



Ark Bentworth Primary Academy
ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Policy Information

Named personnel with designated responsibility for attendance

Academic year	Designated Senior person	Deputy Designated Senior person	Nominated Governor	Chair of Governors
2021/22	Emily Keeler	Karinne Faddy	Ian Emerson	Ian Emerson

Policy review dates (frequency of review: yearly)

Review Date	Changes made	By whom
May 2013	Policy created	Ark
August 2016	Policy review	Moira Cruddas
August 2017	Policy Review	Moira Cruddas
August 2018	Policy Review	Moira Cruddas
November 2019	Policy Review	Emily Keeler
September 2020	Policy Review	Emily Keeler
September 2021	Policy Review	Karinne Faddy

Ratification by Governing Body

Academic year	Date of ratification	Chair of Governors
2015/2016	New Policy from Ark ratified by the Board	Michael Coren
2017/2018	Policy Review	Karin Ulukut Barrett
2018/2019	Policy Review	Karin Ulukut Barrett
2019/2020	Policy Review	Karin Ulukut Barrett
2020/2021	Policy Review	Karin Ulukut Barrett
2021/2022	Policy Review	Ian Emerson

Dates of staff training for this academic year

Dates	Course Title	Staff
05/09/2016	Safeguarding & Attendance	All Staff
05/09/2017	Safeguarding & Attendance	All Staff
03/09/2018	Safeguarding & Attendance	All Staff
02/09/2019	Safeguarding & Attendance	All Staff
02/09/2020	Safeguarding & Attendance	All Staff
03/09/2021	Safeguarding & Attendance	All Staff

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
2	AIMS	4
3	GUIDELINES	5
4	ACTION TAKEN WHEN PUPILS ARE ABSENT	6
5	WHAT HAPPENS IF ATTENDANCE IS UNACCEPTABLE?	7
6	LATENESS	8
7	PUNCTUALITY INSPECTION	8
8	HOW WILL THIS INFORMATION BE COLLATED?	9
9	PUPILS ABSENCE AND EXTENUATING FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES	9
10	COLLECTION AFTER SCHOOL	9
11	REGISTERS	9
12	REWARDS	10
13	HOW WE WILL SUPPORT YOU	10
14	EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT	11
15	APPENDIX 1 - PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICES:	11

1 INTRODUCTION

All children of school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability or any additional needs they may have. Regular academy attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Ark Bentworth 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

The aims of the Attendance Policy are:

- a To raise the importance of good attendance in line with Ofsted 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

3.1 Reasons for absence

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

3.2 Authorised absences

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, if possible. Where this is not possible, we would expect pupils to miss only part of the day.

3.3 Unauthorised absences

Unacceptable reasons include 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.

3.5 Only the Head of School can authorise absence.

4 ACTION TAKEN WHEN PUPILS ARE ABSENT

- 4.1 There are occasions when absence is unavoidable. These include:
- a. Illness
 - b. Circumstances relating to COVID-19
 - i. Self-isolation if they or a member of their household has symptoms of COVID-19
 - ii. Self-isolation if they are a close contact of someone with symptoms / confirmed COVID-19
 - iii. Required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine
 - iv. Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only
 - c. Medical or education 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 and, on return, present a written note or email explaining the absence. If your child is absent and has been prescribed medicine by the doctor the parent or carer should bring the medicine or prescription into the academy so that we can photocopy it.
- 4.4 It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that they contact the office on 02087432527 before 9am to inform us if their child/ren will be absent on that day and the reason for absence.
- 4.5 If we have not heard from the parents of any child who absent by 9:30 a.m. then we will start to call all the contact numbers that you have provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence. It is therefore important that all emergency contact details are up to date and that three emergency contact details are provided. If we still have not been able to ascertain where your child is, then we will make a home visit. However, if we still haven't been able to get a response then we will report it to the police as your child will then be classed a 'missing child'.
- 4.6 This Unexplained Absence procedure will apply if your child is absent from school for any reason and you have failed to inform us i.e. if you take your child on holiday during term time, sickness etc.

