

Ascend Learning Trust

Attendance Policy

Policy Start Date: **September 2021**

Policy Review Date: **September 2024**

Ratified by the Academic Board

Please read this policy in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (2018)
- Behaviour for Learning Policy (2018)
- Medical Needs

Contents

1. POLICY STATEMENT	2
2. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION	2
3. LATENESS	3
4. IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR ATTENDANCE	3
5. PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE	3
6. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE	4
7. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)	4
8. ABSENCE PROCEDURES	5
9. PARENT/CARER CONTACT DETAILS	5
10. ROLE OF EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE	5
11. HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME	6
12. PENALTY NOTICES	6

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- I. The mission of the Ascend Learning Trust is to have the highest possible aspirations, achieve the highest standards, provide the best possible teaching and learning, and to encourage the expectations of behaviour and personal conduct that are expressed within the Trust's contract. For the Trust to achieve this, it is vital that our children attend our school regularly and on time. Where the reason for absence is unavoidable, this must be communicated to the relevant school.
- II. The Ascend Learning Trust supports the principles enshrined in Articles 28 (right to education) and 29 (goals of education) of Unicef's Rights of the Child Charter. We endorse the position that: **'Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures and the environment'**.
- III. NJS Statement - Academic success is intrinsically linked to good attendance. At Noremars Junior School, we implement the best possible curriculum to ensure that our children can enjoy their learning experience and gain the knowledge that they require to be successful in later life. We encourage good attendance by delivering engaging and varied lessons, meeting the needs of all learners.

2. ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

- I. The Trusts "Education and Standards Committee" has oversight of the effective operation of this policy in each school and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory framework.
- II. Teachers and the delegated members of staff in each school have a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy. The delegated members of staff at Noremars Junior School are the Headteacher, the Senior Leadership Team, the School Office as well as teachers, Cover Supervisors and ELSA.
- III. Parents/carers and children have the responsibility to ensure they are aware of this policy and the procedures to be followed in cases of absence from our school. It is also the responsibility of the parent/carer to communicate with our school any additional support they need to help them get their child to school.

3. LATENESS

- I. Poor punctuality is unacceptable. A child who misses the start of the day, misses vital time and preparation for the day ahead and may not get their registration mark. Arriving late to lessons is also disruptive to learning and teaching and, again, the child may miss important explanations, instructions or tasks which prevent them from understanding the lesson objectives and making good progress in the lesson. At NJS, the school gates open every morning at 8.40am. All children are expected to be in their classes before 9am where they will be registered for the morning. Any child who arrives after 9am will receive a late mark. If a child is persistently late for school, a fixed penalty notice can be issued.
- II. The AM register is electronically taken by 9am and children will be marked as "Late" if they are not in registration by this time.
- III. The AM register is closed at 9.30am. In accordance with the regulations on attendance, any child arriving after this time will receive a mark to indicate they are on site, but this mark may not count as a present mark and may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Parents/carers face the possibility of a fixed penalty notice if this becomes a persistent problem.
- IV. If parents/carers are experiencing difficulty in getting their child to school, they should contact the school so that a member of staff can assist and support them. The school office team is the first line of contact and can request to meet with the parent/carer if the school recognises that there is a problem with persistent lateness.

4. IMPORTANCE OF REGULAR ATTENDANCE

- I. A child's regular attendance is the legal responsibility of parents/carers and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.
- II. Any absence during term time affects the continuity of a child's schooling and more frequent absence seriously affects their learning. An attendance rate at school of 95% sounds good, but this equates to missing 10 school days during the academic year.

5. PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

- I. Encouraging and supporting good attendance is everyone's responsibility including parents, children and all staff. The Ascend Learning Trust and its schools may do this by some or all of the following strategies:
 - a. Reports to parents and carers throughout the academic year;

- b. Daily text/ phone call home if a child does not turn up from school without an explanation from parents/ carers
- c. Reminder at parents evening on the importance of attendance on attainment
- d. Text home when attendance falls beneath 90%
- e. ELSA support
- f. Family worker support

6. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

- I. Each school is required by law to record each half-day of absence as either authorised or unauthorised. Therefore the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing.
- II. Reasons such as illness or medical/dental appointment are considered reasonable to warrant an authorised absence from school.
- III. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and no "leave" has been granted. This includes:
 - a. Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
 - b. Truancy from school
 - c. No reason yet provided for absence
 - d. Unauthorised absence
 - e. Children who arrive late (after registers are closed)
- IV. The school actively seeks to support parents/carers where a child's 'illness' is becoming a mask for reluctance to attend school. If a child is becoming reluctant to attend school, parents/carers are encouraged to contact Mrs Beard in the school office for support. Rather than give in to pressure to excuse their child from attending school, parents/carers can discuss their concerns with the school office to find a wayforward.
- V. Children with medical needs may require additional support with maintaining regular and punctual attendance. Parents/carers should contact the SENCO, Mrs Ballinger, for support.

7. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

- I. Children who have an absence rate of 10% or more across the academic year, or who have an absence rate of 10% or more in any six-week period, regardless of the reason, are categorised as a 'persistent absentee' (PA). Each school monitors and tracks absenteeism meticulously. However, any child identified as having been absent for 10% of the school time or is at risk of moving towards that figure, will be treated as a priority and parents/carers will be notified of this immediately.
- II. Identified PA or those at risk of becoming PA children and parents are supported and assisted in meeting their needs in improving their attendance.

8. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

If a child is absent from school, their parent/carer must:

- a. Contact the school by call or by email on the first day of absence, stating a reason for the absence;
- b. Contact the school by call or by email on each subsequent day of absence

When a child is absent the school will:

- a. Telephone/Text parents/carers if they have not been in contact;
- b. Request an explanation of the child's absence. If the parent/carer has not contacted the school and/or the school has been unable to reach the child's parents/carers through first-day calling;
- c. Invite the parent/carer to discuss the situation if the problem persists.

9. PARENT/CARER CONTACT DETAILS

- I. To ensure each Academy can contact students' parents/carers quickly and efficiently, please let the school know if your details have changed.
- II. If there are any changes to your contact details during the year, parents/carers must notify the school immediately to ensure that records are up to date.

10. ROLE OF EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

- I. The Trust values working in close partnership with parents/carers and encourages them to get in contact at an early stage to resolve any attendance problems which are becoming apparent. Working in this way is very effective and ensures a high level of success. However, if a school feels a situation would benefit from more focused intervention, a child may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.
- II. The Education Welfare Service will work in partnership with the parent/carer/school. It should be noted that if unauthorised absence persists, and other methods of intervention have been unsuccessful, the Head Teacher or authorised senior member of staff may instruct the relevant authorities to:
 - a. Issue Penalty Notices; and/or
 - b. Progress a case to prosecution in the Magistrates Court as it is a legal obligation of the parent/carer to ensure regular attendance of the child at school.

11. HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

- I. There is no legal entitlement for parents/carers to take their children out of school for holidays during term time. The Trust and each school expect support from parents/carers by not taking their children out of school during term time.
- II. Schools will only consider holidays in term time in exceptional circumstances. With exceptional circumstances in mind, any such holiday requests must be made no less than one month prior to the holiday. Any requests should be marked for the attention of Mrs Beard, the Office Manager.
- III. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional and permission to take a term-time holiday is not granted by the Head Teacher, but the holiday is still taken, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued by the relevant Local Authority.

12. PENALTY NOTICES

- I. Following a period of unauthorised or persistent absence, any parent/carer may be considered for a penalty notice. This is issued through the courts to both parents/carers and any fine is paid to the relevant Local Authority.