

Arkwright Primary School

ATTENDANCE

POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

At Arkwright Primary School we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximize the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realize their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

At Arkwright Primary School all pupils are valued. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Arkwright Primary School recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

1. The Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approval educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

2. Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

- Authorised can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.
- Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parent/carers.

Absence will be categorized as follows:

Illness

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription unless the local authority requires verification from the GP.

Medication/Dental Appointments

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part-time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Excluded (No alternative provision made)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Family Holidays and Extended Leave

Parents wishing to take their child on holiday during term time must complete a written request to the head teacher before holiday arrangements are made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorized as unauthorised.

From 1st September 2013 amendments to the Regulations 2006 by the Department of Education come into force. These state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school, if the leave is granted.

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter will state:

- The expected date of return
- That parent must contact school should any delays to their return occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family, do not return as expected.

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child may lose their school place.

If permission to take leave is not granted and the parents take their child on holiday anyway, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school will refer the matter to the Local Authority who will keep this on the child's file. The school will request that a Penalty Notice be issued.

Religious Observance

Arkwright Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that par-time education for Traveller children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

Late Arrival

Registration begins at 8.55am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The registers close at 9.05am. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late and after 9.15am the lateness will be recorded as unauthorised absence of a session.

On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately be taken to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if parents wake up late.

Unauthorised absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- Holidays taken without the authorization of school.

3. Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Transfer between school
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school
- 10 school days of continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried and failed to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where she/he has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

Arkwright Primary school will follow Derbyshire County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year and where appropriate link these to the Performance Management of Senior Leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Education as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance (Headteacher)
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

The Headteacher will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented

- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response (Education Welfare, School Health Care) to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

Class teachers will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

We request that Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, home work, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or when a parent is unwell
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.

5. Using Attendance Data

Pupil's attendance will be monitored and data will be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every time (6) the school clerk, as attendance administrator, will provide all class teachers and the headteacher with attendance data for the previous term for each pupil within their class. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attenders at the top; every pupil will be colour coded as indicated below:

GREEN	pupils with attendance between 100% and 96%
AMBER	pupils with attendance between 95% and 90%
RED	pupils with attendance below 89%

Parents will also be sent a letter every term (6) providing information on their child's attendance.

This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).

Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

Arkwright Primary School will share attendance data with the Department for Education via the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

6. Support Systems

School recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parent should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may effect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

School also recognises that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Friendship groups
- PSHE

- Reward systems
- Time limited part time attendance
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support

Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with parents.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the school in consultation with the Education Welfare Service will consider the use of legal sanctions.

7. Legal Sanctions

Prosecution

When attendance continues to be low and interventions fails to bring about an improvement, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required in court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternative to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contract, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Parenting Contracts

(Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

Parenting Contracts will be used in accordance with Derbyshire County Council's Parenting Contract Protocol.

Penalty Notices

(Anti Social Behaviour Act 2007) – under the updated regulations, Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2013, Penalty Notices will be considered when;

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Derbyshire County Council's Notice Protocol.

Attendance will be a standing item each term on the agenda of the Staff Meeting's where the progress of these groups will be reported and the effectiveness of interventions measured. This will be used to review and inform whole school strategies.

The Headteacher will include attendance information in each termly Report to Governors.

Appendix 1

Escalation of Attendance Interventions

GREEN – pupils with attendance between 100 – 96%

Parents will receive a letter home congratulating them on their child's good/excellent attendance each term.

Pupils with this level of annual attendance will receive a certificate of achievement and this will be acknowledged in whole school assembly.

The school clerk and Headteacher will be responsible for all action at this level and will organise the letters and certificates.

AMBER – pupils with attendance between 95- 90%

Parents will receive a letter informing them of their child's attendance. On return to school after any absences, the class teacher will speak to the parent/pupil to:

- Confirm with the parent/pupil the reason for absence
- Update the pupil on work they have missed and support any catch up required
- Continue to monitor especially if any attendance was unauthorised

RED – pupils with attendance below 89%

Attendance below 89%

Parents will receive a letter informing them of their child's attendance. The headteacher will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all interventions and outcomes.

Action may include:

- Arranging Multi-Agency working
- Maintaining close communication with parents whenever possible
- Monitoring any Parent Agreement or Parent Attendance Order with the Education Welfare Service
- Referring parents for prosecution and preparation of all necessary data for court case
- Referral to Education Welfare Officer

Attendance below 80%

Parents will receive a letter informing them:

Pupils who have attendance below 80% are considered to be persistently absent from school. To ensure that intervention is focused and meets the needs of individuals, pupils will be grouped in to one of the following categories:

- Looked After Children and Children on the Child Protection Register
- Special Educational Needs
- Long term non attendance
- Parental support/needs e.g. parental drug use, young carers, domestic issues
- English as an Additional Language
- Ethnic minority

Date: October 2013

Headteacher:

Chair of Governors:

Minute No.

Date of next review: