

drb Ignite Multi Academy Trust

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Trust Vision

all pupils achieve the highest standard of educational outcomes regardless of circumstances or background.

The Trust has been established through a shared belief that lives can be transformed by what goes on in schools. The Trust believes that the process of teaching and learning shapes futures. To this end the Trust's vision is to give every pupil learning experiences that excite them and give them the power to begin to shape their own lives.

Rationale

The Trust believes in the fundamental right of all pupils to access educational opportunities through a full-time education that is shaped to meet their needs. This means that pupils need to attend school regularly and be punctual enabling them to make the most of their learning experiences. We believe this results in strong educational progress and achievement. The Trust regards attendance and punctuality as a measure of the quality of education offered by our schools. The Government is also clear about the importance of attendance by publishing an annual % target for all primary schools.

Background

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the *Education Act 1996* and associated regulations. Section 7 of the *Education Act 1996* states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 444 further states that:

The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law. An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

- *The student was absent with leave (authorised absence)*
- *The student was ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause*
- *The absence occurred on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which students/parents belong*
- *The school is not within the prescribed walking distance of the child's home and no suitable transport arrangements have been*

made. The law relating to 'walking distance' effectively is defined as two miles for students under eight and three miles for all other students measured by nearest available walking route.

- *A limited defence is available to the parents of travelling children.*

The Act places a legal obligation on the Trust to:

- provide and enforce attendance
- register attendance and notify the Local Authority of a child's absence from school without authorisation of 10 or more days.
- make sure that school registers are kept, one for attendance and one for admissions.

Trust Expectations

The Trust has a clear expectation that pupils will:

- attend school regularly and on each day the school is open
- arrive punctually for the start of the day
- attend all required lessons and engage with the education being provided
- arrive at school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss with their class teacher (or another appropriate adult) any problems that might deter them from attending school

The Trust expects that parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their children arrive at school on time and properly prepared for the school day
- contact the school, on the first day of absence, whenever their child is unable to attend school
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that keeps their child away from school. Contact can be made by phone, email, verbal or written message

The Trust expects that staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for pupils twice daily
- monitor every pupil's attendance and raise concerns promptly

- use school systems to contact parents as soon as possible on the first day of absence where no message has been received explaining the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences
- emphasise the importance of good attendance and take positive steps to encourage it
- provide a welcoming atmosphere and safe learning environment for all pupils
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns about attendance
- refer irregular or concerning patterns of attendance promptly to the member of staff with responsibility for school attendance.

Working in partnership with parents and carers

The Trust is committed to working in close partnership with parents and carers to support and encourage habits of good attendance. Parents, carers and school staff are supported to collaborate together to find solutions and overcome any barriers to school attendance. Parents and carers who may be concerned about their child's willingness to attend school should speak to their class teacher and/or headteachers as soon as possible.

Illness and medical appointments

The Trust expects that parents/carers will:

- make every effort to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a pupil to be out of school for this reason, the pupil should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- inform the school office the morning of the first day of a pupil's absence through illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence.
- provide a form of evidence, as required, to support a pupil's absence.

Absence through exceptional circumstances

The Trust recognises that sudden, serious circumstances do occur, albeit rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent of the circumstances so that it is aware of when to expect the pupil's return and the appropriate code can be recorded in the attendance register.

Holidays during term time

The Trust does not authorise holidays during term time unless the circumstances are exceptional and have been agreed in discussion with the school headteacher.


Legal powers to enforce school attendance

The Trust and its schools will use the various available powers if a pupil misses school without a good reason. These may include:

- Parenting Orders
- Education Supervision Orders
- School Attendance Orders
- Fines (known as a *penalty orders*)

Celebrating good attendance

The Trust recognises the importance of celebrating pupils' success and considers attendance to be part of this. However, for the youngest pupils it is recognised that attendance is heavily dependent on parental decision making.

Monitoring and review	Trust Board
Links	Safeguarding policy and procedures
Staff responsible	Headteachers DSLs School Attendance Officers
Committee responsible	Achievement, Support and Scrutiny
Reviewed	December 2021
Next review	December 2023
Sign off by Chair of Trust	 Date: December 2021

*Please note that should there be any changes/further national guidance issued relevant to this policy, it will be updated accordingly prior to the review date shown above and referred to the next Trust Board meeting.

Change Management

Issue No.:	Change date:	Change description:
1.0	Dec'16	Initial release
2.0	Nov'18	Rebranded, updated and signed off
3.0	Nov'19	Review
4.0	Dec'21	Review

