



Attendance Policy

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Mission Statement:

Our mission is to provide every pupil – regardless of the barriers they face - with a complete education of the very highest standard that ensures that they can have the opportunity to go on to university or pursue the career of their choice, as well as live fulfilling and happy lives.

At Ark Franklin, we will achieve our mission together, by working towards our common vision for the school. We want our school to be:

- **Inclusive, nurturing and supportive** - where barriers to success are overcome
- **Ambitious and aspirational**, with the very highest expectations of all children
- **Rigorous** - characterised by high expectations of each other
- **Lively** with the buzz of activity, **calm** in the classes and corridors
- **Joyful, safe and happy** – for children, adults, families and the community as a whole

Objectives of the school attendance policy:

- 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 ensure that pupils maintain good levels of attendance so that they can make the best possible progress in school
- to encourage a positive approach to attendance and punctuality by ensuring that children feel happy, safe and want to come to school every day

Introduction

This is a successful school and every pupil plays their part in making this so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to the academic and social development that will improve the life chances of children and young people.

Parents and carers have a duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to get the most benefit from the opportunities.

The school has a duty to ensure that children want to come to a school that is happy, safe motivating and where they make excellent progress, supported by committed adults.

Brent Council and Ark Schools are committed to supporting all schools, children, young people and families to achieve and maintain good attendance at school.

Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Children and young people who do not attend school regularly are at risk from a whole range of factors that may lead to poor outcomes in terms their educational achievement and future employment and financial security and citizenship.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and if you permit absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

What we will do

- Keep you up to date with attendance levels in the school newsletter;
- Inform you regularly on your son's/daughter's attendance, punctuality, and how this relates to their academic progress;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying school and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class rewards and praise
- Closely monitor attendance at school, communicating concerns with parents in a supportive manner through emails, letters, discussions and meetings.
- Escalate cases where attendance is a concern for further support or intervention by the local authority

Understanding types of absence:

Every half -day absence from school has to be recorded and classified with a code by the school, as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can make this decision and record it. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

AUTHORISED absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

UNAUTHORISED absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which “leave” of absence has not been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Some examples of this include:

- Parents/carers keeping their child away from school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences that have not been properly explained;
- Late arrival **after** the close of registration (morning or afternoon);
- Shopping trips, looking after other children or adults, or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed.

Illness

Whilst it is understood that any child can have an illness and be away from school for a given period, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are always best sorted out by the parents/carers contacting school immediately to discuss the issues.

If your child is reluctant to attend:

- Please report this type of absence with as much detail as possible
- Please encourage them to attend and speak to us at the earliest opportunity. We will be able to help.

The school needs to give careful consideration to the authorisation of absence for some pupils.

Where a pupil has frequent absences the school may decide to ask for evidence such as a medical certificate, appointment card, or a label from prescription medication.

The school may also wish to seek the advice of the family GP having first discussed the matter with parents/carees to seek their permission to do this.

Dental/medical appointments

Wherever possible, parents/cares should make every effort to avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. It is preferable to try and arrange these during holiday periods or at the beginning or end of the school day. An appointment at the beginning of the school day should not result in a whole day's absence from school.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they are absent from school for 10% or more across the school year for whatever reason. The reasons can be both authorised and unauthorised. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational achievement and future prospects. We will need the full support and co-operation of all parents to tackle this.

- We will monitor all absence thoroughly
- If your child's attendance has reached or is in danger of reaching the PA level we will inform you immediately and make the case a priority;
- We will write to all families at this threshold each term
- Pupils who have reached the PA level will be tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system
- All PA pupils will be made known to the Education Welfare Officer which may result in a further action being taken, including the potential for a Fixed Penalty Notice or prosecution.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the **first day** of absence;
- Send a **note** or **email** on the **first day** your child returns with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Alternatively you can call into the school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone, email or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance falls below 85% or if other patterns of absence cause concern.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of every day they can miss work and the opportunity of hearing vital information and news, and sharing class time with their friends.

Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. Your child may also be embarrassed by arriving late and may fall into absenteeism in order to avoid arriving late.

