ARNOLD ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Background

At Arnold Academy we believe that regular school attendance is vital if pupils are to benefit fully from the opportunities which the school offers them. The school encourages full attendance by working to make school a happy, caring, positive and stimulating environment in which all pupils can flourish. We also seek to work closely with parents/carers and to apply current regulations and monitoring procedures in line with current requirements.

The school's Senior Attendance Champion is Spencer Rudkin, and can be contacted for queries or concerns about attendance or the school's policy and procedures via srudkin@aa.pstrust.co.uk.

Routine reports of absence or requests for leave of absence should be made via email to admin@aa.pstrust.co.uk or absence@aa.pstrust.co.uk, on parentmail or by telephoning on 01582 616400.

At Arnold Academy the school day starts at 8:35am every day and ends at 3:30pm Monday to Thursday and 2:15pm on a Friday.

Pupils are expected to be in their form rooms:

- by 8:35am at the latest
- in full and correct uniform for that particular day
- with a pencil case, planner and reading book.

Definition of a parent/carer:

Section 576, Education Act 1996 defines a parent as:

- all natural parents, whether named or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in Children's Act 1989) for a child or young person;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of the child or young person. A person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered a parent in education law.

Throughout this document, 'parent/carer' means each and every person referred to within this definition.

Missing Children

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. The school therefore has in place appropriate safeguarding responses (set out in the procedures below) in relation to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual and other abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Responsibilities

Parents/carers are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education. Local Authorities are responsible in law for ensuring that parents/carers meet the obligations imposed on them by Section 36 of the 1944 Act to secure suitable full-time education for their children of compulsory school age, whether by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Government statutory guidance also sets out the following:

- On schools to:
  - keep registers of admission and attendance;
  - promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
  - ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
  - act early to address patterns of absence;
  - have in place safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education.
- On parents/carers to:
  - perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly;
  - provide up to date details of the address of all parents/carers with whom their child lives for at least part of the time and at least one telephone number for each parent/carer, so that they can be contacted in an emergency.
- On pupils to:
  - be punctual to their lessons.

Arnold Academy will take a positive approach to promoting attendance by:

a) Encouraging good health by:
   - Providing a clean and safe environment.
   - Encouraging and facilitating good hygiene.
   - Ensuring that pupils that are unwell are isolated and sent home as soon as possible.
   - Encouraging parents/carers to keep children off school when they have flu, vomiting, diarrhoea or a fever and for 48 hours after any vomiting or diarrhoea.
   - Promoting and offering a healthy diet.
   - Encourage healthy exercise through P.E., extracurricular activities and other lessons.

- Providing appropriate drug, smoking, alcohol and sex and relationships education and support.

b) Encouraging children to come to school by:
   - Providing a happy, caring, calm and positive environment.
   - Delivering positive spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
   - Encouraging understanding, friendship, kindness and respect for all.
   - Providing a high quality of pastoral support to address social and emotional concerns.
   - Making every effort to prevent and eradicate bullying of all kinds.
   - Establishing constructive relationships with parents/carers, so that they are positive about school and communicate well.
   - Involving other agencies to provide family support where appropriate.
   - Making school an exciting and stimulating place, offering a wide range of activities and experiences.
   - Offering an inspiring and stimulating curriculum.
   - Providing a high quality of teaching so that pupils make good progress and enjoy lessons.
   - Provide high quality learning support so that pupils with additional needs do not fall behind.

Addressing Attendance Issues. The school will:

a) Keep accurate registers using codes specified in Government guidance.
b) Monitor individual levels of lateness and attendance to identify concerns at an early stage and, in particular, to identify persistent absence.
c) Ensure that staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
d) Contact parents/carers when pupils are absent without explanation.
e) Provide positive reintegration and support on return from absence.
f) Where the school has identified concerns about attendance to:
   I. Discuss issues of attendance with pupils and parents/carers to identify individual concerns and work with them to agree appropriate targets and support.
   II. Ensure that all special needs have been identified and addressed, involving other agencies as necessary.
   III. Ensure that an appropriate curriculum and learning support are provided and that pupils have access to a full-time education.
   IV. Ensure that concerns over attendance and any support are communicated during transition.
   V. Use the provisions for penalties and legal action as appropriate where this would be likely to improve attendance.

Governors will be involved in setting and monitoring targets for absence.

