



Arts & Media School  
ISLINGTON

# ARTS & MEDIA SCHOOL ISLINGTON ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>Last Review Date</b>	<b>November 2018</b>
<b>Next Review Date</b>	<b>November 2019</b>

## **Introduction**

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## **Why Regular Attendance is important**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Inform students of their attendance on a weekly basis and ensure they write it in their student planners;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through prizes, certificates and outings/events.

## **Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

***Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.***

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (e.g. waiting for

- a repair man)
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. If your child is regularly off school for illness or medical issues we will require evidence of this in the form of letters from your doctor/consultant or prescriptions. **If your child's attendance falls below 85% we will not authorise any illness without this evidence.**

Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss one day a week or 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Lead.

### **Absence Procedures**

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence; call 0207 281 5511 ext 1027 to leave a message on the absence line or 0207 281 5511 for reception
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for an attendance officer to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, or a member of the leadership team if absences

- persist;
- Refer the matter to the Attendance Lead if attendance moves below 85%.

### **Telephone Numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### **The Attendance Lead:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Lead & the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, the Attendance Lead & the Local Authority can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices, parenting contracts/orders, Education Supervision Orders or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Attendance Lead or the local Authority themselves to ask for help or information. The telephone number at the school is 0207 281 5511 Ext 1042 or at the local authority 0207 527 5833 and currently the Attendance lead at Arts and Media School Islington is Mrs Janina Morgan.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8:50am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

At **9:15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Head Teacher, member of the Leadership team or the Head of School

and/or Attendance Lead to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Holiday in Term Time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make withdrawing pupils for travel in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the Head Teacher, a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. Leave is not automatically granted. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. The application form is attached to the end of this policy.

It is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will not be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATs), GCSE or any other public examinations.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below (96%) or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

### **School targets, projects and special initiatives**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them, they are currently for every child to be in school at least 96% of the time for every 1/2 term.

The minimum level of attendance for this school in line with the national average is 96% attendance. Our target is to achieve better than this, however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.  
Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

**Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the attendance policy at Arts and Media School Islington,

I will ensure that my child attends school and is on time for at least 96% of each  $\frac{1}{2}$  term

I will contact the school early if there are problems with my child's attendance and will work with the staff to ensure that the problems are resolved so that my child education does not suffer.

## Application for Leave of Absence in Term Time

Parents and carers are strongly urged not to book holidays or take special leave during school term time because your child will miss out on important school work and may not be able to catch up. This could have serious consequences on progress, attainment and opportunities later in life. Other pupils' education could be affected - the time teachers have to help all the children in a class is reduced if they spend time helping your child catch up after a holiday. Educational experiences in school missed as a result of a family holiday cannot be re-captured later.

There are 190 school days in a year – this leaves 175 days for holidays, cultural activities and family time.

If you feel that absence from school in term time is absolutely unavoidable, complete this form and return it to the head teacher. **Please be advised that holidays in term time are not a right and will only be granted under exceptional circumstances.** Each case is considered individually; however, leave is unlikely to be granted if your child already has low attendance or if the leave coincides with important examinations.

Pupil's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor Group/Class \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of Last day at School \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Return to School \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of school days missed \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons for absence from school (please continue on other side if needed):

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*I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a penalty notice or a summons to court for irregular school attendance.*

Name of Parent/Carer making application \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE**

**Reviewed JMO Nov 18**

**Next Review Nov 19**