



Ark Swift
Primary Academy

The Swift Way...Every Day

**Ark Swift Attendance and Punctuality Policy
2017-18**

1. INTRODUCTION

Why do we need a policy?

“Our school” fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time and therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours. Every lesson counts!

Who does the policy apply to?

Our policy applies to all children and young people registered at this school and is therefore shared with parents/carers and pupils on admission to the school. In law compulsory school age applies to all children from the start of the term commencing on or after the child’s 5th birthday, until the last Friday in June during the academic year that the young person becomes 16.

How has the policy been developed?

It has been underpinned by the principles established in the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from both the DfES and the Local Authority.

What does the policy do?

Although parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child’s attendance, the governors and staff at this school will work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure pupils are encouraged and supported. Procedures in this policy will ensure that this happens and that children do not slip through the net.

Why is the policy important?

Every day of education and indeed every lesson matters. In the National Curriculum where there is built in progression, children who are persistently late or absent soon get behind with work and then do not understand current lessons when they return. The introduction to a lesson and to the school day is crucial to the child’s understanding of their own learning. Children who miss school frequently will undoubtedly have gaps in their learning which will impede their progress and future ability to engage in lessons. This in turn has a knock on effect for their ability to concentrate and for their behaviour. Children who do not understand the lesson will frequently behave inappropriately to cover their inability to engage with the work. Frequent absence has a profound and cumulative effect on achievement.

2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy ensures that all staff in our school are fully aware and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

What should we do to maintain good attendance and punctuality by our pupils?

- a) Raise awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- b) Ensure that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and on time by setting out their obligation in the school brochure and home school agreement.
- c) Equip children/young people with the skills needed to take responsibility for school attendance and punctuality appropriate to their age and development
- d) Maintain clear effective communication channels on school attendance matters
- e) Develop and implement procedures for identifying, reporting and following up cases of poor attendance and lateness
- f) Support pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance

- g) Develop and implement procedures to follow up non-attendance in school
- h) Establish a safe environment which demonstrates that *every child matters* and where children/young people can: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well being

3. PROCEDURES

Our School will undertake to follow the procedures set out in this policy below.

- a) To maintain appropriate registration processes
- b) To maintain appropriate attendance data
- c) To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school to all staff, parents and pupils
- d) To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness
- e) To follow up all absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school on the first day
- f) To discuss with parents what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence (only the school can authorise absences, not parents)
- g) To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken in term time
- h) To work with parents to improve attendance and punctuality
- i) To refer to the education welfare service any child whose family fails to respond to school initiatives to improve
- j) To report attendance statistics to the DfE and LA as required

4. Procedures for School Staff

- a) All staff should be aware that they must report any attendance or punctuality concerns to the named person in your school, the Assistant Principal.
- b) Advice can be sought from the LA when necessary
- c) If a pupil on the child protection register is absent for two days without explanation their social worker is notified.
- d) If a pupil is in public care (LAC) the carer, social worker and education co-ordinator will be involved appropriately. (see section on LAC)

The process for implementing these procedures in this school are set out below :

- a) The school day starts at 8.55am, the gates are open at 8.40am and registration takes place at 8.55am, closing at 9am.
- b) Children arriving after the gates close at 8.55am need to get a late slip from the school office
- c) Children who do not make registration will be marked as late from 9.01am.
- d) Children attending a medical appointment need to bring an appointment form or card and hand this to the office.
- e) Every week, attendance and punctuality is monitored by the Assistant Principal and Pastoral Support Manager. Children with persistent lateness or whose attendance drops below 96% will receive a letter from the Assistant Principal, informing parents the school is concerned. If lateness or absence persists, parents will be asked to come in to meet with the Pastoral Support Manager in the first instance to discuss how to improve this. Persistence leads to a second meet and a date with the Assistant Principal in which improvements need to be achieved by (4 weeks). After this Education and Welfare officer involvement will take place.

Sickness and Late procedures

If your child is ill;

- Call the school on the first day of absence by 9am – speak to the office (a home visit from members of our team may take place for absences so we can check in and provide any support that may be needed).
- Keep us informed daily with a phone call to tell us how they are getting on.
- An appointment card or prescription is required as proof that the child attended an appointment.
- Where possible let the school know of any appointments (medical/dental) in advance, and provide an appointment card for our records.
- Any child whose attendance is below 90% will need to provide medical proof for all absences in order for the school to authorise it.

If we are unable to contact you by the third attempt we will have no choice but to call the police as this may then be a child protection issue.

If your child is late;

- They must report to the school office immediately on arrival for registration purposes.

Continuous Absences/ lateness

If your child's absence falls below 96%, or a child is late more than twice, an alert will be triggered on our system and this will start our monitoring procedure.

1. A letter will be sent out to inform you that we have concerns over attendance or punctuality.
2. If the absence continues, a letter will be sent out to arrange a meeting with a member of the Pastoral Support Team to discuss how we can support you.
3. If the absence continues, we will send out another letter asking you to attend another meeting with the Assistant Principal, and we will set a date for improvement.
4. If the absence persists, we will make a referral to The Borough (Hammersmith and Fulham council) for external support. They will work closely with the family to identify where there are barriers to getting the child/ren to school and a fine may be issued.
5. If the absence persists, the Borough will have no choice but to progress with court proceedings (once attendance has reached the borough and/or court, any decisions/actions made going forth are out of school's hands and we are no longer able to intervene or provide further support)
6. If the absence still doesn't improve: We will then move to acquiring either a Parenting Order or an Education Supervision Order (ESO).

Term Time Travel

At Ark Swift we value the diverse cultures we have in our community. We understand that our families have relatives from all over the world and that at times there will be family emergencies and unforeseen circumstances which may force you to travel abroad. In this case please complete an 'Absence Request form' and return it to the office where we will arrange a meeting with yourself and the Principal

If the holiday or leave of absence is taken without the agreement of the Principal or is in excess of what has been agreed, your child's absence will be marked as unauthorised and we will have to make a referral to the Education Welfare Service who may issue you with an Education Penalty Notice.

What we are doing to encourage our pupils to attend, on time every day

- Breakfast Club from 8am
- Gates open at 8:40am and children go straight to class for an 8:55am start.
- Weekly attendance cup to the highest class.
- Weekly attendance points/winning classes featured in the school newsletter
- 100% names in the hat weekly for a prize
- 100% children will be invited to a 100% attendance party at the end of every half term.

We are open to suggestions from parents, pupils and staff as to what else we can do to promote attendance and punctuality at Swift.