ARK ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE

POLICY & PROCEDURES

A Mathematics and Citizenship Rich School

ARK ACADEMY

www.arkacademy.org

2014-15 SGE

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.

AIMS OF WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

- to reflect the values expressed in our mission statement
- to make clear the expectations with regard to attendance, punctuality and absence
- to set the framework for rewarding good attendance and punctuality
- to make explicit the procedures to be followed and sanctions applied should attendance and punctuality fall below the expected standards

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.

Attendance Policy and Procedures

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 96% attendance. Absence of 10% is considered very unsatisfactory 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 Assistant Principal (attendance), Attendance Officer, Heads of Year and all the Form Tutors. Whilst am and pm roll calls will be taken by subject teachers during lessons 1 and 5, these registers still remain the responsibility of Form Tutors and Attendance Officer. Therefore, all unauthorised absence will be monitored by both.

All registers will be taken electronically on eportal. **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 and not to book holidays in school time.

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 Geary, 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 EWO attached to the Academy which could result in a fine being issued or further legal prosecution. 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, wherever possible.

3. Pupils who arrive after the gate closes at 8.25 will have to sign in late and a 20 minute lunch time detention will be issued. Failure to attend means they are issued a

60 minute detention after school the following day. Pupils who arrive after 9.00 without good reason are set a 60 minute detention.

4. On the first day of absence parents are expected to contact the school by telephone, by 8.15 a.m., that day. The child should be given a letter or a note in the planner to pass to the form tutor on the first day of their return. This letter is a legal requirement. Where parents do not do this, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents by phone call to ask them why their child is absent.

5. Pupils who are absent and have not called in will be sent a text message by the Attendance Officer that same day.

6. The Attendance Officer will send out a list of the day's absentees every day

7. Form tutors 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 form tutors or Attendance Officer contacting parents. Form tutors should 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 suspicion that the letter may have been forged, should be brought to the HOYs attention.

8. Form tutors should inform Heads of Year of all such cases:
   - absences of a week or more, even when the reason is known
   - absence no matter how brief, where truancy is suspected or found

9. All letters concerning absence should be given to the Attendance Officer. If the notes are written in planners these should be photocopied. Suspicious letters should be followed up.

10. The Assistant Principal (attendance) and Heads of Year should monitor the attendance patterns across the Year groups, and be watchful for signs of individual or group truancy.

The Attendance Officer and senior vice Principal will meet with the 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.
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 80% and there are insufficient medical grounds for this non-attendance.

1. The Attendance Officer will send letters of concern to pupils whose attendance falls below 90%. Which pupils are sent letters will be agreed with HOYs and EWO during their weekly 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 %. These will be updated on a weekly basis and sent to the Leadership Team and HOYs.

2. HOYs and Form tutors should celebrate attendance achievements by issuing certificates, displaying positives on the plasma and sending congratulatory postcards home.

3. All referrals to the EWO and any other causes for concern which are not improving should be discussed with the HOY and/or Assistant Principal (attendance) before being passed to the EWO.

4. 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.

5. Every term there will be an awards ceremony where average attendance for each house is calculated. House points will then be distributed accordingly. At the end of the Year, a House attendance cup will be awarded during the awards ceremony.

6. The Attendance Officer will chase pupils who have an unexplained absence on a daily basis by communicating with HOY, form tutor, pupil and parent.

7. The Attendance Officer will also publish a weekly attendance break down by form, Year, house and Key Stage in the bulletin.

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 being dogged in our communication with pupils, parents, where attendance is a concern.

Rate of attendance	**Action**	**Responsibility**
100%	Certificate per term	Attendance Officer
90 – 95%	Discussion with parent and pupil	Form Tutor
80 – 90%	Meeting and letter of concern	Head of Year
Below 80%	EWO referral	EWO/Attendance Officer/SGE

Procedures for Registers, Lateness and Absence

- Teachers will be expected to take a register in the first five minutes of every lesson. This includes reading and compulsory enrichment. These will be entered on ePortal.

- If a pupil arrives after the register has been taken then their mark should be amended to a present mark immediately. For this reason, colleagues are advised not to close ePortal until the end of the lesson. Pupils who arrive late should have their planner taken. Persistent lateness to lessons should result in a 20 minute detention.

- The a.m. and p.m. roll calls are taken at the beginning of period 1 and 5 each day.

- **It is essential that codes for absences are accurately recorded, and that students submit letters from their parents on the first day a pupil returns to school after absence**. If a pupil does not do this the Tutor should write a note to the parents in the planner. All letters should be passed to the Attendance Officer.

- Students who have been absent and have not brought a note should **not** have a code entered. Their names will continue to appear on the absence return as an N (no reason given).

- When the Attendance Officer is clear that the absence was without parental knowledge and permission, the code for unauthorised absence (O) should be entered.

- Not all absence covered by note or telephone call has to be authorised. If the Attendance Officer or Form tutor feels notes are suspicious, or if the reasons are not sound, they should discuss this with the Assistant Principal (attendance) or Head of Year, before entering a code.

- If at any point it becomes clear that the wrong code has been entered for an absence, the Attendance Officer should be informed in writing, giving the name, the form, the date(s) of absence and the appropriate code.

- If ePortal 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.**

Any pupil who signs in late after 9.00 should be marked as late on ePortal by the attendance Officer. On a Friday this becomes 8.30.

The Attendance Officer has responsibility for the authorisation of absences and the chasing of pupils who have not brought letters explaining absence into school. Therefore, if there is any doubt about what to do with a pupil who has been absent a form tutor should refer the matter to her. If the Attendance Officer requires clarification she will speak to the Assistant Principal (attendance)

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. We ask for follow-up notes to phone calls in any case. A 'blanket' letter covering several absences is not generally acceptable, or is 'he/she wasn't well'.

N.B. The form tutors who have the most difficulty are those who do not follow up regularly and relentlessly. It is horrendous to be faced with chasing up absences weeks or months old where even the student can't remember why they were away.

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 S. Geary 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 T Dainty)

G Family holiday not approved or days in excess of agreed authorised holiday

H Family holiday authorised by T Dainty

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 that 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 truanted 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 registers to be accurate in case of emergency.

Appendix 1

Attendance concern letter

Date

Dear Parents

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)

-

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.	School to advise the parent to: • 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 • 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 • Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing

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?		Inform Police. Brent Multi –Agency Front Door Telephone 020 83937 4300 Follow up with on line referral
Does the child have a formal child protection plan?		
Is the child in care i.e. looked after by the local authority?		
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.		
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?		
Is the child at risk of sexual exploitation ?		
Has there been LA children's social care or LA adults' social care or Criminal Justice System involvement in the past?		Give consideration to the vulnerability of the child and following risk assessment inform one or all of the following : Police Safer school Officer Children's social care. Local Authority Designated Officer. Education Welfare Service. Contact MAFD on 020 8937 4300 for a consultation Use other services to help with your risk assessment.
Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? E.g. FGM or forced marriage.		
Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?		
Is there any known history of domestic violence?		
Is there concern about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?		
Was there any significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence?		
Has the child been a victim of bullying?		
Does the child need essential medication or health care?		
Was the child noted to be depressed prior to the child's unexplained absence?		
Has the child gone missing with their family?		
Have the parents been subject to proceedings in relation to attendance?		
Is there a history of poor attendance?		
Has there been any change in the child/family's financial circumstances?		
Age of the child		