



## ARLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Attendance Policy

Status of policy – Statutory/Non-Statutory

DATE REVIEWED - DEC 22

DATE APPROVED – JAN 23

By RC, ESS, FGB

NEXT REVIEW DATE – DEC 23

Signed:

Staff Lead: Claire Roberts (Office Manager)

Governor Lead: Gary Green



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

### **The school hours are:**

School gates open: 8:40am

Doors open: 8.50am

Registration: 9.00am

Close of registration: 9.30am

Break: 10:15-10:30/10.35 – 10.50

Lunch: 12:00-1:00pm/12.15pm - 1.15pm

End of School: 3.30pm

- 1.2 The governing body is responsible for ensuring that attendance registers are kept, that record which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day.

Registers will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

- 1.3 If allowed to remain unchecked, persistent absence and lateness can significantly undermine the school's efforts to raise standards. The purpose of this policy is to inform all members of our school communities of the following:

- How the school encourages good attendance
- How the school monitors attendance
- Authorised and unauthorised absences
- Holiday absence in term time
- Role of the WAS (Warwickshire Attendance Service)

## **2. ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

- 2.1 The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good.



Attendance of the individual classes is on every weekly newsletter.

Certificates are presented to children who achieve 100% attendance at the end of each term, and for pupils with 97%+ they receive a certificate of congratulations.

Regular reminders are included on the newsletter to reinforce the importance of good attendance at school.

- 2.2 It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset parents are encouraged to take an active role in the work of their school and to share and support their children's enthusiasm. Among the variety of commitments, regular and punctual attendance is prominent.
- 2.3 All staff ensure children are aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised and rewarded for attending school regularly.
- 2.4 The child's attendance record is shared with parents as part of termly written reports. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept on file and are passed onto subsequent schools.

### **3. MONITORING AND REVIEWING ATTENDANCE**

- 3.1 Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure pupils attend school regularly and on time and, to provide a reason to the school for any absences. Being on time for school is very important. Arley Primary concentrates on key skills such as Literacy and Numeracy at the beginning of the school day and children who arrive late, miss important learning. They also miss important information about what is happening during the day. This can leave a child confused and distressed when he/she does not know what is happening throughout the day. Being late frequently can have an impact on a child's ability to form friendships and can lead to lower self-esteem.
- 3.2 Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by Office staff. Relevant teachers will be contacted after 9:30am to check any absences in the electronic registers, before parents are contacted.
- 3.3 All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. If a pupil arrives at school before 9:30, this will be authorised late. If the pupil arrives after 9:30, this will be marked as unauthorised late. When the register closes at 9:30, the office staff check the messages and a text is sent home or a phone call made on the first day after registers close for those pupils absent with no reason given.
- 3.4 Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the SLT and Office staff, who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.
- 3.5 The Attendance lead monitors the attendance of pupils every 4-6 weeks and contacts parents if a child's attendance has been lower than 96%. If a pupil's attendance falls



below 90%, it will be deemed as persistent absence. The school may refer a pupil to the WAS team if a child's attendance is lower than 90%. Support is available in this situation via the school or the WAS team. If there is no improvement in attendance a referral will be made to WAS, which may result in legal action.

- 3.6 Returns of school data are made annually to the DFE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.
- 3.7 Attendance targets are set each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and governors at the first Full Governors' meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The target at Arley Primary is 97%.

#### 4. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

- 4.1 The DFE recognises the importance of regular attendance and ***it is a statutory requirement for the school to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised.***
- 4.2 The following represent the sort of absences, which the school may approve as authorised:
- Medical/dental appointment or illness.
  - Approved sporting activity (playing at a standard of excellence)
  - Day of religious observance
  - Visits to prospective secondary schools or prospective schools children may be moving to in other areas
  - Close family bereavement
  - Adverse weather conditions

Holidays may be taken, but only if exceptional circumstances warrant this. Each case is judged independently and factors taken into consideration, before a decision will be made.

- 4.3 Wherever possible, parents are expected to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental), outside of school time.
- 4.4 If a child is absent from school for any reason, the parent **must** inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible. For the majority of parents the normal routine is to telephone the school on the first morning of absence. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.
- 4.5 If a child is absent for more than ten days, this will be reported to the Head of vulnerable groups and lead professional, as the child will be considered to be "Missing in Education". This will not apply if the child has been hospitalised for medical reasons.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent without authorisation for twenty consecutive days, the pupil can be



removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

4.6 Any absence that is either not explained by a parent or is not agreed by the school will be counted as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence is also known as truancy.

- Schools are required by law to report their unauthorised absences to both the Local Authority and the relevant government department (DfE).
- Persistent or severe levels of unauthorised absence will be referred to the Warwickshire, Attendance Service (WAS) for intervention. WAS staff will make contact with families to find out why absence is high and will offer support to help with any issues that are preventing full attendance.
- However, if absence and/or lateness persists, the WAS has the responsibility to enforce attendance through legal interventions (Fixed Penalty Notices and/or prosecution) which may result in a fine, a Parenting Order or, in extreme cases, imprisonment.

## 5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

### *Leave of Absence*

5.1.1 The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

5.1.2 Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

5.1.3 Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

5.1.4 Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.

5.1.5 The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

5.1.6 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.



5.1.7 Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

5.1.8 All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) of Warwickshire County Council.

5.1.9 The Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).

5.1.10 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.**

#### **5.11 Why attendance matters:**

- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
  - 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
  - 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
  - 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance
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- If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.
  - There are 190 school days each year and 175 other days for shopping trips, birthday treats, non-urgent appointments and holidays.
  - One day a week absence is the equivalent over a school career of 2.5 whole years of education missed.
  - 10 days holiday leave a year is the equivalent of two whole terms of education missed.
  - 15 minutes of lateness a day equals one whole year of education missed.

## **6. ROLE OF THE EDUCATIONAL SOCIAL WORK (TRADED) SERVICE**



6.1 On those occasions when a pattern of poor attendance or lateness is developing, the Head will work directly with the family to seek solutions. Should the problem persist, then a referral to the school's Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) will follow. The WAS makes chargeable visits to the school and has a number of statutory powers to assist families with attendance difficulties and, of course, has access to all the support mechanisms of the County's Social Services.

## **7. IN CONCLUSION**

7.1 It is our belief that good attendance and punctuality is at the heart of a child's progress and is, therefore, fundamental to our school's success.

7.2 The Governing Body greatly appreciates parental support to reduce the total amount of days lost due to holidays. The Senior Leadership team are committed to working in partnership with parents to enable all children to reach their academic targets and to support their social development and for this to happen, individual attendance needs to be as high as possible and we all need to play our part.

Kate Parkes  
Arley Primary School  
March 2023