

Ark Blake Academy



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Celebrating Attendance and Punctuality

Students with 100% attendance and/or punctuality each term will enter a raffle and receive certificates and vouchers. Students with 100% attendance and punctuality will also have congratulatory letters sent home to parents.

Weekly attendance and punctuality shout outs are presented in Year Group assemblies to Tutor Groups who have had excellent attendance and punctuality the previous week. Students are encouraged to have a collective responsibility towards each other in a bid to win the weekly trophies and Heads of Year are encouraged to engender a competitive atmosphere within their year group.

Weekly attendance and punctuality results are displayed on the specific attendance and punctuality notice boards at each building. All students who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality throughout an entire academic year will be rewarded with a celebratory trip off school premises.

Contents

Introduction	3	
Aims and Objectives	3	
Ark Blake Academy Commitment-a whole school approach		
3		
Definition	4	
Legal Duties	4	
Responsibilities		4-6
MCAS	6	
Absences	7	
Absences immediately before or after a school holiday		7
Requesting Leave of Absence	7-8	
Catching up with work missed whilst absent		8
Why regular attendance is important	9	
Monitoring	9	
Supporting attendance of students with medical needs		9
Supporting attendance of students with temporary medical conditions		
10		
Re-integration of students following long term absence		10
Persistent absence	10	
Sanctions	10	
Removal from the School Roll		10
Punctuality	11	
Policy review	11	

Introduction

Ark Blake Academy is committed to creating a well ordered, structured, stimulating, safe and encouraging learning environment, which supports high levels of achievement for all students. Central to this aim, is high expectations of all students with regard to attendance and punctuality. It is the aim of this School to support every student to have maximum attendance and thus to achieve their full academic and social potential. To realise this aim, the School will work in partnership with parents in offering Students academic and pastoral support.

Post Covid-19, it is of even greater importance that students attend school regularly, on time and ready to learn to ensure that there is no further disruption to their education. Ark Blake Academy is therefore committed to maintaining its excellent record in this respect: over the last three years, both the overall absence levels and the levels of persistent absenteeism have been substantially below the national average for secondary schools.

This Policy should be read alongside the Department for Education publication: 'School attendance: guidance for schools', the School Behaviour Policy, the Safeguarding Policy and the Policy for supporting students with medical needs.

Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- *To provide clear guidelines about how the School promotes and attains high levels of Student attendance and punctuality.*
- *To set out procedures in place to achieve this.*
- *To develop a whole school approach to attendance and punctuality;*
- *To reward and celebrate achievement in the areas of attendance and punctuality*

Ark Blake Academy Commitment-a whole school approach

- Everyone at Ark Blake Academy is committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- All members of staff are made aware of how their role impacts on attendance and punctuality as well as the expectations of them in ensuring consistent application of the policy and the use of absence codes.
- The School will support students and parents/carers to achieve good attendance and punctuality, working closely with all where absence is a cause for concern.
- The School strives for 100% attendance for all Students. The whole school attendance target is 98%. If a student achieves at least 98% attendance in one whole school year, they will have missed less than 4 days from school.

- The School will ensure that students are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.
- The School will celebrate and reward high levels of punctuality and attendance.
- The School also acknowledges the profound importance of the support of parents/carers in ensuring that levels of attendance and punctuality remain high.

Definitions

- Authorised absence means that the School has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.
- Unauthorised absence is where the School is not satisfied with the reasons given for an absence.

Legal Duties

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on parents to ensure children of compulsory school age are receiving efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the child may have. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

A parent who fails to ensure that their child attends school regularly is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the Attendance and Punctuality Policy throughout the School and are known by parents.
- Review the effectiveness of the implementation of the policy in light of the Headteachers Termly Report, Annual Report and presentations to the Governing Body.

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure the School ethos promotes and celebrates good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure strategies are in place to promote and implement the Attendance and Punctuality Policy throughout the School.
- Provide the Governing Body with half-termly data on attendance and punctuality, including data about students who are persistent absentees.
- Monitor data on attendance and punctuality via reports from the Senior Leader responsible for attendance.
- Determine, in collaboration with the Senior Leader responsible for attendance, whether to authorise any proposed absences formally requested, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made/approved.

The Senior Leader responsible for attendance will:

- Lead initiatives to promote attendance and punctuality throughout the School.
- Provide weekly data updates for the Pastoral Team with regards to attendance and punctuality.

