

Ark Elvin Academy

Attendance Policy



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Principles

We are committed to ensuring that pupils and parents understand the absolute importance of high attendance. Attendance in school is incredibly important for academic and social development, but we also need to ensure that we know pupils are safe. At Ark Elvin Academy we aim to create a secure and caring learning environment to ensure our pupils want to attend school.

Aims

- To maintain exceptionally high levels of attendance and punctuality across the school, significantly above local and national averages.
- To work with parents to ensure individual pupil attendance is as high as possible, supporting and challenging where needed. Every pupil should aim for 97-100% attendance.
- To regularly monitor attendance patterns so that the Academy can put appropriate interventions and support in place to support young people and their families.

Attendance & Registration Procedures

- All registers will be taken electronically. **Every period will have a register taken.** This ensures that we can keep track of any possible truancy.
- Registration marks are taken twice a day. Morning registration opens at 8:30am and closes at 9:30am. Afternoon registration opens at 3:05pm and closes at 3:30pm on Mondays to Fridays.
- Pupils arriving to school after a registration has opened will be marked late 'L' and will be issued with a late correction to signal the importance of punctuality and to make up the lost learning time. A daily correction of 30 minutes will be set for pupils arriving between 8.30am-9.00am. Thereafter an hour correction will be given.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed will be marked late after close of registration using the 'U' code (this is classed as an unauthorised absence).
- Parents are expected to notify the school of a pupil absence. On every day of absence parents are expected to contact the school by telephone, by 8.30 a.m. 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, a member of the attendance team will contact the parents by phone to ask them why their child is absent.
- We will contact parents on a daily basis if they fail to inform the school of an absence. The school must be made aware of the reason for a child's absence for safeguarding and educational reasons. If a child is absent for three days with no contact a home visit will be scheduled.
- If a parent knows a child is going to be absent from school a Leave of Absence form should be completed and returned to the school with as much notice as possible. Family holidays during term time are not permitted by law. Any Leave of Absence must be requested in advance and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Once the school has received the request parents may be invited to a meeting with a member of SLT.
- A member of SLT *may* authorise Leave of Absence for the following reasons:
 - A circumstance that the school deems to be *genuinely* exceptional. These absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'C' code.
 - For medical appointments which cannot be made outside of school. These absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'M' code. When making these appointments parents are expected to ensure that pupils are only missing education for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- For a day set aside *exclusively* for religious observance, pupils will be granted one day for each occasion of religious observance, with a maximum of 3 days over one academic year. These absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'R' code.
- Pupil absence will be recorded as unauthorised when the school is not satisfied with the reasons for the absence:
 - Code 'G' will be used for unauthorised holidays. Where family holidays are taken during term time, the school may respond with a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority.
 - Code 'N' will be used when parents have not yet provided the Academy with a reason for an absence.
 - Code 'O' will be used when no satisfactory reason for a child's absence has been provided.
 - Code 'M' will be used for medical when an appointment slip has been provided.
 - Code 'I' will be used if a pupil is ill but only once medical evidence has been received.

- We take seriously our duty to safeguard the welfare of all our pupils. Unexplained absences and a lack of contact from parents or carers may cause us concern and lead us to involve other agencies such as Children's Social Care. We will contact Children's Social Care within 2 days for any child with a Child Protection Plan.
- Pupils with strong attendance will qualify for rewards. These may include events, material rewards, and certificates.
- We carefully monitor attendance on a daily basis and attendance is discussed at least twice a week, in meetings between the Heads of Year and Attendance Officer, and at SLT level.
- Parental meetings are held to challenge and support our parents in raising the attendance of any child we have concerns about.
- Where a child is failing to attend school an Attendance Plan will be drawn up in consultation with the family.

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 Head of Year.

The role of the Attendance Officer

- The Attendance Team will chase pupils who have an unexplained absence on a daily basis by communicating with pastoral teams, pupils and parents.
- Pupils who are absent and have not called in will be sent a text message by the Attendance Officer by 9.30am that same day.
- The Attendance Officer, and Heads of Year, will monitor the attendance of pupils constantly and carefully. Any week-by-week drop in attendance may result in an intervention by the Form Tutor, Head of Year, Attendance Officer, or SLT. This may involve conversations with pupils and parents, formal letters of concern, parental meetings, or referral for statutory action.
- All letters concerning absence should be given to the Attendance Officer. If the notes are written in planners these will be photocopied and stored. Suspicious letters will be followed up.
- The Attendance Officer, Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Year will monitor attendance patterns across year groups, and be watchful for signs of individual or group truancy.

