



# 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 2020   | Author:            | Education Directors |
| Date of next review: | September 2021   | Owner:             | Education Directors |
| 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:  | Jerome Scafe        |
| 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<br><input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring, Reporting & Data<br><input type="checkbox"/> Governance & Accountabilities<br><input type="checkbox"/> Teaching & Learning<br><input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Assessment<br><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture, Ethos & Wellbeing<br><input type="checkbox"/> Pathways & Enrichment<br><input type="checkbox"/> Parents & Community<br><input type="checkbox"/> Finance, IT & Estates<br><input type="checkbox"/> Our People | Behaviour Model |

## **Coronavirus (Covid-19) Update:**

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020, the government released guidance explaining that schools nationally would return in September as the prevalence of coronavirus has decreased. We know that the very lengthy time away from school is detrimental to our children's mental and physical wellbeing and so with the stringent protective measures successfully in place since March 2020, we are very much looking forward to welcoming back all of our staff and students. It is important that all students return to us in September who are medically able to do so. We do not want any students falling further behind as a result of this pandemic. As such, the government have made it clear that normal attendance to school expectations and protocols will resume. This means:

- It is a parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- It is a schools' responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence
- Schools have availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

In line with public health advice, we acknowledge there may be need for small numbers students and their families to shield or self-isolate if they present with symptoms, test positive for coronavirus or a close contact has coronavirus. Families will not be penalised if this is the case. From 1 August all students previously shielding will be able to return to school.

If due to illness or other exceptional circumstance, your child is unable to attend school, please follow this process:

1. Call the absence line before 8am
2. Consult the NHS- Reporting the track and trace details
3. Report the findings of the results to the school
4. Keep in touch with the school daily

If you have any concerns or worries surrounding your child's return back to school please email.

Year 7 & 8 – Mrs L Barham, [l.barham@arkalexandra.org](mailto:l.barham@arkalexandra.org)

Year 9-13 – Ms M Anderson, [melissa.anderson@arkalexandra.org](mailto:melissa.anderson@arkalexandra.org)

The DFE guidance can be found [here](#)

ESBAS return to school helpline: 01273 481967

If you have any questions about school attendance from September 2020, ESBAS staff will be available to talk every Tuesday and Thursday in August between 1pm and 3pm.

## **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 attend less than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve 5 Grade 4's and above at GCSE including English and maths.
- Of students whose attendance is between 90% and 80%, 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.
- Nationally the average attendance for a student in secondary school is 94.5% and our ambition is to be better than that.

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 8.00 am on every morning of every day of absence.

#### 3.2 Authorised absences

Acceptable reasons include illness (2 days only, unless on attendance monitoring plan), 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 and provide medical evidence / appointment card/letter.

Only 1 episode of the same illness in any one term will be authorised

#### 3.3 Unauthorised absences

Unacceptable reasons include, but are not exclusive to, shopping, going to an appointment without notifying the school and providing medical evidence/ appointment card/ letter, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, refusing to attend, parent/carer unwell and taking holiday, for example by acquiring cheaper flights outside of academy holidays. No absence will be authorised 3 days either side of a school holiday period unless medical evidence is provided.

Continuous illness without medical evidence will also be unauthorised, medical evidence to be provided by day 3 of absence.

#### 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. Holiday FPNs will be issued.

#### **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 8.00am on every day of 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 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 or a call to 101 for a police welfare check maybe requested. Absences without explanation will be automatically unauthorised.

*4.5 - After 3 days of absence medical evidence may be required and / or a police welfare check may be requested to conduct a home visit.*

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

5.1 The Attendance Team reviews the attendance of all students daily / 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 daily with ongoing reviews. and at the next weekly monitoring meeting.

b) If no improvement is seen the Attendance Team will request an appointment with the parent or carer. Formal monitoring will begin with an attendance contract and support plan. The situation is reviewed daily and at the next weekly monitoring meeting

*C) - The Attendance team will require medical evidence for all absence while on formal monitoring*

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 8.35am.

6.2 Students who arrive after 8.40am must enter the academy through the main entrance. They will be signed in late by the Attendance Lead.

6.3 Children who arrive more than 20 minutes late will be recorded as unauthorised absence for the morning session.

6.4 The procedure for consistent lateness is the same as for absence and an FPN may be issued.

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

6.6 If a student is late to school a suitable sanction will be issued.

## **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. A request should be completed a minimum of 14 days before the absence.

## **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. A register closes within 8 minutes of a lesson starting.

## **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. Consequences 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 95% 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 10 academy days following the issue of the letter to see if the desired improvement has taken place. An acceptable improvement is 100% attendance for the 10 academy day period. Monitoring would be ongoing.
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.
7. FPN for unauthorised holidays will automatically be requested upon the students return to the Academy

**Withdrawal of Penalty Notices:**

8. 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 £60 if paid within 28 days rising to £120 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.