



Attendance Policy

Version 1.0

Adopted by the governing body: September 2015

Review: Autumn Term 2016

Key Individual: LJ Harrison

Introduction

The Archer Academy aims to achieve an environment which enables and encourages all members of the school community to realise their potential within a safe and nurturing environment. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

This Policy sets out how by school and home working together we will achieve regular attendance for each student.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by The Department for Education. Most notably, this policy draws on guidance from the 1996 Education Act, Parental Responsibility for attendance, DfE January 2015, Advice on School Attendance, Dfe September 2014.

Why is regular attendance important?

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of the parent and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

Provide students and parents with regular details on the importance of attendance in our weekly newsletter.

Report to parents, at least termly, on their child performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their current progress and attainment.

Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and tutor group achievements through assemblies, letters home and star of the week.

Reward good or improving attendance through tutor group competitions, certificates, postcards home, achievement codes and trips/events.

Organise workshops and events when parents, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

Link Learning Mentors to support families where attendance may be an emerging barrier to school success.

Provide termly reminders to parents about the importance of good attendance at school and our school systems to record absence.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either *authorised* or *unauthorised*. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Parents are requested to inform the school office, preferably in advance, of any planned unavoidable absence. A member of the school admin team is designated to lead on attendance.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, religious observance, and medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Parents are actively encouraged to make medical appointments outside of school time as far as is possible.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where absence may be authorised during term time, at the discretion of the headteacher:

Funeral of parent, grandparent or sibling – the headteacher will use their discretion having heard from parents about travel and funeral arrangements and taking into account the distance to be travelled

Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence- up to a maximum of 3 days.

Serious illness of a close relative – only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional

Teenage parents responsible for the care of their own child – at the Headteacher's discretion.

Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement– as appropriate.

Time- off relating to Child Entertainment Performances, subject to a license being issued by Education Social Work Service

Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states “on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs”. This would include the Islamic Eids, as well as religious observance days of the orthodox Christian, Jewish and other religions.

Weddings of parents and siblings – weddings can be arranged at weekends or during school holidays; however we acknowledge that there are times when the dates are dependent on other factors, such as the needs of the couple getting married. Leave should

only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time. In difficult family situations the Headteacher will use their discretion in granting leave, for example where natural parents are separated, and in new relationships and it may cause a child further difficulties if he/she is excluded from a wedding.

Each case will be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.

Truancy before or during the school day.

Absences which have never been properly explained.

Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.

Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.

Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. Parents are encouraged, in the spirit of working together; to contact their child's form tutor or Head of Year if they feel their child is reluctant to attend school for any reason. Parents are encouraged to never cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending; but to contact school immediately and discuss any concerns. Parents condoning absence from school can give the impression that attendance does not matter and this can and does usually make things worse.

Holidays in term time

Absence during term time as a result of term time holidays, interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in school. We actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term time and will only authorise absence for such holidays in exceptional circumstances.

Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect term time leave to be granted and all leave is granted at the discretion of the headteacher. Any request for absence during the term must be made in writing to the headteacher. Parents must not assume that a request for absence will be automatically granted. The headteacher will inform parents if the request is refused.

Leave for the purpose of a family holiday will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If leave is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence, which is as truancy, and the matter may be referred to the Education Welfare Team.

The headteacher reserves the right to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances, which might include the following:

A parent or grandparent is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday.

There has recently been a death or other significant trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation.

The holiday is a unique one off never to be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.

As a rule, the financial factor when a parent claims that they are unable to afford a holiday during school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time, should not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

We will not grant leave if:

A child's attendance record over the previous 20 week period is less than 95% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness

The period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to or coincides with tests, exams or other significant events in the school calendar.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 20% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects. We seek parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle any issues or persistent absenteeism **or** where we become concerned that child may be in danger of becoming classified as a persistent absentee.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and placed on an attendance contract. Our attendance contracts may also be combined with academic mentoring where absence is affecting progress and attainment.

All our PA students and their parents are subject to an attendance contract which works as an action plan to improve attendance. The plan may include: allocation of additional support through a mentor, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Team at Barnet (lead practitioner Trevor Orr).

Absent procedures

If a child is absent parents must:

Contact the school office, before 9.30am, on the first day of absence and each day of subsequent absence.

Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – parents must do this even if they have already telephoned the school. This note should be given to the child's form tutor.

Or, call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff (form tutor or Head of Year) to speak with parents.

If child is absent we will:

Telephone or text parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from a parent.

Invite parents in to discuss attendance concerns with their child's Head of Year and/or Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral & Well Being if absences persist.

Establish an attendance contract with parents and the student if attendance moves below 87%

Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Team if attendance moves below 87%

Tracking and monitoring systems for attendance

We have robust in school systems to support and achieve good attendance for all our students.

A member of the school admin team is focused on attendance. **They will:**

Record absence information into SIMS from parent telephone calls/email.