Penalty Notices:

- The law states that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure their child has regular attendance at the school at which they are registered. If after working with with parents the attendance or punctuality of an individual student does not improve, the Academy will consider asking the Education Welfare Service to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The circumstances in which a Penalty Notice might be issued include:
 - Truancy
 - Parent-condoned absences
 - Persistent lateness after the Roll Call has closed
 - Unauthorised absences
 - Deliberate taking of a holiday in term time.
- The issue of a Penalty Notice incurs a cost to the parent of £60, if paid within 21 days of issue, rising to £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay can lead to prosecution in a Magistrate's Court, where if found guilty a parent will receive a criminal record and a possible fine and / or a custodial sentence for failing to ensure their child's attendance in school. Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per pupil per academic year. In cases

where families contain more than one poor-attending pupil multiple issue may occur but this will be subject to careful consideration with external agencies.

- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

Removing Pupils from Roll

Under certain conditions, pupils who have ceased to attend school may be removed from the school roll i.e. no longer registered as a pupil at the school. This will always follow a set process and involve Brent Education Welfare Service. Our processes comply with the following pieces of legislation:

- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and Amendment 2016

There are fifteen grounds for removing a pupil from the school roll, as set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended¹. The most common of these for our school are set out below:

- **A pupil has moved to a new school:** we will remove a child from our school roll once we have written confirmation that they have attended a new school that is registered with Ofsted. This includes pupils who have moved outside London. Pupils are legally expected to attend Ark Elvin Academy up until the day that they start their new school, as long as it is within a reasonable commute – including pupils who have moved to other parts of London.
- **A pupil has moved to another country:** we will remove a child from our school roll when we have written confirmation that they have attended their new school in their new country of residence. If we do not receive this confirmation, the pupil is likely to be considered a Child Missing Education.
- **A pupil has stopped attending and we have not received evidence that they are in a school:** following joint enquiries between the school and Brent, a Child Missing Education may be removed after twenty consecutive days of absence (see below for further details).
- **A pupil has been permanently excluded:** we will remove a child from the school roll if they have failed to successfully appeal a permanent exclusion within the prescribed time period (15 days).
- **Parents have elected to educate their child at home:** we will remove a child from roll if we receive written notification from a parent or carer that they have elected to home educate. We do not encourage parents to take this route.

Parents who are withdrawing their children from the school, for example to move to another school, move out of London or abroad, or home educate, are expected to complete the *Leaving School Parent Form*, available from the school reception. This should include the reason for leaving, all contact details, and details of the new school.

Children Missing Education

If a child is absent for ten consecutive school days and we have not received satisfactory evidence of their whereabouts, they may be referred to Brent as a Child Missing Education (CME). This includes, but is not restricted to, the following circumstances:

¹ See <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2016/792/contents/made>
Attendance & Punctuality Policy, updated September 2017

- A child has not attended school for ten days, we have not received any contact from parents or carers, and we are unable to make contact.
- An unauthorised holiday has been taken, no return date has been provided, and the child has been away for more than ten days.
- A holiday has been requested but the child has not returned for ten days after the provided return date.
- We have been told that a child has moved out of London (or out of the UK) but we have no confirmation that they are attending a new school or engaging with another local authority.

The school's priority with potential CMEs is to ascertain their whereabouts and wellbeing. To this end, our procedures include the following:

- Daily text messages for pupils who are absent without an authorised reason.
- A phone call and letter home on the second day of an absence with no parental contact.
- A home visit for pupils who have been absent for three or more consecutive days with no parental contact. This may include checking with neighbours and relatives as appropriate. Home visits may be undertaken jointly with the police, social care, or other agencies.
- Communication with other local authorities where we have reason to believe that a child has moved there.
- Referral to social care (and the police if appropriate) if we have reason to believe that the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm.

After ten consecutive days of absence, a child may be referred to Brent. Depending on the outcome of Brent's enquiries, the pupil may be taken off roll after twenty days of absence.

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 the Principal before coding.**
Examples: wedding of close 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 the Principal)
- G** Family holiday not approved or days in excess of agreed authorised holiday
- H** Family holiday authorised by the Principal
- I** Illness (not dental or medical appointments)
- J** Interview
- L** Late arrival before 9.30am
- 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 9.30am 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.
- Z** Pupil not yet on roll, but admitted in a 'pre-admission group'.