Morning Registration Procedures and Recording Lateness

- The school day begins at 8.40am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.;
- Registers are marked at 8.40am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time;
- At 8:40am the registers will be closed.
- In accordance with DfE guidance, if your child arrives after 8:40 they will receive a late mark that shows them to be on site and includes them as being present for the day
- If a pupil arrives after 9:10am, 30 minutes after the registers have closed, the pupil will be marked as late but this will not count as a present mark and be recorded as an unauthorised absence;
- If the problem persists this may mean that you could face the possibility of a warning or penalty notice.
- Persistent lateness will result in a letter being sent asking for a noticeable improvement.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher and or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school. You may also wish to seek advice from the Education Welfare Officer.

Leave during term time (Exceptional leave of absence)

Taking leave in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking their child away in schooltime.

This school and the LA actively discourages holidays in term time. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

The Head teacher has the final decision whether to authorise leave and will consider the individual circumstances of each case:

- All applications for leave must be made in advance and in writing using the form provided (available from the school office);
- In exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Head teacher, a limited amount of time can be authorised but the following will be considered:
 - Your child's overall pattern of attendance;
 - Any previous pattern of leave in term time
 - The age of your child;
 - Whether or not your child has recently started school;
 - The time of year and whether there are examinations;

- The length, destination and purpose of the holiday and whether it is likely to be a rare event in the child's life;
- Family circumstances and the parents/carers reasons for wanting to take a leave of absence during term time.

If the holiday or leave of absence is taken without the agreement of the Headteacher or is in excess of what has been agreed, your child's absence will be marked as unauthorised and you may be served with a written warning or Fixed Penalty Notice.

Failure to return to school for more than 20 days can result in a loss of the school place. In the rare event of extended leave from school, whatever the circumstance, it is critical that parents communicate regularly with us so that this does not happen.

The Attendance Service

Parents are expected and encouraged to contact the school at an early stage and work together with school staff in resolving problems together. This approach is nearly always successful.

If this does not resolve the problem, the school will refer your child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the local authority. They are independent of the school and can provide impartial advice.

The EWO will work together with you and the school in order to resolve the difficulty and return your child to regular attendance.

If, after all efforts have been tried, the unauthorised absences persist; these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Full details and information leaflets are available from the school and from the Local Authority.

Telephone numbers/contact details

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers in an emergency and about other things including absence from school. We must have contact telephone numbers and parental /carer details.

We need your help in ensuring that you have provided us with up to date telephone numbers and contact details – if we don't then something important may be missed.

We will make regular checks on telephone numbers and contact details throughout the year.

School targets, projects and initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in helping us to meet these targets and to aim higher in all aspects of their education.

Targets for the whole school and for the classes are displayed in the school and we hope you will take the opportunity to study them.

The target level of attendance for this school is 96% and we will keep you updated regularly about the progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our aim is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our regular newsletter and we would ask for your full support.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high level of attendance as possible.

Recording Absence and Absence Codes

The school records a daily register using our MIS, recording absences using the DfE codes. It is the school admin team that ensure that absences are correctly coded, under the supervision of the attendance officer.

The school records and codes absence in full accordance with the guidance published in "[Working Together To Improve School Attendance](#)" (DfE, May 2022)

Appendix A – School Leavers and Children Missing In Education (CME)

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of Safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect and may also raise concerns about other safeguarding issues, including the criminal exploitation of children.

At Ark Franklin we monitor attendance carefully and address poor or irregular attendance without delay.

At Ark Franklin we follow the Ark School leavers management and statutory guidance and ensure our processes keep track of pupils leaving our school for any reason and offer better support management of any at risk cases.

At Ark Franklin when pupils leave, we make sure leavers are correctly processed through the MIS and visible on our systems and record the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date.

We will always follow up with parents/carers when pupils are not at school. This means we need to have a least two up to date contacts numbers for parents/carers. Parents should remember to update the school as soon as possible if the numbers change.

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) the school has:

1. Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
2. Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions).
3. Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
4. Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll when they:

- a. leave school to be home educated
- b. move away from the school's location
- c. remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- d. are in custody for four months or more (and will not return to school afterwards); or
- e. are permanently excluded

We will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

Further information about CME including definitions and indicators is included in KCSIE '22 Annex B and in relation to the school's approach to child-on-child abuse can be found in Appendix A of the school's safeguarding policy.