

# Arunside Primary School

## Attendance policy and procedures



**Approved by:** FGB (P&R) Committee **Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Last reviewed on:** October 2022

**Next review due by:** October 2026

| Date       | Section | Policy review updates:   |
|------------|---------|--|
| 19/09/2023 | 3.3     | Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating this regularly to pupils and parents, (see appendix 4: Promoting Good attendance).<br>Addition of the wording, 'Our Admin Assistant supports the Family Welfare Officer with matters of attendance' |

|            |                   |   |
|------------|-------------------|---|
| 19/09/2023 | Previous 3.4      | Removal of text relating to the roles and responsibilities of the Attendance and Welfare Officer whilst transferring some of these to 3.3.  |
| 19/09/2023 | Section 3.4 – 3.6 | Sequential re-numbering 3.4 – 3.5   |
| 19/09/2023 | 3.4               | to the <b>Admin Assistant</b> (new title for Attendance and Welfare Office)   |
| 19/09/2023 | 3.5               | Change 'registers' to ' <b>front gates</b> '  |
| 19/09/2023 | 4.1               | Change of times from 8.45am and 8.55am to <b>8.50am</b> and <b>9.00am</b> respectively  |
| 19/09/2023 | 4.3               | Email address updated: <a href="mailto:attendance@arunside.school">attendance@arunside.school</a> .   |
| 19/09/2023 | 4.3               | Updated, additional wording: <b>See Appendix 1 (flowchart) regarding requests for medical evidence for pupils with low-level attendance</b>   |
| 19/09/2023 | 4.5               | Updated, additional wording: <b>In such circumstances, two members of the senior leadership team will undertake a home visit.</b> Also, number of days amended to <b>three</b> as per advice from the LA.   |
| 19/09/2023 | 6                 | Update wording following meeting with the LA and the change of roles and responsibilities 'The FWO will regularly review attendance data, trends and concerns. Children falling between <b>92-95% attendance</b> , will be picked up quickly to ensure early intervention. <b>Parents will receive a phone call or attendance letter 1 to offer support.</b> Parents of pupils with attendance between <b>90 – 92%</b> will be sent attendance letter 2 alongside a phone call from the Family Welfare Officer to discuss the support that can be put in place. The school will work closely with a child's social worker if there are any unexplained absences.<br><br>Pupil attendance data is also discussed each term by the <b>Family Welfare Officer</b> and the link governor for attendance'. |
| 19/09/2023 | Previous 6.1      | Wording altered to reflect the fact that the Pastoral and Welfare Team are no longer active due to change in roles.   |
| 19/09/2023 | New 6.1           | Updates and details the additional support available to SEND children and those with emotional based school avoidance   |
| 19/09/2023 | 6.2               | Updated the level of absence ( <b>below 90%</b> ) as per the recommendation by the LA and amended the wording to reflect the change in roles and responsibilities: 'Where attendance data shows persistent absence, the FWO will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to communicate with parents to discuss the reasons for the absences.</li> <li>• Pass the details of any families whose attendance has not improved following telephone calls or meetings to the headteacher who will request a meeting and parents will be warned of a possible PEIO referral.</li> <li>• If there is no improvement in attendance following the meeting with the Headteacher, a referral to the PEIO will be made.</li> </ul>  |

## 1. Aims

As a school are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance. We will therefore:

- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the necessary support in place to achieve good attendance
- Promote and support punctuality and good attendance through targets, data and strategies
- Act early to identify patterns of absence and reduce persistent and severe absence

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the importance of school attendance is promoted across the school's policies and ethos (see letter from the headteacher in appendix 1)
- Ensuring that school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Ensuring attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced and staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Monitoring, reviewing and challenging the school's attendance data presented in reports prepared by the link governor for attendance; comparing the data on a termly basis with the 'national average'.

### 3.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy
- Monitoring and evaluating the impact of implemented attendance strategies
- Authorising absences for 'exceptional circumstances'
- Referring unauthorised absences to the local authority so that intervention may be considered

### 3.3 The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school and providing a clear vision for improving attendance, the strategy for which is documented in our school development plan
- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating this regularly to pupils and parents, [\(see appendix 4: Promoting Good attendance\)](#)
- Devising specific strategies to address any areas of poor attendance identified

and supporting pupils and families in their achievement of targeted intervention, including issuing rewards.

- Monitoring and analysing all attendance data (see section 6) and benchmarking data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher, including the possible need for fixed-penalty notices.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is our Family Welfare Officer (FWO) who can be contacted via the main school phone number, (01403 263919) or by emailing [fwo@arunside.school](mailto:fwo@arunside.school). Our Admin Assistant supports the Family Welfare Officer with matters of attendance.

