



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

UPDATED SEPT 2024

## ATTENDANCE POLICY: SUPPORTING ACHIEVEMENT

The Ark Smallholding considers the promotion of good attendance as a key priority in terms of raising the social and emotional wellbeing of all learners. We are committed to working in partnership with learners, parents/carers, referring schools, and relevant agencies in order to ensure that we continue to improve the attendance of all our learners.

### KEY AIMS OF POLICY:

- Ensuring punctuality of learners
- Reducing the number of learners with persistent absence
- Reducing the number of unauthorised absences
- Ensuring safeguarding of learners by supporting parents/carers in improving learners' attendance.

## STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

In order to support learners in understanding the importance of attendance, and encouraging motivation to attend, the following strategies are implemented.

- Engaging activities to motivate young people to attend
- A safe and nurturing environment where learners feel welcomed
- Clear expectations laid out at referrals and baseline assessment days
- Phone calls to follow-up regarding absences
- Meetings with parent/school

## REGISTERS

Registers are completed daily, sharing attendance information on a morning with host schools via phone call or email. Authorised absences are verified by host school only.

To ensure all people in the building are accounted for in case of fire, hard copies of registers are kept by the Fire Marshall and receptionist on-site and taken out to the Fire Assembly Points where the register is re-taken to ensure all learners are accounted for. Radio Communication is used to confirm this.

## IF A LEARNER IS ABSENT

It is essential that learners and parents know that their absence from the centre is noted, and that prompt return is important for maintaining progress. For safeguarding reasons, it is also vital that parents are made aware promptly if their child is not in school.

Daily phone calls are made to parents/carers to follow up on any unauthorised (not pre-arranged) absences. Notes from these calls are made and passed on to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for any appropriate action (for example Safeguarding or home visits) to be taken.

All outcomes are communicated to the learner's host school.

## PERSISTENT ABSENTEES

If the above strategies fail, the Manager/Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the host school regarding further intervention, which may include:

- Parent/school meeting
- Joint home visit
- Reduced timetable
- Support with travel arrangements
- Usual school action, for instance fines.

## REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

At The Ark Smallholding we believe that learners need to attend for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that in exceptional circumstances there are times when a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence.

We expect parents to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods. Any requests for leave of absence outside this time are directed to the host school, who can choose to approve or deny the request.

If The Ark Smallholding is informed of a medical appointment, this is also communicated to the host school, along with any relevant evidence.

## STUDENTS ABSCONDING FROM SITE

Students are not allowed to leave site during the school day other than due to prior-arranged leaves of absence (as detailed above).

If any student leaves site without permission, this is categorised as absconding. A staff member will leave the site to speak to the student while they remain within sight of the premises in order to encourage them to return. Where the student is at risk of imminent harm (or of causing harm/criminal action), staff may call 999 or act to ensure the safety of the student and/or prevention of criminal activity. Where it is not safe to do so (either for the absconding student or others) staff will not continue to pursue learners who continue to leave, however they will attempt to get confirmation from the learner of where they intend to go.

If the learner goes out of sight of staff, contact with parents/carers and school will be made to inform them that the learner has absconded. Any conversation with the learner about why they are leaving or where they are going will also be relayed.

In the event that no contact can be made with parents/carers and/or school, a phone call will be made to 101 to report the learner missing.

## ENFORCED CLOSURE

The Ark Smallholding may be closed in exceptional circumstances, including the following:

- a weather-related emergency, such as snow or flooding,
- a natural disaster, such as the impact on air travel of a volcanic eruption,
- a health-related emergency, such as restrictions on travel in certain areas related to a foot and mouth outbreak,
- travel disruption caused by the rationing or non-availability of fuel,
- a health and safety risk on-site, such as gas leak or electrical failure.