



## **Ark Atwood School Attendance Policy**

**Agreed by the School Governors:** 20<sup>th</sup> March 2023

**Introduced:** Academic Year 2022/23

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In line with all Ark schools, our mission is to ensure that children are ready for the next stage of their education. At Ark Atwood, this is demonstrated through the children acquiring the different characteristics that make up the Atwood Scholar along with academic success at the end of KS2. None of this is possible without good levels of attendance. Every day and every lesson matters.

Our curriculum is carefully designed to ensure that teaching builds on what has been taught in the previous session. Children who miss school frequently will undoubtedly have gaps in their learning which will impede their progress and future ability to engage in lessons. Frequent absence has a profound and cumulative effect on achievement.

We recognise that attendance is everyone's responsibility and there are many reasons why children miss school. As the Department for Education's guidance document, Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022), says:

*'Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex both within and beyond the school gates and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.'*

We know from surveys, conversations and anecdotal data that children love being at Ark Atwood. They enjoy school and feel safe. However, we need to ensure more children are at school every day. Improving attendance is not just achieved through conversations with families as the DfE guidance document notes:

*'Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium.'*

It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.'

Outcomes are strong at Ark Atwood and we know our local secondaries talk very positively about the Ark Atwood children who join them.

### **Who does the policy apply to?**

Our policy applies to all children attending our school and is shared with parents/carers and pupils on admission to the school. In law compulsory school age applies to all children from the start of the term commencing on or after the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## What does the policy do?

Although parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance, the governors and staff at this school will work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure pupils are encouraged and supported. Procedures in this policy will ensure that this happens and that children do not slip through the net.

## 2. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This policy:

- ensures that all staff in our school are fully aware and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance. They have an understanding of the current whole school attendance data picture and areas of concern/focus
- raises awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and children
- ensures that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and on time by setting out their obligation in the school brochure and home school agreement.
- equips children/young people with the skills needed to take responsibility for school attendance and punctuality appropriate to their age and development
- maintains clear effective communication channels on school attendance matters
- develops and implement procedures for identifying, reporting and following up cases of poor attendance and lateness
- supports children who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance
- implements procedures to follow up non-attendance in school for all pupils
- establishes a safe environment which demonstrates that every child matters and where children/young people can:
  - be healthy
  - stay safe
  - enjoy and achieve
  - make a positive contribution
  - achieve economic well being

## 3. PROCEDURES

Timing for the school day:

8.25am	Gates Open
8.30am	School Day Starts
8.40am	Class Registers Closed (children arriving <u>in class</u> after this time will be marked late – this is 10 minutes after the start of the school day)
9.00am	Children arriving from 9.30am will receive a 'U' in the register. This will impact on the child's attendance percentage for the child in line with Westminster policy.
2.10pm	Afternoon Registers Closed
3.40pm	End of School: gates open <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children in Nursery to Year 3 are collected from the classroom</li><li>• Children in Year 4 to Year 6 are collected from the playground</li></ul>
3.50pm	Gates closed


- Children arriving after the gates close at 8.40am are recorded as late. Parents are asked to provide a reason for lateness at this time for the records.
- Children arriving after 9.30am are recorded as late with parents required to record through the Invenry system why their child is late
- Children not being collected by parents by 3.50pm are called by the Headteacher after two instances in a six-week period
- Children attending a medical appointment need to bring an appointment form or complete the school medical form for every absence, and hand this to the office.

Absence from school

- For **two** unauthorised days, in a six-week period, you will receive a warning letter from the school
- If this **rises to four consecutive** days in a six-week period, we will refer the concern to Westminster and this might result in the issuing of a penalty notice
- For **four non-consecutive days** absent in a six-week period, this may result in a referral to Westminster Early Help depending on the level of absence over time

For any absence relating to illness over two days, a medical note must be received or this will be recorded as unauthorised leave.

Authorised leave will be granted in exceptional circumstances and this will be at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents should complete the form below (available from the reception) and submit this at least one week before the requested absence.

**ARK ATWOOD PRIMARY ACADEMY** 

Achieving Success

**Absence Request Form - Holiday in Term Time**

Dear Parent/Carer,  
 The School recommendation is that you do not take your child out of school for holidays. However, in exceptional circumstances which mean that the holiday cannot be taken during a school holiday, we will consider requests.

When deciding whether to allow term leave, for any reason, the school will consider:-

- The time and duration of the leave
- Your child's record of attendance
- Learning that will be missed

**WARNING:** Any absence that has not been authorised by the school will be seen as truancy which may lead to a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrate's Court and your child may lose his/her school place.

**TO THE HEADTEACHER**  
 I wish to apply for  
 NAME[S] OF CHILD[REN] \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_

to be authorised as being absent from school from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ inclusive

**REASON FOR REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME:**

Name of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Parent/Carer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**AUTHORISED** The school agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.

