



Arno Vale Junior School

Attendance Policy and Procedures

Date of policy: January 2025

Review Date: January 2027

Policy and Procedures

At Arno Vale Junior School we are committed to working with parents and carers to provide the best possible opportunities for children to learn. To achieve this we expect good attendance from all of the pupils. Parents and carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children can access their education by having good attendance and being punctual.

Good attendance has been shown to promote successful learning. It sets a foundation for the positive habits needed in the next phases of education and later in the workplace. Good attendance supports the development of academic and social skills, both of which can be self-motivating factors in learning.

Children whose attendance is poor can often feel excluded or worried about their learning. This can lead to a lack of confidence or motivation to learn, which for some pupils leads to behaviour that impacts negatively on their own learning or restricts that of others. Poor attendance can also be a safeguarding issue. The impact that poor attendance can have on academic achievement can be seen in Appendix 1.

Procedures

Parents / carers must contact the school by 9.15am on the first day if a pupil is going to be absent by calling 0115 9536400, leaving details and a reason for the absence. These messages are logged and passed to the class teacher. Any absences that have not been accounted for are then followed up by the school office, who will try to make contact with the family. This information is logged. If initial contact cannot be made, the school will endeavour to make contact following the procedures set out in 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance.'

The morning bell is rung at 8.50am and the school day starts at 8.55am with electronic registers taken as soon as the pupils are settled. Classroom / corridor doors are locked at 8.55am. All latecomers must be signed in through the main entrance, giving a reason for lateness. These records are used to track punctuality and for safeguarding and fire safety reasons.

Parents who need to collect their children during the school day should let the school know beforehand about any appointments booked; you will also be asked for evidence of the appointment (for example an appointment card or text / email message). In order to collect your child, you should come to the main entrance, where a member of staff will bring them to you and sign them out. At any other time when parents ask to remove the children from school it is by negotiation with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the school to decide whether a pupil's absence is authorised. An authorised absence will be granted for genuine sickness or emergency medical and dental appointments which cannot be made outside school hours and where parents/carers are able to demonstrate that every effort has been made to arrange these at other times.

An initial application for leave of absence must be in writing from a person with parental responsibility detailing all the exceptional circumstances that they wish the school to consider. The application will be considered by the Headteacher, who will consider the impact of this absence on the child's education and welfare and balance this against the exceptional circumstances that you explain in your application. You will be notified of the outcome within 14 days of the application being received. The form can be requested from the school office or a copy obtained from our school website: <https://www.arnovale.co.uk/forms/>

An appeal procedure to the Chair of Governors can be followed by submitting a written appeal which will be considered by two Governors. Parents and carers wishing to apply for leave or submit an appeal must allow sufficient time for the processes to be completed prior to the date of absence and consider the procedure when booking.

In our school, we interpret 'exceptional' in this context as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another and whilst it will be important to look at the whole

situation in making decisions about individual requests, the normality will be that requests will be refused in line with the law.

If parents take a term time leave of absence for a holiday which has not been authorised, the child's absence will be unauthorised and this is permanently recorded in their attendance record and passed on to their future schools. The school could choose to involve the local authority in following this up legally through fines. If a child is absent for an extended period of time without an explanation, they may be removed from the school roll.

Unauthorised absence marks will be given for truancy, staying at home because other members of the family are unwell, when there is regular absence with no medical evidence to support it, holidays, when the school has reason to believe that the information given is not correct, when the child has a poor attendance record or during times which are considered inappropriate ie: the start of a new school term or during assessment periods. The school may request medical evidence in order to authorise absences for illness and appointments. If poor attendance is due to reported medical conditions with no medical evidence, the 'Healthy Family Service' may be contacted to offer support to the family.

Attendance and punctuality are monitored on a regular basis by the administration staff and by the Senior Leadership Team. Parents/carers will be informed if their child's attendance falls below 90%. **This is because Ofsted regards pupils who miss 10% of their lessons as persistent absentees; this equates to missing half a day per week.** Their attendance will then be monitored over the next 4-6 weeks, and if there is no improvement a letter will be sent home. If this doesn't result in an improvement, the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher will request a meeting to discuss the issues around the absence and identify what needs to be done to improve the circumstances for the child. If the attendance does not improve from this point, the school may take further action, including the involvement of external support services.