- Analyse data on attendance and punctuality on a weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis and prepare reports, as required, for the Headteacher and Governing Body.
- Support Heads of Year with making referrals to highly specialised services (e.g. Hospital School) where a student cannot attend due to medical needs.
- Comply with the Department for Education Statutory Guidance by informing the relevant Local Authority of the details of children who are regularly absent, missing from school following a leave of absence and prior to removing a child from the roll of the school.
- Comply with the requirement set out in the Local Authority's Code of Conduct when requesting issuance of penalty notices

The Attendance Manager will:

- Monitor registration on a daily basis.
- Monitor attendance on daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annual basis.
- Be the first point of contact for parents and relevant school staff regarding Student absence and appointments.
- Check attendance for highly vulnerable students and inform parents/carers immediately in event of absence.
- Produce a list of all students who are late to school for Heads of Year and Senior Leaders by 9.30am each day.
- Produce a list of all absent students (detailing reasons for absence) for Heads of Year and Senior Leaders
- Contact parents of Students who have been identified as at-risk, to challenge absences and encourage early return to school.
- Ensure data on attendance and punctuality is displayed in prominent places visible to students
- Where appropriate, make a referral to the relevant Local Authority for students where whom attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern.
- Manage the arrangements for students who need to attend appointments during school time.
- Co-ordinate the collation of all the documentary evidence required by the Local Authority for issuing a penalty notice or prosecution by the Local Authority for unauthorised absence.
- Arrange the end of term and end of year reward activities/trips for winning Form Groups in each Year Group.

The Head of Year will:

- Promote and celebrate attendance and punctuality for within their Year Group.
- Issue appropriate sanctions students for whom attendance and punctuality is a cause for concern.
- Work with the Senior Leader responsible for attendance to identify students at risk of developing issues with punctuality and attendance.
- Convene and lead meetings with parents/carers and develop an action plan involving the child, parent/carer and, where appropriate, other agencies for students whose attendance and/or punctuality falls below the expected level.

- Make referrals to highly specialised services (e.g. Hospital School) where a student cannot attend due to medical needs.
- Co-ordinate the support plan for students returning to school after a prolonged absence.
- Disseminate attendance and punctuality data prepared by the Senior Leader to Form Tutors on a regular basis.
- Ensure Attendance and Punctuality is a standing agenda item for all meetings with their Pastoral Teams.

The Form Tutor will:

- Ensure that the attendance register using Bromcom is taken at the start of the Tutor time.
- Ensure the register is taken in silence. There should be no other activity taking place in the room. Tutors must emphasise the importance of the register to all students.
- Be alert and deal with any signs of disaffection which could result in poor attendance and punctuality and share this with the Head of Year.
- Identify absence trends or concerns and raise with the Head of Year.
- Promote and celebrate attendance and punctuality within their Form Group.
- Provide regular advice, encouragement, challenge and support to the class as a whole and individually to students about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality using the data provided by the Senior Leader responsible for attendance (disseminated by Heads of Year).

Parents/ carers will:

- Inform the School if their child is unable to attend via the MCAS App. State the reason for absence and the expected date of return.
- Be aware that it is an offence for their child to be absent from school without a valid reason.
- Be aware that only the School can determine if an absence from school is 'authorised'
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time (before the attendance register is closed for the session), dressed in full uniform and ready and equipped to learn.
- Ensure that all appointments, where possible, are arranged after school.
- Ensure that all requests for leave during term time are made in writing to the Headteacher with a minimum of two weeks' notice.
- Be aware that for unauthorised absences, the school reserves the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice (fine) or to remove a child from the roll of the school.

Students will:

- Aim to achieve 100% attendance and punctuality by arriving to school on time every day.
- Be proud of achieving excellent attendance and punctuality
- Come to school well prepared and with the right attitude; to enjoy and achieve.
- Ensure all notes/appointment cards are passed to the Attendance Manager in advance of the appointment.
- Be punctual to all lessons.

- Speak to their Head of Year if there are any problems that may affect their attendance, punctuality and/or learning.

MCAS (MyChildAtSchool App)

MCAS is a free app that allows you to report absence by using the free messaging function. This is available for both Apple iOS and Android devices and can be found using the links below:



Step 1 - Go to your App Store

Step 2 - Search for **MCAS**

Step 3 - Download the Free app

Once you have installed and opened **MCAS**, Enter your unique credentials which can be provided from the school office and follow the instructions to identify yourself. Once downloaded, MCAS will request you set up a 5 digit pin for the, so that only you have access to the information within the app.