The school's target for 2024/2025 is to maintain attendance of at least 96% overall and ensure that Persistent Absence does not rise above 7%.

PROCEDURES AND PRACTICE

Registers

The school will keep an admission register which contains the personal details of every pupil in the school (name, sex, date of birth), along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school and details of the school last attended. The school will also keep information regarding parents and carers, including the name and address of every person known to be a parent/carer of the pupil and, against the entry on the register, the full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides at least part of the time, an indication of that fact and a note of at least one telephone number at which each parent/carer can be contacted in an emergency. Where a parent/carer notifies the school that the pupil is also registered at another school; or will be attending a specified other school in the future, the school will record the name of that other school and the first date on which the pupil attended or is due to attend that school, where it is reasonably practicable to obtain that information.

All pupils will also be included on the school's attendance register. Every amendment made to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the date on which the amendment was made; and the name and position of the person who made the amendment. Every entry in the admission register and attendance register will be preserved for a period of six years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school will inform the local authority within five days of adding a pupil to the register. It will provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil, except for pupils joining in Y5, when it will provide information if requested by the LA.

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register, as soon as the grounds for deletion are met and at the latest when the deletion occurs where the pupil:

- Has been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. Elected Home Education;
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent/carer has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period;
- Have been permanently excluded.

When a pupil is deleted from the register, other than when they have completed Year 8, the school will provide the following information to the local authority,

- the full name of the pupil;

- the full name and address of all parents/carers with whom the pupil normally resides all or part of the time;
- at least one telephone number at which each parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides can be contacted in an emergency;
- the grounds under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register including information relating to the pupil being medically unlikely to be fit to return to school.

At agreed intervals, the school must give the LA the name and address of every pupil who does not go to school regularly and inform the LA if a pupil has been continuously absent without the school's authorisation for not less than 10 school days, specifying the cause if known.

Procedures

Registers will be marked in the morning and the afternoon in Community Time. Registers will be held securely and any amendments should show who made the amendment and why.

Late arrival

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. Morning registration will close at 8.50am Monday to Thursday and 8.45am Friday. Afternoon registration will close at 3.15pm. Pupils arriving after 8:35am, but before registers close, will be recorded as late (L) in the register.

Two incidents of lateness to morning register in a week will result in a 15 minutes detention at lunchtime. Three incidents in a week will result in a 30 minute detention at lunchtime and four incidents of lateness in week will result a 45 minute lunchtime detention.

Those pupils arriving after registration has closed will be entered on the register as arrived late after registration has closed (U). A 'U' code on the register is an unauthorised absence and counts towards a possible fixed penalty notice.

Pupils arriving after registration or during the day should report to the office to be electronically signed in.

Pupils who exhibit a pattern of recurring lateness will be monitored by staff, who will work with pupils and parents/carers to agree targets and support.

Absence

Absence will be recorded according to the national absence and attendance codes.

Where absence is **anticipated** (e.g. appointment, visit) communication should always be sent in advance. Parents/carers will be encouraged to avoid arranging appointments during school time wherever possible.

Where absence is not anticipated, parents/carers should contact the school office before **8.00am** on a daily basis to inform the school of the reason for the pupil's absence.

If a child needs to leave school during the day, a written note or an email communication

to the school office should be received on the morning of the event and the child must be collected and signed out from the office and signed back in on their return by a responsible adult.

On the first day of absence, if no call is received and no written notification from the parent/carer has been received explaining the reason for a pupil's absence, a member of staff will ring or send a text to find out the reason for absence.

Staff will continue to follow up children who are absent, involving outside agencies as necessary.

Persistent absence

Persistent absence has a significant impact on the attainment and wellbeing of pupils. Evidence shows that children with attendance below 90% made on average less than two thirds of the annual progress made by pupils with 90% or better attendance. Absence will therefore be monitored to identify levels and patterns of absence. Where a pupil is absent frequently, whether authorised or unauthorised, the school will work closely with the child, parents/carers and outside agencies and put strategies in place to improve attendance or ensure appropriate alternative provision. (see Annex B)

Persistent unauthorised leave may result in the School Attendance Officer issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (see Annex A).

Term-Time Leave

The Department of Education's Statutory guidance, which came into force on 19th August 2024, removes the ability for schools to approve holidays in term time.

Term-time leave can only be authorised in **exceptional circumstances** and it must be requested in advance by the parent who the pupil normally lives with. The school will then consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

There is no right or entitlement to any term-time leave and requests for such leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

The decision to grant leave of absence is a decision that can only be made by the school. Only the school is able to authorise an absence; not parents/carers or the LA.

