



Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2022-2023

All children of school age have the right to an efficient full-time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability or any special need they may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Ark Dickens Primary Academy 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 school attendance are aware and informed.

Aims

The aims of the Attendance and Punctuality 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.

Guidelines

Reasons for absence:

Parents and carers are asked to contact the Academy office by phone, using the absence line, 02392 826514, via the Studybugs app or in person if their child needs to be absent from the Academy.

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. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absences:

Unacceptable reasons include shopping, going to a non-medical or educational 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.

Holidays/Trips:

The Academy supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents/carers from taking holidays during term time.

It is the Head of School's discretion as to whether a child's absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Action taken when pupils are absent

There are occasions when absence is unavoidable. These include:

- a) Illness.

b) Medical or education appointments.

If a parent knows in advance of absence due to an appointment, the Academy office should be informed and the appointment card or text message/email shown.

If a child is ill, the parent or carer should ring the Academy to inform. If your child is absent and has been prescribed medicine by the doctor please bring the medicine or prescription into the Academy so we can photocopy it.

The parent or carer will be phoned and if there is no answer or no information has been received with regards to the child's absence, and reasons noted, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If no answer, a text and email will be sent and a home visit will be completed.

Letters will be sent to the parent or carers informing them of missed sessions through illness. If a child continues to be absent with the same medical concern or repeated illness, this could result in unauthorised absence. The Academy will request to see medical evidence before the missed session or sessions will be unauthorised.

What happens if attendance is unacceptable

The Attendance Team reviews the attendance of all pupils regularly. If the attendance of a pupil falls below 95% the reasons for the absence are investigated.

The reasons for absence are discussed. If there are no extenuating circumstances the following procedure is instigated:

- a) The Attendance Officer (Maxine Prior) will write to the parent or carer. The situation is reviewed daily.
- b) If no improvement is seen the Attendance Officer will write again requesting medical evidence to be provided for each subsequent absence to be authorised and may request an appointment with the parent or carer.
- c) If the attendance does not significantly improve, a Penalty Notice warning will be requested and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Ø See Appendix 1

If your child's attendance is unsatisfactory (below 95%) you are at risk of a referral to the Local Authority for a School Attendance Panel and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fixed penalty notice under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If you need support with your child's attendance please contact the Academy office to arrange a meeting with your child's class teacher or one of the Assistant Headteachers.

Lateness

The Academy day starts with breakfast club at 8:00am and the usual school hours start at 8:30am. The school gates are closed at 8:40am. The Academy day ends at 3:10pm.

Pupils who arrive after this time must enter the Academy through the main entrance. They must then sign in late at the office.

Registers will close at 9.15. Children who arrive after this time will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence). Any child receiving 10 U's in any half term may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The procedure for consistent lateness is the same as for absence – i.e. at 10% lateness the Attendance Lead is informed by the Attendance Team.

- a) Appointment made to see the Attendance Officer – one month is given for improvement.
- b) If no improvement is seen the Attendance Team will request another appointment with an Assistant Head

- c) If there are unacceptable improvements after a month, a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team is made.

Cause for Concern registers for absence and punctuality are kept.

How will this information be collated?

A register of absence and punctuality referral is kept. The Attendance Officer and the Attendance Lead (Nicola Tuck) manage this register and meet regularly to decide necessary action.

Pupil absence and extenuating family circumstance

If parents or carers need to remove their child from the Academy for any reason, they must complete a Term Time Absence Request form. No absences for holidays should be authorised, unless in extreme or exceptional circumstances. 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.

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.

Rewards and Sanctions

The class with the best attendance for the previous week is recognised and rewarded and presented with a cup in the whole Academy assembly.

Children with 100% attendance are recognised at the end of each term in a variety of ways. Further prizes and awards may be presented for attendance.

APPENDIX 1 : PROCEDURE FOR THE ISSUE OF PENALTY NOTICES:

Academies will notify the Local Authority Attendance Team 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Following a change to advice issued by the DfES in recent months, Penalty Notices may now be issued to the parents/carers of all pupils registered at Ealing 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:

The LA will withdraw any Notices issued if:

- a) It can be established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- b) The use of the Penalty Notice does not conform to the terms of the Protocol.

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.

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:

Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

A Penalty Notice shall be for the sum of £60 if paid within 28 days rising to £120 thereafter until the final deadline of 42 days.

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.

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:

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.

Last date of review: September 2022

Next date of review: September 2023