Absences

- On the first day of absence, parents/carers should report absence via the MCAS App, Calling 0203 443 9000 ext. 1 to leave a voicemail with the child's name, form and detailed reason for absence alternatively email attendance@arkblake.org.
- When reporting absence Parents/carers must give the reason for absence (reporting a child as 'unwell' is insufficient: we must have exact reasons for the absence) and the anticipated date of return.
- Parents/carers must follow this procedure for each day their child is absent.
- Should you be unable to access the app, then you can report your child's absence by calling the school. Please **do not report** sickness or absence by emailing info@arkblake.org
- It is the responsibility of the school not the parent/carer, to decide whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Such decisions will be made in accordance with Government regulations and guidance.
- The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education.
- Removal from the School Roll may result from an absence of longer than twenty consecutive school days.

Absences immediately before or after a school holiday

In order to ensure that all students' attendance records are accurate, we will require medical evidence to authorise any absences immediately before or after a school holiday where parent(s)/carer(s) are citing illness or a medical appointment as being the reason for absence. This could be in the form of an appointment letter from a medical institution, a stamped appointment card from a GP surgery or by requesting our own "request for medical evidence"

form from The Attendance manager. Without such evidence, absences immediately before or after a holiday will be unauthorised.

Requesting Leave of Absence

Family holidays

It is not acceptable for parents/carers to request to take students out of school for a family holiday. It is disruptive to a student's learning and does not communicate a consistent message of the value of education between school and home. Such requests will be unauthorised and may result in the school making a referral for parents/carers to be issued a penalty charge notice.

Extenuating circumstances requiring time off school

The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2013 prohibits the Headteacher from granting leave of absence to a student. The exception to this, is where an advance application has been made by the parent and the Headteacher considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

The request for leave of absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher with a minimum of two weeks' notice. The Headteacher will assess all requests on a case-by-case basis. Each case will be considered on merit, taking into account the individual facts and the exceptional circumstances. For the purpose of defining 'exceptional circumstances' and as a guiding principle only, the Headteacher may consider if the reasons given for requesting leave are: rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

The Headteacher will take the following into consideration when considering requests for leave of absence during term time:

- *Can the event for which leave of absence is requested be reasonably taken during school holidays?*
- *Levels of attendance and unauthorised absence over the last 12 months.*
- *Any leave of absence taken previously.*
- *Whether the leave is during an internal exam period, or will result in not meeting assessment deadlines*
- *Age and year group of the student.*

In no case should students be absent during GCSE/A Level examination periods and any requests for students to be absent during this time will not be authorised. Please refer to the Examinations Policy for further information regarding absence during examination periods.

External Examinations

Occasionally, parents/carers may wish to request leave of absence for external examinations (such as Dance or Music exams). These requests should also be put in writing to the Headteacher, with at least two weeks' notice given.

Appointments

- All appointments, where possible, must be arranged after school.
- Time away from school as a result of an appointment must be kept to a minimum – students should not be absent for the whole day/whole morning/whole afternoon.
- All appointments must be logged via the MCAS app in advance and requests should be supported by a medical card and/or letter for any time off school required for medical appointments. The Attendance Manager will manage all appoint requests

and, will log on Bromcom, and will inform the relevant School Office of all appointments.

Catching up with work missed whilst absent

When students are absent due to illness, students and parents/carers should not contact staff to request that the work being missed that day be sent to the student to complete. If a student is too unwell to be in school, then it is important that they take the time needed to rest and recover. Students should speak to their teachers upon their return and discuss what work could be done to catch up.

If it is a planned absence (for example if the student has been granted leave of absence for a dance exam), we expect students to be proactive and contact their teachers in advance of the absence to ask for any work they could do and/or students should contact their teachers to find out what work was missed in order to catch up before their next lesson.

If it is a long term absence due to illness or other extenuating circumstances, when appropriate, a student's Head of Year will liaise with their teachers to provide adequate work for the student.

However, in all situations, it is important to understand that there is no substitute for students being physically present in a lesson and that, wherever possible, all types of absences should be avoided so that students' learning is not affected.

Why regular attendance is important

The welfare of students is of paramount importance to Ark Blake Academy and we know that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment. Furthermore, studies by the Department for Education, have consistently shown that links between attendance and achievement are strong. Therefore, falling below 98% attendance will likely have an impact on their academic achievement. The table below sets out the evidences how percentage attendance equates to the amount of school time missed.

Attendance	Missed days	Sessions	Equivalent weeks	Equivalent lessons
100%	0	0	0	0
98%	4	8	< 1 week	24
95%	9	18	1 week and 4 days	54
90%	19	38	3 weeks and 4 days	114
85%	29	58	5 weeks and 4 days	174
80%	38	76	7 weeks and 3 days	228
75%	48	96	9 weeks and 3 days	288
70%	57	114	11 week and 2 days	342
65%	67	134	13 weeks and 2 days	402

Monitoring

The Senior Leader responsible for attendance will provide weekly updates for the Pastoral Team with regards to attendance and punctuality. This will include students who are at risk of falling in to persistent absence so that Heads of Year and Pastoral staff can intervene at an early stage.