Requesting Leave of Absence

All requests for term-time leave should be made four weeks in advance by the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.

A request for leave of absence cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Parents/carers who consider that they meet the criteria of exceptional circumstances must request the relevant 'Leave of Absence' form available from the school office. This form should be completed by a parent/carer and returned to the school office for consideration.

If the request for Leave of Absence is authorised by the school, a copy of the form will be returned to the parent/carer indicating leave of absence is approved.

Unauthorised leave may result in the School Attendance Officer issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (see Annex A). Warning notices may not now be issued before a penalty is imposed.

Religious Observances

The school will take advice from local religious groups of all faiths to establish the number of days required for religious festivals. Parents/carers must inform the school at least 7 days in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance, to a maximum of 2 days. The days(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong.

Penalty Notices

In Central Bedfordshire the Central Bedfordshire Access and Inclusion Service (AIS), in consultation with schools (and other agencies where appropriate) will be responsible for the issuing of Penalty Notices. The code of conduct of Central Bedfordshire in issuing and recovering penalty notices is set out on their website.

Details of penalty notice escalation can be found at Annex A.

Missing Child Procedure

Children with no prior concern noted

If a child fails to attend school without explanation, the school will seek to contact parents/carers that day.

The school will make further attempts to contact the parents/carers during the first two weeks of unexplained absence. If these enquiries, or other information provided to the school, give reasonable cause for concern in relation to the welfare of the child, the school will alert the appropriate agencies, including Social Care or the Police.

If a child fails to attend school for 10 consecutive days without explanation and attempts to contact parents/carers prove unsuccessful, then the school will complete a Missing Child Report Form and send this to the Central Bedfordshire Attendance Officer or LA.

All safeguarding protocols around children missing in education will be followed without exception.

Children with prior child protection or other welfare concerns noted

The school will take account of any child protection or other welfare concerns, including where there is a possibility of travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage in deciding how to deal with the unexplained absence of individual pupils and may decide to involve other agencies including Social Care or the Police without delay.

ANNEX A

EVERY SCHOOL DAY MATTERS

Penalty Notice Fines for absence from school are changing

From 19th August 2024 Penalty Notice fines increase to £160 for each parent, for each child.



You can be fined if your child has a total of 5 days of unauthorised absences in 10 school weeks, for things like:

- being late after the register has closed
- truancy
- taking a holiday without permission from the school
- or if a headteacher isn't satisfied for the reason for missing school

Over a rolling 3-year period the sanctions are:

- 1st offence – £160 reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days
- 2nd offence – £160
- 3rd offence – Court hearing and up to £2,500 fine, or up to 3 months in prison and a criminal record

For more information go to:
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/missing-school

ANNEX B


Autumn Half Term 1
100%
0 school days missed
Best Chance of SUCCESS
Below 96%
1.5 school days missed
Harder to make good progress.
Less Chance of Success
Below 90%
3.5 school days missed
Persistent Absentee.
Serious Cause for Concern
Autumn Half Term 2
100%
0 school days missed
Best Chance of SUCCESS
Below 96%
3 school days missed
Harder to make good progress.
Less Chance of Success
Below 90%
7.5 school days missed
Persistent Absentee.
Serious Cause for Concern
Spring Half Term 1
100%
0 school days missed
Best Chance of SUCCESS
Below 96%
4.5 school days missed
Harder to make good progress.
Less Chance of Success
Below 90%
10.5 school days missed
Persistent Absentee.
Serious Cause for Concern
Spring Half Term 2
100%
0 school days missed
Best Chance of SUCCESS
Below 96%
5.5 school days missed
Harder to make good progress.
Less Chance of Success
Below 90%
13 school days missed
Persistent Absentee.
Serious Cause for Concern
Summer Half Term 1
100%
0 school days missed
Best Chance of SUCCESS
Below 96%
6.5 school days missed
Harder to make good progress.
Less Chance of Success
Below 90%
16 school days missed
Persistent Absentee.
Serious Cause for Concern
Summer Half Term 2
100%
0 school days missed
Best Chance of SUCCESS
Below 96%
8 school days missed
Harder to make good progress.
Less Chance of Success
Below 90%
19.5 school days missed
Persistent Absentee.
Serious Cause for Concern