### 3.4 Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording class attendance at morning and afternoon registration by using the present mark (/) or the not present mark (N)
- Submitting the above attendance information to the Admin Assistant at the close of class registration.

### 3.5 Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school for the whole day when open
- Notify the school office to report an unplanned absence following point 4.3 below
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that where possible, medical and dental appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Accompany their child to the school office to sign their child into the late signing-in book if they are arriving after the front gates have closed

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

The school will maintain an admission register for all pupils, who will have their attendance recorded twice daily in the attendance register. Pupils should arrive at school by 8.50am when the school is open. The morning registration period will close at 9.00am. The afternoon registration period will close at 1.00pm for those pupils in EYFS and Year 6 and at 1.10pm for pupils in Years 1-5.

Pupils will be given a mark to confirm they are either:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity (the nature of the activity being attended will also be recorded)
- Absent (whether or not the absence is authorised or unauthorised for children of compulsory school age will also be recorded)  
or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (the nature of circumstances and the number of days absence approved by the headteacher will also be recorded)

Any subsequent amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

The attendance register will be kept for three years from the date on which the entry was made.

#### **4.2 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives after the main gates have been shut, but before the registers close, will be marked as late (L). A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will receive an unauthorised absent (U) mark. The school has a signing-in book to monitor children who arrive after 8.50am and parents/carers are required to accompany their child to the school office to record the reasons for the lateness in this book. The reasons will then also be captured on the electronic register to ease monitoring purposes.

#### **4.3 Unplanned absence**

On the first day of an unplanned absence, the pupil's parent/carer must notify the school by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible. This can be done in person at the school office, by telephoning the school office, (a message can be left on the answerphone) or electronically by emailing [attendance@arunside.school](mailto:attendance@arunside.school). Parents/carers are expected to call the school on each subsequent morning during their child's absence unless they are able to provide an accurate length of absence during the initial notification.

The school will mark any absence caused through illness as 'authorised'. If the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, the pupil's parent/carer will be asked to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate documentation. Medical evidence will not be requested unnecessarily. If the school is dissatisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'. Parents/carers will be notified of this action in advance. See Appendix 1 (flowchart) regarding requests for medical evidence for pupils with low-level attendance

Where parents do not notify the school of the reason for absence on the first day, the school will contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence. If the school is unable to speak with a parent, a voicemail will be left/a text will be sent and the parent will be asked to contact the school as soon as possible. The register mark will remain as "N" (an unexplained absence), until a reason for the absence is received by the school. (See section 4.5 – Following up on unexplained absences).

#### **4.4 Planned absence**

We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. On occasions where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence provided advance notice has been given to the school. Parents should notify the school office of all such appointments, providing evidence of the appointment wherever possible. A visual sighting of a text is acceptable, but if evidence is contained in a letter or email, then a copy of this will be scanned and attached to the pupil's electronic records that are held on the school's MIS.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 5 – Authorised and unauthorised absence.

#### **4.5 Following up on unexplained absence**

Where a pupil has an unexplained absence, the school will (up to a maximum of three days) pursue daily enquiries, to ascertain the reason for absence. In such circumstances, two members of the senior leadership team will undertake a home visit. The correct code will then be applied to the register. Such follow-ups will also ensure that all necessary safeguarding action can be taken.

If a child's absence for illness has exceeded five-days, the parents may be asked to provide a doctor's note or other medical evidence in support of the absence. If the absence continues, the school will consider involving a Pupil Entitlement: Investigating Officer (PEIO).

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if it is considered that the request constitutes 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion with the agreed number of days specified.

Requests should be submitted in writing (6 weeks in advance where possible, using the template available from the school). The headteacher may require evidence to support any request. Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, even if it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

When a child of compulsory school age is recorded as absent from school without authority, their parent(s) /carer(s) can be held accountable for an offence under S.444 of the Education Act 1996. The school has the option to refer such matters to the local authority to consider intervention, dependent on the length and the reason for the absence. This can be through one of two pathways:

- A request for the use of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)
- A request for the allocation of an Investigating Officer, (PEIO)

Referrals are reviewed and acted upon by Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PE:I), who finalise which pathway of intervention is to be taken.

## 6. Monitoring and analysing data

The FWO will regularly review attendance data, trends and concerns. Children falling between 92-95% attendance, will be picked up quickly to ensure early intervention. Parents will receive a phone call or attendance letter 1 to offer support. Parents of pupils with attendance between 90 – 92% will be sent attendance letter 2 alongside a phone call from the Family Welfare Officer to discuss the support that can be put in place. The school will work closely with a child's social worker if there are any unexplained absences.

