

1st September 2025

Attendance Strategy to September 2025/26

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are delighted to share with you that attendance on our first day back has been fantastic across each year group and stands at 95.1%. We would like to thank you for your vital support in achieving this. It has been wonderful to see our students returning to the Academy, with such enthusiasm and commitment, ready and eager to learn. This positive start to the academic year now sets the tone for the term ahead, and maintaining the excellent attendance we have seen on day one will ensure students experience continuity in learning and remain fully engaged with key messages, routines, and opportunities.

The beginning of the school year also provides us with the opportunity to share some important attendance updates with our parents and carers. These include the changes to school attendance guidance, introduced by the government in August 2024. These updates apply to **all** children and families, and we kindly ask that you take a moment to read the key points below:

- Schools are obliged to issue a penalty notice if a child has 10 unauthorised absences over 10 consecutive school weeks.
- Missing one morning or one afternoon register mark will result in one unauthorised absence.
- A child will miss their morning and/or afternoon register mark if they arrive (a) more than 30 minutes after the school has opened in the morning (after 9.00am) and/or (b) after the afternoon register has started
- The first penalty notice equated to £160 if paid within 28 days.
- The penalty notice can be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

All schools **must** consistently follow national guidance on unauthorised absences, in line with NHS advice. We fully understand that it can sometimes be difficult for parents/carers to decide whether a child is well enough to attend school, especially if they're feeling a little off. Our advice is always to send your child in if you're unsure. Children often perk up by the time they arrive to school and are in their familiar school environment. Please be assured that we have a fantastic team of teaching and non-teaching staff who will keep a close eye on them throughout the day. Should we have any concerns, we'll be sure to get in touch with you.

We hope the additional information below will also prove useful. These guidelines are in place to support families in making confident decisions about their child's attendance and aim to help students the maintain strong, consistent attendance that is crucial to long term learning.

| What will be counted as an unauthorised absence? | What can be done to help in this situation? |
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| Colds, coughs, headaches, nausea, hay fever, sore throats, migraines, period pains, cold sores or conjunctivitis, feeling sick or unwell. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please check the NHS guidance: "Is my child too ill for school?" • When the illness is minor, let school know your child is feeling ill so we can monitor them during the day. • Please give them doses of recommended medicine before school, for mild illnesses. • If your child has been diagnosed with migraines by your GP, please let school know. • If your child feels unwell in school, they should report to Student Reception and a trained First Aider can support them (children must never use their phones themselves to contact parents to say they need picking up). |
| No communication at all from a parent or carer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and carers have a duty to call in and explain their child's absence. • For family emergencies, please ensure you contact us about your situation and we will offer support. |
| Unevidenced medical appointments (doctors, dentist, etc.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for a letter/email/text message to confirm your child's appointment. You can send a screenshot of appointment confirmations to school. |
| Holidays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please always only book holidays during the school holidays. |
| Feeling tired after a weekend sports fixture or other extracurricular event/school trip | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the school that your child is tired. We can monitor and support in school. |
| Physical injuries that could be catered for in school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If your child has a physical injury, contact school for support on how they can attend. |
| Your child refuses to attend school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call our Attendance Officer immediately and we can offer support. • If your child is experiencing friendship issues, or is worried about a past incident, make us aware of the situation and send them to school so we can support. We can always best support your child when they are in school. |
| Head lice and nits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please treat your child's hair with a medical shampoo and call school to let us know. |
| Low mood or anxiety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call our Attendance Officer immediately and we can offer support. • If your GP, or other medical professional, has expressed concerns about your child's mental health, again, please contact school for support |
| Sunburn | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please apply appropriate after-sun cream and give doses of appropriate medicine. Contact us if you need further support. |
| Unevidenced and unagreed sporting/musical activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All external sporting/music activities must be evidenced and agreed by the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher. • Contact school as soon as you know dates for these activities. |
| More than one day for religious observance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are granted one day of authorised absence for religious observance. • Further absences would be unauthorised. |
| Uniform or item is missing or broken | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School is able to provide uniform if they have misplaced an item. • School is also able to lend uniform until you are able to purchase the correct item. |

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| Collecting students from school without a valid reason. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School will contact you if it is felt that they need to be collected. For example, an injury that needs to be assessed by a medical professional. • If your child feels unwell in school, they should report to Student Reception and a trained First Aider can support them (children must never use their phones to contact parents to say they need picking up). School will contact you if they feel they are too unwell to be in school. |
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Finally, an important aspect of our strategy to ensuring children attend every day is a home visit from the team. Home visits are important in helping us make contact with families to discuss a student's wellbeing, enabling us to offer support and ensuring we follow our Children Missing from Education Policy and safeguard **all** the young people in our care. Typically, home visits are used for:

- Checking on students' welfare after the third day of absence.
- Students who are refusing to come into school
- When there are attendance concerns
- When other means of contact with a family have not been successful
- Establishing that a child is safe if they are absent from school and attempts to contact families have not elicited a response
- Working with and supporting families in developing strategies to help their child attend school
- Visiting a child who has been off school for a period of time, for example due to medical issues, so that they do not feel isolated from school
- Investigating situations when there are suspicions that someone may be on holiday contrary to earlier indications (for example when a child is not at school and is reported as being ill during the same period for which a request for exceptional leave in term-time had not been accepted)

The key phrase we use with Newark Academy children and families is 'Attend Every Day'. We recognise that for some students, building the resilience to attend regularly takes time, and we are here to support that journey every step of the way. When circumstances beyond your control affect your child's attendance, please know that we are always here to help, guide, and work with you.

We're really looking forward to continuing this strong start and maintaining a positive attendance record throughout the year, thereby ensuring every student has the best chance to thrive, learn, and succeed.

If you have any questions about your child's attendance record, please contact Mrs Butler, our attendance officer (kbutler@newarkacademy.co.uk)

Kind regards,
Newark Academy