5 WHAT HAPPENS IF ATTENDANCE IS UNACCEPTABLE?

- 5.1 The Head of School reviews the attendance of all pupils daily. If the attendance of a pupil falls below **95%** 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 Head of School will write to the parent or carer. The situation is reviewed at the next month's check.
 - b If no improvement is seen, the Head of School will request an appointment with the parent or carer. The situation is reviewed at the next month's check.
 - c If no improvement is seen, the Head of School will write again 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 Educational Welfare Service/Early Help will be made. In non-improving situations a penalty notice may be served
 - See Appendix 1
- 5.3 If your child's attendance is unsatisfactory (below 95%) 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.
- 5.4 If the child is below 5 years of age, the Education Welfare Officer will not accept a referral. In this instance the Head of School will pursue the situation. In extreme cases, a nursery place could be withdrawn.

6 LATENESS

- 6.1 The academy day starts at 8:15 a.m. when the gates are open. The gates and all academy doors are closed at 9:00 a.m.
- 6.2 Pupils who arrive after this time must enter the academy through the main entrance. They must then be signed in at the Reception Desk.
- 6.3 Registers will close at 9:05 a.m. Children who arrive after this time will be marked as 'L' (Late Absence) until 9:30 am. Any child arriving to the school after this will be marked as a 'U'. If your child receives 5 U's in any half term, you may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- 6.4 The procedure for consistent lateness is the same as for absence:
 - a Appointment made to see the Head of School – one month is given for improvement.
 - b If no improvement is seen, the Head of School will request another appointment.
 - c If there are unacceptable improvements after a month, a referral to the Education Welfare Officer/Early Help is made.
- 6.5 'Cause for Concern' registers for absence and punctuality are kept.

7 PUNCTUALITY INSPECTION

We also do sporadic punctuality inspections at the academy gate.

8 HOW WILL THIS INFORMATION BE COLLATED?

A register of absence and punctuality referral is kept. Head of School and SLT manage this register and meet regularly to decide necessary action.

9 PUPILS ABSENCE AND EXTENUATING FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES

If parents or carers need to remove their child from the academy for any reason, they must write to the Head of School asking for permission to do so. **No absences for holidays will be authorised**, unless in extreme or exceptional circumstances with supporting evidence produced. 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.

10 COLLECTION AFTER SCHOOL

- 10.1 School finishes at 3:30 p.m.
- 10.2 Teachers will keep the children with them until 3:40p.m. After this time children are entered into after-school care.
- 10.3 The trigger to action is set at **10%** i.e. 3 times within a six-week block.
 - a The Head of School will write to the parent/carer.
 - b The Head of School will request an appointment with the parent/carer.
 - c The Head of School will again request appointment with parent/carer.
 - d Governors may request an appointment with the parent/carer.
 - e Fines may be imposed at the discretion of the Head of School.
- 10.4 As with punctuality and attendance, progress is reviewed each month.

11 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.

12 REWARDS

Classes with the best attendance for the previous week, half term and full term are recognised and rewarded with certificates presented in the Friday Celebration Assembly. The class with the best attendance every half term is also given the Attendance Cup to display in their classroom.

Children with 100% attendance for the week enter the 'In it to win it' weekly draw.

13 HOW WE WILL SUPPORT YOU

We offer a range of support services to encourage good attendance and punctuality at school.

We will...

- Meet regularly with parents and carers to encourage good attendance and punctuality
- We will meet with parents and carers regularly to give updates on improvements and to set targets to encourage improvement.
- We offer free breakfast to pupils that arrive between 8.15– 8.55a.m.
- Our school nurse is on hand to give support and advice on medical support plans if your child suffers from any medical condition that may affect their attendance.

14 EQUALITY IMPACT STATEMENT

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.

15 APPENDIX 1 - PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICES:

- 15.1 Academies will notify either the Attendance Team (ACE) or Family Support 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.
- 15.2 The LA 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.
- 15.3 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.
- 15.4 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.
- 15.5 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.
- 15.6 Following a change to advice issued by the DfES, 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:

15.7 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.

15.8 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.

15.9 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:

15.10 Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

15.11 A Penalty Notice shall be for the sum of **£60 per child** if paid within 21 days rising to **£120 per child**. If you don't pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

15.12 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.

15.13 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:

15.14 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.