Pupil attendance data is also discussed each term by the Family Welfare Officer and the link governor for attendance.

### 6.1 Additional Support

The school will support pupils with medical conditions or SEND who have poor attendance by:

- Maintaining the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.

- Ensuring join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Considering additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitoring data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

The school will support pupils with emotional based school avoidance through

- Targeted support from the FWO

## 6.2 Reducing persistent and severe absence

A pupil with an overall rate of absence **below 90%** is classified as persistently absent. Where attendance data shows persistent absence, the FWO will:

- Continue to communicate with parents to discuss the reasons for the absences.
- Pass the details of any families whose attendance has not improved following telephone calls or meetings to the headteacher who will request a meeting and parents will be warned of a possible PEIO referral.
- If there is no improvement in attendance following the meeting with the Headteacher, a referral to the PEIO will be made.

## 7. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. As the barriers to attendance evolve quickly, the school will also seek the views of pupils and parents to aid policy updates but as a minimum, the policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the P&R Committee (under delegated authority from the full governing board).

## 8. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Supporting Pupils in School with Medical Needs

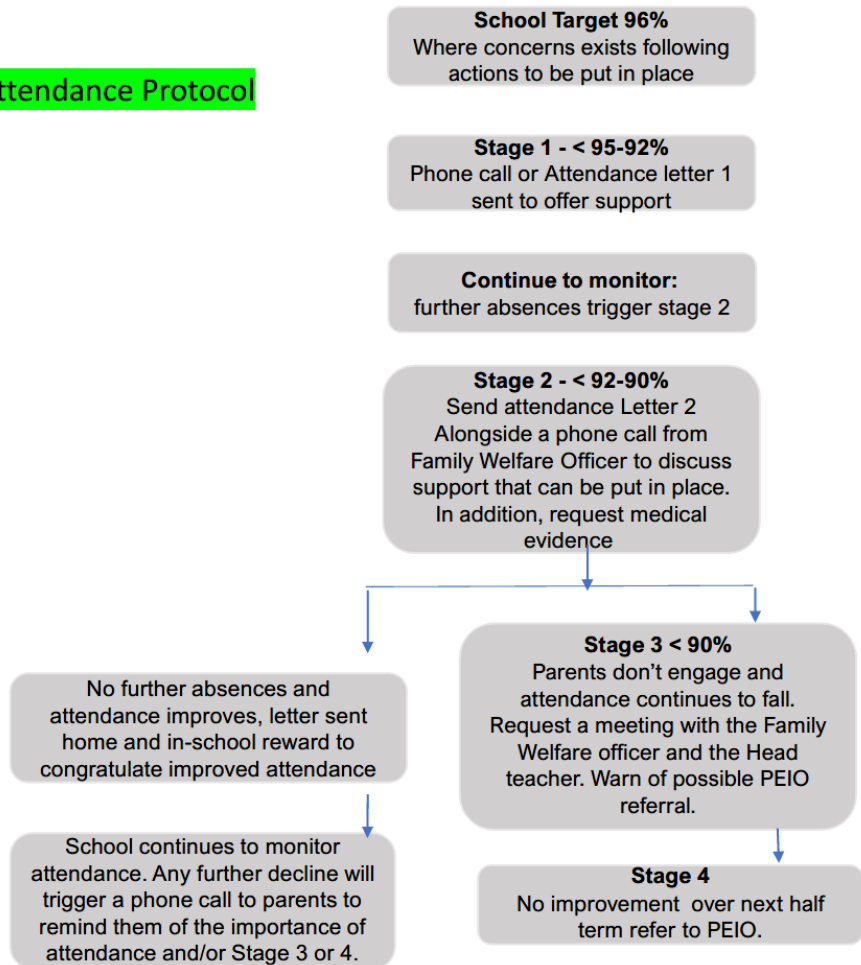


# Appendix 1

Time Scale



## Attendance Protocol





Date

Dear XXX

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school. They have already had XXX days absent from school. This is likely to have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement and this means that .... is missing XXX hours of reading and XXX hours of Maths, alongside all the other curriculum areas, and as I am sure you are aware it is a legal requirement.



We will continue to monitor name attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If the absence is due to a medical reason please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on «forename» attending school regularly or if you are concerned about your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me, because together we can make a difference.

Yours sincerely,

Sara Lee

Family Welfare Officer



Email: [fwo@arunside.school](mailto:fwo@arunside.school) Telephone: 01403 263919

Dear

Following our previous letter dated XXXX regarding XXXX's attendance, there continues to be a cause for concern. Our records show that XXXX's attendance is currently at XX%, the same as XXXX days absent and XXXX hours of English and Maths learning missed. This rate of absence is called persistent absence and will have an impact on XXXX academic achievement and their friendships.

