

# Archibald Primary School Attendance Policy

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend 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 reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## 1.3 Pre School/ Nursery Attendance

Pre School/Nursery attendance is closely monitored and if attendance is below 90% due to unauthorised absence a first warning letter will be sent. The attendance will be monitored for 2 weeks and if there is no improvement a second warning letter will be sent to the Parent/Carer informing them that if there is no improvement if their child's attendance at Nursery their child will be removed from the Nursery Roll. The child's attendance will be monitored for a further two weeks if no improvement is made a final letter will be sent to the Parent/Carer informing them that their child is being removed from the Nursery Roll.

## 2 Definitions

### 2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
- School will provide work for children who are absent due to long term illness or if they have been excluded.

## 2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- If a parent keeps their child/ren off school without authorisation work will not be provided and the school will inform the Education Welfare Officer.

## 3 If a child is absent

3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and the school office will endeavour to contact a parent/carer.

3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent/carer to explain the absence.

3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent/carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.

3.5 **School staff should give consideration to the following if the absence is unexpected or unexplained:**

**Is the child at risk of abuse and neglect – including radicalisation, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, runaways and young carers (Keeping Children Safe in Education ).**

## 4 Requests for leave of absence

4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a hospital appointment. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, with proof of the appointment, but normally this request will be granted.

4.2 We are all aware of the significant difference in price of holidays during term time compared to holiday time. Also leave from work cannot always be guaranteed around school holiday times. This makes it increasingly difficult for many families to go on holiday at the correct times.

We DO NOT consider the following as exceptional circumstances; these are not however an exhaustive list:

- Parent/s work/holiday rota
- A family holiday at a lower cost
- Parent/s wedding of a child at the school as this can be arranged during school holidays
- Holidays booked by a member of the extended family without your knowledge
- Family reunions or gatherings

Examples of what we would consider to be exceptional are:

- A serving soldier's leave
- The funeral of a family member necessitating significant travel

In all cases authorisation must be obtained from your child's Headteacher prior to making arrangements. Failure to do so may mean a Penalty Notice is issued.

- A parent requesting a leave of absence during term time should make the application at least two school weeks in advance.
- The school replies to all applications in writing stating whether or not the absence has been agreed.
- If leave is not granted, the reason for not authorising a request must be clearly stated as well as the possible consequences of disregarding the refusal.
- If leave is granted ( only under exceptional circumstances) the length of authorised absence must be clearly stated including the date the child is expected back in school and the possible consequences if the child fails to return on that date.

**4.3** A pupils name will be deleted from Archibald's Primary School's Roll in the following circumstances, which relate to unauthorised absence

- If a pupil is granted leave of absence of 10 school days to go on holiday and does not return to school in the 10 school days immediately after the expiry of the authorised absence and the Governing Body is not satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend school due to sickness or another unavoidable reason
- If a pupil has been continuously absent from school for a period of at least 4 weeks and both the school and the Local Authority have failed, after a reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil.

Therefore, it is important that parents realise that if either of those two situations applies to their child's absence from Archibald Primary School, the Governing Body will remove that pupil's name from the schools admission register.

The effect of the removal of that pupil's name from the Admission Register will be that when the pupil tries to return to Archibald Primary School, he or she will no longer have a place. The pupil's parents will then have to contact the LA to make arrangements for

their child to attend a school in Middlesbrough. If there is not a place available at Archibald Primary School a place would have to be obtained at another school.

## **5 Long-term absence**

- 5.1** When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2** If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

## **6 Repeated unauthorised absences**

- 6.1** The school will contact the parent/carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem with the Attendance officer. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the EWO, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents/carers understand the seriousness of the situation. If the situation does not improve the EWO will arrange an Attendance Case Conference which will be held at the school. If no improvement occurs then it will progress to legal action against the parent/carer.
- 6.2** The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

## **7 Fixed penalty notices**

### **7.1 Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued**

A Penalty Notice may only be issued in accordance with this Code of Practice and when the Local Authority is satisfied that an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996 has been committed by the recipient of the Notice.

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. An unauthorised absence is recorded where the Head Teacher is not satisfied with the reasons given for absence, or a leave of absence request has been refused.

### **7.2 A Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:**

- 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during the current term
- Unauthorised leave of absence of 10 or more sessions during the current term. Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

- Persistent late arrival (recorded as unauthorised) after the register has closed for 10 or more sessions during the current term

**7.3 To ensure consistent delivery of Penalty Notices the following criteria will apply:**

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current term
- Other than in specific circumstances\* the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a minimum of 10 school days to effect an improvement

\*The deliberate taking of a leave of absence in term time without the Head Teacher's permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent understood that permission had not/would not be given) and where this has created, or contributed to, a period of unauthorised absence of at least 10 sessions.

In cases where families contain more than one child who meets the above criteria parents may receive a separate Penalty Notice for each child but this will be the subject of careful consideration and coordination.

Where more than one person comes within the definition of "parent" a separate Penalty Notice may be issued to each such person for each relevant offence.

Usually a parent can receive a maximum of one Penalty Notice per child; subsequent offences will proceed to prosecution.

The LA must consider every aspect of a child's case before considering whether a Penalty Notice would be appropriate.

In the case of unauthorised leave of absence the parent can make representation to the Head Teacher at the time of the leave of absence request. Where the request is refused, and there is an unauthorised absence of 10 or more sessions, the Head Teacher may notify the LA to request a Penalty Notice be issued.

Where all criteria are met the LA will:

- Ensure a formal written warning has been issued to the parent explaining the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued.
- Penalty Notices will be hand delivered (to ensure receipt) if there has been no significant improvement in the child's school attendance as required in the warning letter.

**7.4 Payment of Penalty Notices**

**Arrangements for payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.**

Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent's liability for the offence in question, and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted for the offence covered by the Penalty Notice.

The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority must either prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies or withdraw the notice.

### **Non-payment of Penalty Notices:**

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the notice and will trigger the prosecution process. Prosecution is for the offence to which the notice relates rather than for non-payment of the notice.

In the case of the prosecution of a parent who has failed to ensure their child attends school regularly the prosecution will be brought by the Local Authority under the provisions of Section 444 Education Act 1996.

In the case of prosecution of a parent who has failed to ensure that their child is not found in a public place during a specified day of exclusion the prosecution will be brought by the Local Authority under the provisions of Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

## **8 Rewards for good attendance**

- 8.1** All the children who have 100 per cent attendance each half term participate in the Roary 100% club .There is also a weekly attendance prize for any class that has 100% attendance.

## **9 Attendance targets**

- 9.1** The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the headteacher and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the School Improvement Partner (SIP). The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

## **10 Monitoring and review**

- 10.1** It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 10.2** The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

- 10.3** The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, the governors' report and the weekly 'Archibald News'.
- 10.4** The Attendance officer will be responsible for monitoring attendance in all classes, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the parents. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the E.S.W., who will contact the parent/carer.
- 10.5** This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

**Date: October 2018**

*Archibald Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.*