any week).

## **APPENDIX 1: PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICES:**

1. Academies will notify the East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service of all cases where attendance has fallen below 90% in the preceding 6-week period and no valid reason for the absence has been provided by the parent/carer, along with evidence of what measures they have taken to bring this matter to the parent's/carer's attention.
2. The Attendance Team will produce an information letter for distribution to all parents/carers whose children have been identified as falling below 95% attendance at their respective academies. This will set out clearly the circumstances whereby a Penalty Notice can be issued and the consequences for failure to pay within the required time scale.
3. Each student's attendance will be monitored for 15 academy days following the issue of the letter to see if the desired improvement has taken place. An acceptable improvement is an increase in attendance above 90% for the 15-day period.
4. Should the required improvement not take place and no valid reason for the absence is provided, the Court Officer will decide whether to issue the Penalty Notice or to proceed with a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
5. Where a Penalty Notice is issued, it will be sent by the Court Officer through the post using First Class post to the parent's last known address.
6. Following a change to advice issued by the DfES in recent months, Penalty Notices may now be issued to the parents/carers of all students registered at Ark Alexandra, irrespective of their actual home address. This also means that follow-up prosecutions where parents/carers fail to pay the Notice or to improve their children's attendance will extend to families resident outside the area.

### **Withdrawal of Penalty Notices:**

7. The LA will withdraw any Notices issued if:
  - a) It can be established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
  - b) The use of the Penalty Notice does not conform to the terms of the Protocol.
8. Where either of the above occurs, written notice of the withdrawal shall be given to the recipient and any monies paid over shall be fully refunded.
9. Also, no proceedings under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 shall be instituted against the recipient in respect of the period covered by the withdrawn Notice.

### **Payment:**

10. Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.
11. A Penalty Notice shall be for the sum of £50 if paid within 28 days rising to £100

thereafter until the final deadline of 42 days.

12. Payment in full of the Penalty Notice discharges the parent's legal responsibility for the period of unauthorised absence outlined in the Notice and the parent cannot be subsequently prosecuted under any other enforcement powers for the period.

13. Any revenue arising from the issue of Penalty Notices will be retained by the LA to defray the costs involved in their issue or any subsequent prosecutions arising from non-payment.

**Non Payment:**

14. Non payment of Penalty Notices within the prescribed time limits will result in a prosecution under Section (1) or (1A) of the Education Act 1996 for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of the child/ren at school.

# Ark Alexandra Academy Attendance Protocol

**Tutor**

## Conversation with Student (2-3 per week)

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**Strategies appropriate at this intervention level:**

- Show the tracker each week
- Provide details of conversation where relevant to the Attendance Lead/Attendance Officer, to be discussed at next attendance meeting.
- Student planners could be used as a way of recording the conversation, and to make parents aware of attendance concerns.
- First instance of absence/98% +

**Head of Year**

## Conversation with Parent (5 per week)

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**Strategies appropriate at this intervention level:**

- Remind parent of procedures for reporting absence, including contacting the academy on the first day of each absence.
- Provide details of conversation where relevant for any members of staff involved in progress, to be discussed at next attendance meeting.
- 2nd instance of absence/96% +

**Attendance Officer and Head of Year**

## Letter 1 (Meeting 1)

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**Strategies appropriate at this intervention level:**

- Discuss student with Tutor, Head of Year, and Attendance Lead prior to the meeting with the parent. Home Visit if no attendance at meeting.
- 3rd instance of absence/Below 94%
- Parent meeting
- Complete an Individual Attendance Plan (IAP) with student, and set targets to improve attendance including a review date.
- Ask permission from parent to obtain medical evidence from a medical professional.
- Signpost to external agencies (e.g. referral to SPOA).

**Head of Year and Attendance Lead**

## Letter 2 (School/Home Visit/Meeting 2)

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**Strategies appropriate at this intervention level:**

- Review all previous interventions and actions in preparation for meeting.
- Discuss the appropriateness of legal action.
- 4th instance of absence/Below 92%
- Use meeting template to record accurate information.

**Attendance Lead and Attendance Officer**

## Letter 3 (Legal Proceedings)

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**Strategies appropriate at this intervention level:**

- Prepare all relevant legal documentation and send to Local Authority.
- Alert the Principal, Vice Principal, and Governing Body where appropriate, in preparation for high profile case outcomes.
- 5th instance of absence/Below 90%/where school feel applicable