Send a parent text to any parents who not informed the school of their child's absence by 9.30am on the first day of absence.

Log information into SIMS following parental response to text message.

Inform a child's Head of Year when contact, regarding absence, from a parent is poor or they identify concerns.

Email a daily absence register to each Head of Year for their year group by 10am each day.

Collect absent notes from the form tray each day and log in a child's file.

Heads of year will:

Review attendance for their year group daily.

Have a register of student's current attendance statistics and use the red, amber, green flagging system to identify concerns. This should include information based on the previous

academic year. If a student is pupil premium/SEN/AGT this will be also be included on this register to identify the tracking of any patterns by group of learner.

Inform form tutors to telephone the parents of any student who is absent for a second consecutive day, unless they are a flagged attendance concern. The purpose of this telephone call is to ensure that all is well and to offer any appropriate support. This call should be logged on SIMS.

Telephone home on the first day of absence for any student who is flagged as an attendance concern. Telephone home daily if this absence continues. These calls will be logged on SIMS.

Organise meetings with parents where attendance is becoming a concern or patterns are being identified.

Report on their weekly attendance, tracking spreadsheet and actions for identified students in their weekly line management meetings with the AHT Pastoral & Well Being.

Alert the AHT Pastoral & Well Being of any safeguarding concerns regarding attendance.

Prioritise messages about attendance through assemblies and pastoral time.

Provide training for staff and clarity of expectations through the leadership of their tutor teams.

Ensure absence notes are collected by form tutors in the tutor tray and returned to reception each day.

Celebrate good and improving attendance.

Establish attendance contracts.

Work with the AHT Pastoral & Well Being if the Education Welfare Team becomes involved with a case.

Ensure up to student files and notes from meetings, telephone calls, action taken.

The Education Welfare Team

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Team at Barnet. The Education Welfare Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Barnet Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give

impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting Barnet Local Authority.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. A student who is late misses the start of the day and they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons; this can be embarrassing for the student and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at **8.30am** and we expect student to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **8.40am** and student will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. A student who is late for school, without a valid reason, will receive a yellow slip lunch time punctuality detention. Any student who receives 3 yellow slip lunch time punctuality detentions over the course of a week will be issued with an SLT detention. Students' punctuality is monitored carefully and where patterns of regular lateness to school are identified students will be issued with an SLT detention. Parents will be requested to meet with their child's Head of Year where an SLT detention for poor punctuality is issued.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be at school, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If a student has a persistent late record parents will be asked to meet with their child's Head of Year and/or Assistant Headteacher for Pastoral & Well Being to resolve the problem. Parents are encouraged to approach their child's form tutor or Head of Year if they are experiencing problems getting their child to school on time. Students may be placed on punctuality report to support them in improving their punctuality.

Tracking and monitoring of punctuality

We have robust in school systems to support and achieve good attendance for all our students. Securing good punctuality is a key aspect of this.

Each morning one member of the middle or senior leadership team will be on duty from 8am to 8.45am. This duty will include completing the late book for any late students and issuing yellow slip punctuality detentions. At the end of their duty, at 8.45am, the late book should be handed to the designated member of the admin team.

A member of the school admin team is focused on attendance. As part of this role they will carry out the following actions related to punctuality. **They will:**

Log students issued with late detentions by the duty team into the punctuality spreadsheet.

Issue late detention slips to any student who arrives at school after 8.45am and log these students onto the spreadsheet.

Ensure minutes late have been added into SIMS for any students registered as late.

Heads of Year will:

Lead lunchtime punctuality detentions.

Review punctuality for their year group daily.

Have a register of student's current punctuality and use the red, amber, green flagging system to identify concerns. This should include information based on the previous academic year. If a student is pupil premium/SEN/AGT this will be also be included on this register to identify the tracking of any patterns by group of learner.

Inform form tutors to telephone the parents of any student whose punctuality is becoming a concern. The purpose of this telephone call is to ensure parents are aware that their child is regularly late and to ensure that all is well and to offer any appropriate support. This call should be logged on SIMS.

Add any student with 3 late detentions in a week/repeated patterns of poor attendance to the SLT detention list. Telephone home to inform parents of this.

Organise meetings with parents where punctuality is becoming a concern or patterns are being identified.

Report on their weekly punctuality, tracking spreadsheet and actions for identified students in their weekly line management meetings with the AHT Pastoral & Well Being.

Alert the AHT Pastoral & Well Being of any safeguarding concerns regarding punctuality.

Prioritise messages about punctuality through assemblies and pastoral time.

Provide training for staff and clarity of expectations through the leadership of their tutor teams.

Celebrate good and improving punctuality.

Work with the AHT Pastoral & Well Being if the Education Welfare Team becomes involved with a case.

Ensure up to student files and notes from meetings, telephone calls, action taken.