



**ARK Castledown**  
Primary Academy

# ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY



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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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All children of school age have the right to a 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 Castledown Primary Academy takes the responsibility to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils 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. We feel the whole academy community should take responsibility for attendance. Therefore this policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of academy attendance are aware and informed.

## 2 AIMS

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The aims of the Attendance Policy are:

- a To raise the importance of good attendance in line with National Statutory Requirements?
- b Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- c To improve punctuality.
- d Promote opportunities to celebrate and reward children for attendance and punctuality achievements.

## 3 GUIDELINES

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### 3.1 Reasons for absence

- 3.1.1 Parents and carers must to contact the academy office by phone or in person if their child needs to be absent from the academy.

### 3.2 Authorised absences

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

### 3.3 Unauthorised absences

- 3.3.1 Unacceptable reasons include shopping, going to an appointment, visiting relatives, buying shoes, going for a haircut, parent/carer unwell and taking holidays, for example by acquiring cheaper flights outside of academy holidays.

### 3.4 Holidays/Trips

- 3.4.1 The academy supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents/carers from taking holidays during term time.
- 3.5 Only the Principal can authorise absence and these will be only in exceptional circumstances. This does not include holidays and wedding

## 4 ACTION TAKEN WHEN PUPILS ARE ABSENT

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- 4.1 There are occasions when absence is unavoidable. These include:
- a Illness.
  - b Medical or educational appointments.
- 4.2 If a parent knows in advance of absence due to an appointment, the academy office 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 of the reason for the absence and on return present a written note explaining the absence. If your child is absent and has been prescribed medicine by the doctor please can you bring the medicine or prescription into the academy so we can photocopy it.
- 4.4 The parent or carer will be phoned and if there is no answer or no information has been received, and reasons noted, on the **first day of absence**.
- 4.5 Letters will be periodically sent to the parent or carers requesting an explanation of any unauthorised absence. If no reply is received; the absence is counted as unauthorised. Two academy weeks are allowed for responses after the letter is sent.

## 5 WHAT HAPPENS IF ATTENDANCE IS UNACCEPTABLE?

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- 5.0 The Inclusion Manager is the acting Attendance Officer for the Academy.
- 5.1 The Inclusion Manager reviews the attendance of all pupils monthly. If the attendance of a pupil falls below 97% the reasons for the absence are investigated.
- 5.2 If there are no extenuating circumstances the following procedure is instigated:
- a The Inclusion Manager will write to the parent or carer. The pupil will be placed onto attendance tracking, where the Inclusion Manager will monitor the pupil's attendance over the following month.
  - b At the end of the first tracking period, the Inclusion Manager will make the decision to either maintain attendance tracking or remove the pupil from attendance tracking. This will be dependent on the level of improvement in the child's attendance.
  - c This process will continue, and the pupil may be moved from Green to Amber to Red tracking. At each level there are different actions that may be taken by the Academy in response. These are explained within the attendance tracking letters that are sent out.
  - d If the attendance does not significantly improve, a referral to the Educational Welfare Service will be made. In situations where there is no on going improvement in attendance a penalty notice can be served. (See Appendix 1)
- 5.3 If your child's attendance is unsatisfactory (below 90%) you are at risk of a referral to the Education Welfare Officer and may be liable for fast track court prosecution, prosecution and/or a fixed penalty notice under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Children whose attendance is below 90% are regarded by the Government as being 'persistently

absent' from school and so there is a greater emphasis on improving their attendance as a priority.

- 5.4 If the child is below 5 years of age, the Education Welfare Officer will not accept a referral. In this instance the Inclusion Manager will look at the situation, and take appropriate action according to the circumstances.

## 6 LATENESS

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- 6.1 The academy day starts at 08.55 and all academy doors open at 8.45am and are closed at 09.00. For parents whose children attend breakfast club entry to the school is available from 8.00am. The school gates are open from 8.35am for everybody else, although the children are unsupervised on the playground.
- 6.2 Pupils who arrive after 09.00 must enter the academy through the main entrance. They must then be signed into the late book.
- 6.3 Registers will close at 09.05. Children who arrive after this time will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence). Any child receiving 5 U's in any half term may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 6.4 The procedure for persistent lateness is similar as for absence – i.e. at **10%** lateness the Attendance Office will write to the parents of the children to notify them that their child's punctuality is unsatisfactory. If there is no improvement over the following month then the following actions may be taken:
- a The Attendance Officer may ask for an appointment to meet with the parents and punctuality targets will be set.
  - b If there are unacceptable improvements after a suitable time period a referral to the Education Welfare Officer will be made.
- 6.5 'Cause for Concern' records for absence and punctuality are kept.

## 7 PUNCTUALITY INSPECTION

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We also do sporadic punctuality inspections at the academy gate. The East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Team are sometimes involved in these.

## 8 HOW WILL THIS INFORMATION BE COLLATED?

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

## 9 PUPIL ABSENCE AND EXTENUATING FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

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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 or family weddings 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 could become liable to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## 10 COLLECTION AFTER SCHOOL

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- 10.1 School finishes at 3pm for EYFS & KS1 pupils and 3.05pm for KS2
- 10.2 Teachers will keep the children with them until 3.20pm.. After this time children are taken to the school office entered into the "Late Collection Book".
- 10.3 The trigger to action is set at **10%** i.e. 3 times within a six-week block.
  - a The Attendance Officer will write to the parent/carer and request an appointment to discuss the issues.
  - b If there is persistent late collection of a child over a sustained period, then the academy may have to notify Children's Services as part of it's safeguarding responsibilities.
- 10.4 As with punctuality and attendance, progress is reviewed each month.

## 11 REGISTERS

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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.

## 12 REWARDS

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The class with the best attendance for the previous week is recognised and rewarded on the attendance board, and a trophy is presented to the winning class each week.

Children 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.

## 13 EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT

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We will do all we can to ensure that this policy does not discriminate, directly or indirectly. We shall do this through regular monitoring and evaluation of our policies. On review we shall assess and consult relevant stakeholders on the likely impact of our policies on the promotion of all aspects of equality, as laid down in the Equality Act (2010). This will include, but not necessarily be limited to: race; gender; sexual orientation; disability; ethnicity; religion; cultural beliefs and pregnancy/maternity. We will use an appropriate Equality Impact Assessment to monitor the impact of all our policies and the policy may be amended as a result of this assessment.

## 14 APPENDIX 1 - PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICES:

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- 14.1 Academies will notify the EWS 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.
- 14.2 The LA will produce an information letter for distribution to all parents/carers whose children have been identified as falling below 90% 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.
- 14.3 Each pupil'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.
- 14.4 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.
- 14.5 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.
- 14.6 Following a change to advice issued by the DfES in recent months, Penalty Notices may now be issued to the parents/carers of **all** pupils registered at [LA] schools, 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:**

- 14.7 The LA will withdraw any Notices issued if:
- a It can be established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
  - or**
  - b The use of the Penalty Notice does not conform to the terms of the Protocol.
- 14.8 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.
- 14.9 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:**

- 14.10 Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.
- 14.11 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.
- 14.12 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.

- 14.13 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:**

- 14.14 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.