

Arbury Primary School – Attendance Policy

1. Aims and Objectives – Our policy aims to

- Emphasise the importance to all students and families that maximum attendance at school is vital for achieving their full potential.
- Reinforce the notion that every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled and that parents are responsible in law for the regular and punctual attendance of their child.
- Make explicit to all (students, parents/carers and teachers) the schools' expectations on attendance levels and support strategies to help students maximise their attendance.
- Stress the need for home and school to work in partnership to achieve high attendance.
- Promote a consistent approach across the school towards attendance matters.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties linked to attendance at school and in the local authority.

The school sees **96% attendance as the minimum expectation** for all students and strives for all students to attend more than 98%. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and September 2013 make clear that Head teachers may not authorise holidays (or other Leave of Absence) in term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. The school upholds these regulations and supports the use of financial penalties and court action where necessary.

2. Procedures and Practices

Registration

Roll call registration (electronic) takes place twice a day at 9:00 am & 13:30(KS1) / 13:45(KS2) pm in the classroom.

Lateness

Any student arriving in school after registration has been taken will be recorded as 'L' (late). If they arrive after registration period has finished they will be recorded as 'U' (unauthorised absence). Any child arriving after 9.15 am will be marked as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence at the beginning of the day is particularly damaging to a child's academic and social progress and for this reason will be treated very seriously by the school and the EWO.

Absences

Authorised absences are where a student has been absent and a satisfactory and legal reason has been communicated to the school via a form tutor, direct to the attendance team or whilst representing the school/educational visit. Other reasons include: genuine illness, days of religious observance, unavoidable medical appointments, exceptional circumstances (bereavement/marriage of immediate family member or traveller children going 'on the road'). The school expects authorised absences to be kept to a minimum and therefore routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours or during school holidays wherever possible.

Where absence through illness has led to significantly low attendance, parents/carers will be expected to provide evidence of illness and/or appointments.

Unauthorised absences are when no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parents/carers or the reason provided is not deemed as acceptable by the school. Examples of these may be lateness after the end of registration, attending a birthday celebration, minding a house, caring for a sibling, shopping or going on holiday.

The school, using DfE guidelines, makes the final decision about whether or not any absence is seen as authorised or unauthorised

Term-Time holidays

The school strongly discourages holidays being taken in term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. Arbury Primary School follows the new DfE guidelines, which took effect from September 2013, that states that requests for long-term leave can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. No term time leave will be granted, or deemed granted without a formal request on the appropriate forms and a written response given. Interviews following a request may be conducted prior to any decision being made. The school will not authorise any holidays retrospectively and may follow up any reported illness that we feel may have been a term time holiday. Full details of the absence request procedures are outlined in Appendix 2.

Unauthorised Term-Time leave (including holiday)

As of 18th April 2017 any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave of 6 or more consecutive sessions (3 school days) over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice.

Reporting and rewarding good attendance

Certificates for 100% Attendance will be awarded to children for the autumn, spring & summer half terms.

3. Strategies used to support and improve attendance at school

Students must attend regularly (minimum of 96%) and punctually (before 9.00 am)

Parents

Parents/carers (or whichever adult the student lives or is staying with) are legally responsible for the child's attendance at school and must ensure that students attend, regularly, on time, in correct uniform and with correct equipment. They could be subject to criminal prosecution should their child's attendance fall below acceptable levels.

We expect parents to;

- Telephone, text or email school on or before the first day of their child's absence to notify of the absence.
- Provide satisfactory medical evidence when required to do so
- Attend attendance planning meetings when requested to do so with staff from school and the Education Welfare Officer when necessary.

School

School will;

Roll call registration twice a day (am and pm)

- Contact the parent/carer by telephone or Email on the first day of absence if no notification is received.
- Monitor attendance when necessary
- **Use the 3 letter system** to communicate with parents highlighting absence and requesting explanations.
- Investigate unexplained absences **(if no satisfactory evidence is received within 10 days, the absence will remain recorded as unauthorised).**
- Hold attendance planning meetings to discuss how school can support parents/carers to improve attendance and to set targets. (Which may include referral to the school's family partnership co-ordinator)
- Include attendance information on progress reports
- Refer to the Education Welfare Officer when attendance falls below 90%

The Local Authority (LA)

The local authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) holds the statutory responsibility for school attendance for pupils in all Cambridgeshire schools. Education Welfare Officers act on behalf of the LA to promote attendance and in partnership with schools, enforce attendance through the use of legal sanctions when necessary

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will;

- Liaise with schools to help identify children whose attendance is unacceptable
- Write to parents requesting their attendance at, Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) meetings as appropriate
- Carry out home visits when appropriate.
- Carry out assessments and broker supportive interventions from a range of external agencies such as the locality team (family work, youth support) when necessary.
- Request the imposition of legal sanctions such as penalty notices, parent contracts, education attendance orders and fines.