It is understood that sometimes children may be absent from school due to health or medical needs. If there is an ongoing persistent health need, which as a school we are unaware of, please provide further information about this. Without medical evidence provided we will not be authorizing any more absences

School attendance is an important issue and something we take very seriously. I will be following this letter with a phone call to discuss XXXX attendance further.

Regular school attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers. If your child's attendance remains at the current level, a referral will be made to the local authority who may need to start legal proceedings.

We look forward to your support in resolving this matter.

Yours sincerely

Sara Lee  
Family Welfare Officer

Email: [fwo@arunside.school](mailto:fwo@arunside.school)  
Telephone: 01043 263919



**Arunside Primary School**



**Ways for parents to encourage Attendance**



If your child is absent from school, please ensure you ring the school attendance line before **8.30am** explaining the reason for absence and the expected return to school.

If the absence is longer than **3** consecutive days, we will presume that medical advice has been sought and medical evidence should be provided for the absence.  
The registers close at : 8.50am

If your child arrives after this time, they will be marked with a "L" code which means they are late for the beginning of their lesson. This is disruptive to them and to their fellow classmates..

Any leave of absence (holidays) taken during term will be unauthorised and may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. This is a fine issued to each parent, per child and not per family.

*If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact : Sara Lee  
On: [fwo@arunside.school](mailto:fwo@arunside.school) or 01 403 263919*

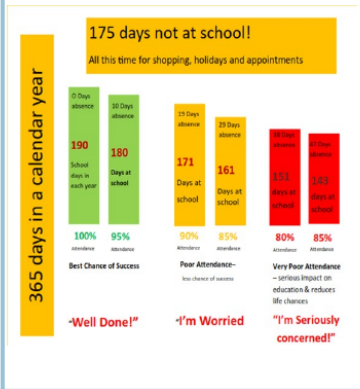
## Every Day Counts

1. Establish **GOOD ATTENDANCE HABITS**. Children look to you as role models, show them its important.
2. **START NOW**. The earlier you start the better and easier it will be.
3. **TALK** regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn, if they feel supported and know their anxieties are being listened to.
4. **PHONE** on the first day of absence, to let the school know, why your child is absent and when you expect them to return. Putting the school number in your phone saves time.



5. **ONLY** allow days at home for genuine illness (YOU will know). Lack of consistency now, leads to problems later.

6. Arrange for a friend or neighbour to take your child to school if a sibling is sick. It's not fair to prevent a child from learning.
7. **DO NOT** take holidays in term time. Head teachers no longer have the authority to authorise them and you may be subject to a fine.
8. **KNOW** routines of the school day to avoid issues.
9. **HELP** your child get ready the night before e.g. School bag; reading book or PE kit.



10. **ESTABLISH** a good bedtime routine, so your child can sleep well; get enough sleep and make getting up in the mornings less of a struggle, e.g. remove all electronic devices.
11. **SET** an alarm clock, rushing is unsettling. Allow plenty of time to travel to school.
12. **PRAISE** and **REWARD** good attendance, even for small successes, like getting ready quickly, even if resisting going to school.
13. **BE WATCHFUL** and supportive in the run up to tests in school and be aware of friendships groups.
14. **CONSIDER** going to the breakfast club.
15. **REMEMBER**, raise any concerns or issues as soon as you become aware. Delay may make matters worse.



## Appendix 5: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:

| Code     | Definition                    | Scenario  |
|----------|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>/</b> | Present (am)                  | Pupil is present at morning registration  |
| <b>\</b> | Present (pm)                  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                      |
| <b>L</b> | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| <b>B</b> | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| <b>D</b> | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| <b>J</b> | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| <b>P</b> | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| <b>V</b> | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| <b>W</b> | Work experience               | Pupil is on a work experience placement   |

| Code                      | Definition                  | Scenario   |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b> |                             |  |
| <b>C</b>                  | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| <b>E</b>                  | Excluded                    | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made         |
| <b>H</b>                  | Authorised holiday          | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |

|                             |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| <b>I</b>                    | Illness                           | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness   |
| <b>M</b>                    | Medical/dental appointment        | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment   |
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance   |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations  |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school   |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |   |
| <b>G</b>                    | Unauthorised holiday              | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b>                    | Reason not provided               | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| <b>O</b>                    | Unauthorised absence              | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b>                    | Arrival after registration        | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed   |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>Y</b>    | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school  |
| <b>#</b>    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day  |