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. Our target for the school is 96%.
- 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 Thursdays, and opens at 2:35pm and closes at 3pm on 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. Corrections will increase in length for pupils who are late more than once in a week.
- 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 the first 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, the Attendance Officer may contact the parents by phone to ask them why their child is absent.
- We will aim to contact parents on a daily basis (this could include a home visit) 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 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 at the discretion of the Principal. Once the school has received the request parents may be invited to a meeting with the Head of Year or a member of SLT.
- The Principal *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.

- 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, certificates and house points.
- 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 Officer 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 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 should be photocopied. 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.

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 10am

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 10 a.m. 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. (e.g. snow day)

Z Pupil not yet on roll, but admitted in a 'pre-admission group'.