Useful Guidance and Websites

Further guidance relating to attendance is recommended to all staff, parents / carers and governors can be found in the following publications:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/schools

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

www.arbury.cambs.sch.uk

Ben Tull – June 2005

Reviewed – Jan 2012

Reviewed – Oct 2013 (In consultation with the Education Welfare Officer)

Adopted – Curriculum Committee – 6th November 2013

Reviewed – September 2014

Reviewed and amended – Oct 2018 (In consultation with the Education Welfare Officer)

Reviewed and amended - May 2019

Appendix 1 – School Register codes

The DfE offers a comprehensive set of register codes which all schools are required to use. These codes are as follows:

/\	Present am/pm
B	Educated off site - Approved Educational Activity.
C	Other authorised circumstances (including public performances licensed by the local authority, family bereavements, exceptional special occasions) - Authorised Absence.
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) - Approved Educational Activity.
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made) - Authorised Absence.
F	Extended family holiday (agreed) - Authorised Absence.
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement) - Unauthorised Absence.
H	Family holiday during term-time (provided this has been agreed by the school) - Authorised Absence.
I	Illness (not medical/dental appointments) - Authorised Absence.
J	Interview - Approved Educational Activity.
L	Late (before registers close) - Present.
M	Medical/Dental appointments - Authorised Absence.
N	No reason yet provided for absence - Unauthorised Absence.
O	Unauthorised Absence.
P	Approved Sporting Activity - Approved Educational Activity.
R	Religious Observance - Authorised Absence.
S	Study Leave - Authorised Absence.
T	Traveller child travelling - Authorised Absence.
U	Late after registers close without an acceptable explanation - Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational visit or trip - Approved Educational Activity.
W	Work Experience - Approved Educational Activity.
X	Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances.
Y	Enforced closure – not counted in possible attendances.
Z	Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances.
#	School closed – not counted in possible attendance.

Teachers are only required to use a limited number of the codes. The attendance office, should be consulted before entering codes that are different to those on the default settings via the electronic registration system.

Appendix 2 – Roles and responsibilities

All staff - are expected to be excellent role models by having outstanding attendance and punctuality records. The following people can help with any concerns or questions regarding attendance & punctuality:

Ben Tull – Headteacher

Christa Schwarz – School Attendance Officer

Melissa Archer – Schools Education Welfare Officer

Parents/Carers -If your child is absent from school for any reason (appointments, illness or other) or is going to be late, you should inform the school office before 9.15am on the morning. If your child is late to school they will need to be signed in the school late book. Any child taken out of school due to illness or appointments need to also be signed out and in on their return at the office.

Requests for absence should be put in writing by completing an absence request form which is available from the school office or via the school website and marked for the attention of Mrs Schwarz. This can be handed in to the school office or put in the post box in reception. Requests should be made well in advance to allow good time for processing.

Appendix 3 - Information about Term Time Holidays

The following information has been taken directly from the Cambridgeshire County Council website:

Term time holidays

Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular attendance is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities which are available to him or her.

When a child is absent from school, he or she misses not only the teaching provided but is also less prepared for the lessons after his or her return.

There are only 190 statutory school days in one year and 175 days (weekends and school holidays) available to use for holidays. Therefore every school day counts!

Key information

Prior to June 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed for headteachers to grant leave of absence for a term time family holiday in 'special circumstances' and for extended leave in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to these regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave. The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Your rights and responsibilities

If your child is registered at school you must ensure that s/he attends regularly.

The regulations make it clear that parents, carers or relatives do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term time holiday.

If parents take their child on holiday in term time this will be counted as unauthorised absence - this is the same as truancy and you may be at risk of a Penalty Notice being applied.

What you can do

Look at the school's attendance policy on the website for full information.

Speak to the school direct if you feel you need to take your child out of school in exceptional circumstances immediately or in an emergency.