**UNAUTHORISED** The school does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason:

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_ Headteacher Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Late to School

If your child arrives at school late (gates open 8.25am, start of day 8.30am, marked late if in class after 8.40am):

- **twice**, in a six-week period, you will receive a letter from the attendance team to share concerns over your child's punctuality.
- **four** times in a six-week period, we will invite you to a meeting with the attendance team and Headteacher to discuss how we can support with punctuality.
- If there is **further lateness**, we may raise this with Westminster Early Help

## End of Day Collection

The gate opens at 3.40pm and closes at 3.50pm. Parents who are unable to collect at this time should book a place for their child in P3 After School Club (places must be booked the day before).

If your child is collected after 4.10pm twice in a fortnight period, you will receive a letter and a call from the Headteacher. If late collection continues, an Early Help referral may take place to identify how best to proceed.

## **4. ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY**

The school's strategy falls into six different areas linked to approach set out in the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2022).

	<b>Expect</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Listen &amp; Understand</b>	<b>Facilitate Support</b>	<b>Formalise Support</b>	<b>Enforce</b>
<b>Definition</b>	Aspire to high standards of attendance	Use attendance data to monitor poor standards of attendance	When patterns are identified, listen and discuss barriers and agree ways forward	Remove barriers in school and help with barriers out of school	Where poor standards persist, work to explain consequences / agree support	Where barriers remain, enforce through statutory intervention or prosecution
<b>Atwood Approach</b>	Increased awareness amongst staff  Stronger tone in parent communication  Greater status for children	Weekly tracking by Office & Headteacher  Inclusion Meeting tracking  Attendance and performance data together  Showcase cases of improved attendance	Phone Calls & Meetings  Involvement of teaching staff  Discussions with children as appropriate	Home Visits  Matching Atwood families and staff  Financial support for wraparound care	Consultation with local authority  Sharing of data to show impact  Provide literature to promote benefits	Penalty Notice referrals  Early Help Referrals  CME Referrals

Termly	Monthly	Weekly	As Required / Ongoing
<p>Whole School, group and year data shared and reviewed with all staff at start of term</p> <p>Mid-term Singing Assembly inset to focus on term to date data</p> <p>Two half days set aside for home visits to families with absence patterns / concerns</p> <p>SENCo including attendance data / plans in termly reviews</p>	<p>Monthly Inclusion Meeting reviewing vulnerable children bringing together SEND, Attendance and Safeguarding.</p>	<p>High profile and strongly worded piece in the newsletter each week</p> <p>Showcase examples of improved attendance in newsletter/the school (weekly/monthly)</p> <p>Headteacher meeting with families causing concern</p> <p>Tracking of data each week by Headteacher/ identifying patterns</p> <p>Attendance Trophy and Certificates in assembly</p>	<p>Financial Support to access wrap around care</p> <p>Year group staff meeting with PA children (outcomes feeding into insets)</p> <p>Creative solutions to attendance barriers for specific families</p> <p>Local Authority involvement as required on a case by case basis</p>

Half Termly Data Overviews are shared and discussed with staff in these areas:

**Attendance Data:**

- Whole School year on year and year to date
- Specific Groups (EHCPs, All SEND, Pupil Premium, Non Pupil Premium)
- Current year by year group

**Persistent Absence**

- Whole School year on year and year to date
- Specific Groups (EHCPs, All SEND, Pupil Premium, Non Pupil Premium)
- Current year by year group

**5. CELEBRATING & PROMOTING EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE**

- Class attendance statistics are published in the school newsletter each week along with a top tip for parents (to support improvement)
- Class attendance statistics are published in the weekly staff bulletin so school staff are aware of their class attendance statistics (whole school statistics are shared half termly)
- Each week in celebration assembly, the class with the highest attendance and punctuality percentages will win the attendance cup.
- Any children with 100% attendance at the end of each term receive a postcard from the headteacher celebrating their success and rewarding them with a non uniform day at the start of the subsequent term
- At the end of the school year there are celebration certificates for children with 100% attendance. Children with 100% attendance will receive a certificate and a £5 book voucher.

## **6. PUPILS WITH EDUCATION HEALTH CARE PLANS (EHCPs)**

- We fully understand that pupils with EHC Plans have specific needs that may require them to attend appointments during the school day. We are fully committed to meeting the needs of these pupils but do require appointment forms to be submitted.
- When the attendance of children with EHC plans falls below 90%, we will contact social workers and other agencies to discuss the underlying reasons for this and agree how best to improve attendance. Children with low levels of attendance are monitored closely and discussed at monthly multi role inclusion meetings.

## **7. OTHER DETAILS**

The Governing Body understands and will fulfil its responsibilities and may appoint a nominated governor or panel of governors for attendance issues.

Parents are welcome to contact Westminster Early Help for further information and advice. Further details online at: [www.westminster.gov.uk/school-attendance-and-child-employment](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/school-attendance-and-child-employment)

If a pupil on the child protection register is absent for two days without explanation their social worker is notified.

If a pupil is in public care (LAC) the carer, social worker and education co-ordinator will be involved appropriately

Where absence is unexplained, no reason is given or it is not possible to contact