The school will ensure that the parents of students whose attendance-rates fall below an acceptable level will be contacted by letter and MCAS with a view to working together to improve the situation.

The Heads of Year Recognise, celebrate and reward students who achieve 100% attendance and punctuality in assemblies

Persistent absence will be closely monitored from 90% and any student whose attendance level falls below 85% will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance

Supporting attendance of students with medical needs

Students with medical needs may need to take medication during the school day. In order to support the student and promote attendance Schools can administer medicines to students if they have been prescribed by a Doctor. If parents/carers wish prescribed medication to be administered during the school day, they must complete a '*Administration of Medication Form*' and send the form to the school office along with the medication. Parents/carers must ensure the medication is in its original packaging with the prescription label on it. The label must be clear and free from alterations. The school is unable to give any medication to children that is not in its original packaging. Further information about how the School supports students with medical needs can be found in the Medical Needs Policy.

Supporting students with attendance of students with temporary medical conditions

On occasion students may need to take pain relief for a headache, period pain, temporary injury. If medication is needed and to support the student's attendance the School can administer medication to students. If medication is needed, it must be handed in at the office and a parent/carer must sign the '*Administration of Medication Form*'. The medication must be in its original packaging with label on it. The label must be clear and free from alterations. The school is unable to give any medication to children that is not in its original packaging. In the case of paracetamol/pain relief First Aid staff are required to obtain verbal consent from parents/carers on that day to verify that no other medication has been taken in the previous four hours. Without this consent paracetamol cannot be administered. This applies for students from Year 7 to Year 13.

Re-integration of students following long term absence

The School recognises the key role it can play in ensuring successful reintegration of students returning after a prolonged period of absence, perhaps due to illness. The School will work in partnership with parents and external agencies (if appropriate), to assist a smooth reintegration back into school, ensuring a flexible approach to meeting the student's needs. All relevant staff will be informed of the student's circumstances and the student's Head of Year will plan their return and monitor their progress.

Persistent absence

- According to the Department for Education guidelines, a Student will be considered as a persistent absentee if their attendance is 90% or lower (i.e., 10% or more sessions are missed).

- Persistent absence will be closely monitored from 90% and any student whose attendance level falls below 85% will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance.

Sanctions

- The School, via the Local Authority, may exercise its legal powers to address poor attendance in school. These powers include : Penalty Notices: Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 allows penalty notices (fines) to be issued to parents. They are an alternative measure to the prosecution of parents who fail to ensure that their child attends school. A penalty notice will be issued by the Local Authority in line with their Code of Conduct when a child’s absence has not been authorised by the School. This is issued to both parents for each child. The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 per parent per child if paid between 21 and 28 days. If one or both parents fail to pay the penalty notice in full, then the Local Authority may decide to prosecute the parents.
- Prosecution: If a child fails to attend school regularly at which they are registered then the parents may be guilty of an offence and may be prosecuted by the Local Authority. They have the power to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order under section 443 of the Education Act 1996 or fail to ensure their child’s regular attendance at a school under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The fines available to the courts if the parents are found guilty could be between £1000 and £2500. The courts can also sentence parents for imprisonment for up to 3 months.

Removal from the roll of the school

- The Governing Body has the legal power to remove a child from the roll of the school in accordance with The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulation 2006.
- When a child is removed from the roll of the school, parents/carers will be required to make a fresh application for admission. Where the year group in which a place is required is full to the published admission number, then it will not be possible to allow the child to be offered their place back at the school
- Parents who are refused re-admission will be given a right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Punctuality

The school day starts at 8.25am Students are late to school when they arrive after these times.

If students arrive late to school, the following sanctions occur:

<u>Late to Line up/ Late to School</u>	<u>No Show – Lunch Time Detention</u>	<u>No Show – 60 minute Detention</u>
20 minute detention at the start of lunch time	60 minute detention after school	90 minute detention after school on the Friday

Any student arriving after 9.30am will be given a one-hour detention then they are marked as U “late - after registers close” and this affects their overall attendance mark for that day.

The Attendance Manager will run regular ‘morning punctuality’ checks and identify those with poor punctuality and those where patterns may be evident. This will be followed up by

Heads of Year. Letters will be sent home raising concerns regarding punctuality to any parents whose child is late in the morning more than 5 times in any one term

Where a student's attendance/punctuality is a cause for concern, they may be put on an attendance/punctuality report where their daily attendance and punctuality is closely monitored and specific sanctions are put in place if they fail to attend school each day and on time.

Review

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