Teachers and administration staff will work together to monitor lateness, and if any concerns arise the class teacher will arrange to speak to the parents/carers. If the issue is not resolved at this point, a letter will be sent home and punctuality will be monitored.

We understand that children can get genuinely unwell from time to time and if this is the case, they should not be sent to school. The school asks parents and carers to follow the doctor's advice. The school follows NHS advice that there should be a 48 hour period after any sickness or diarrhoea when pupils should not return to school.

The school will contact parents or carers if pupils become unwell during the day or need medical attention due to an accident or incident, whereupon arrangements can be made to collect them.

The school's Senior Attendance Champions are Mr Rossington and Mr Baker who can be contacted as follows:

Telephone: 0115 9536400
Email: Mr Rossington - head@arnovale.notts.sch.uk
Mr Baker - cbaker@arnovale.notts.sch.uk

The school will periodically remind parents (through the school bulletin) of the importance of good attendance and the impact that poor attendance can have on attainment. Where necessary, and on an individual basis, the school may agree measures with families to support good attendance. Please speak to one of the Senior Attendance Champions if you require bespoke support.

Further support can be obtained from a number of services; details can be found on our website under the 'Parents' tab or by clicking the link below:

<https://www.arnovale.co.uk/wellbeing-and-further-support/>

In August 2024, the Department for Education issued the document 'Working together to improve school attendance'. This details the statutory guidance for schools and local authorities and includes when parents may be subject to attendance contracts, Education Supervision Orders, attendance prosecution, parenting orders and penalty notices.

The law now states that parents can be fined for taking their child or children on holiday during term time without the headteacher's permission.

- **The threshold for Penalty Notice fines is 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a 10 school week period. Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024) states the following:**
 - *The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).*
- **The threshold mentioned above also covers transition periods, for example when a child leaves one school to go to another (in year transfers and from one education phase to another).**
- **First penalty notices are currently set at £160 per child, per parent / guardian / carer and must be paid within 28 days. If the notice is paid within 21 days, the amount is reduced to £80. A penalty notice can be issued to any adult who has responsibility for a child.**
- **If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent / guardian / carer, the full amount of £160 must be paid within 28 days.**
- **A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same adult who has received a first and second penalty notice for the same child within 3 years of the date of the first penalty notice. In such a case, alternative action will be taken instead; this will often include considering prosecution.**
- **Once three years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued, a further penalty notice can be issued.**

Further information can be found by clicking the links below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/08/19/fines-for-parents-for-taking-children-out-of-school-what-you-need-to-know/>

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-holidays-and-closures/holidays-during-term-time>

Appendix 1

Attendance	Missed learning	Impact
Above 97%	Less than 6 days of absence a year and minimal lost learning time. Excellent attendance!	Pupils with this attendance should achieve the best outcomes they can.
95%	Less than 10 days of absence in a year.	
90%	Approximately 20 days of absence over the year. This equates to around 110 hours of missed learning.	This is classed as persistent absence. Pupils with this level of absence will fall behind in all curriculum areas. It will be very difficult for them to catch up and achieve their intended outcomes.
85%	Approximately 30 days of absence in a year. This equates to around 165 hours of missed learning.	
80%	Approximately 40 days of absence in a year. This equates to around 220 hours of missed learning.	

Appendix 2

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Attached is an application form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully:

- The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time. The Local Authority works with schools to reduce the numbers of children missing school because of holidays taken in term time and schools can refuse your request to take your child out of school.
- If you wish to take your child on holiday during term time, you must apply for permission in advance in writing using the attached form.
- The Department for Education states that absence for leave of absence in term time due to the following reasons will not be authorised:
 - availability of cheap holidays
 - availability of desired accommodation
 - poor weather experienced in the school holiday period
 - overlap with beginning or end of term
 - holidays booked before checking with the school
 - day trips
- There are certain times of the year when a child may experience extra problems because of missing school. These include examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term. In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence and give permission for a holiday in term time, the school will take these and other factors into account.
- If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice or a Summons being issued against you for irregular school attendance.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child to accompany you on holiday during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school as far in advance of the proposed holiday as possible.

Appendix 3

APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR A CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name Tutor Group/Class

Home Address

.....

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of Last day at School Date of Return to School

Total number of school days missed

Please explain the circumstances that make it necessary to have a holiday in term time?

.....

.....

Do you expect to be taking any more term time holidays this academic year?

.....

.....

I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.

Name of Parent/Carer making application

Signed

Date

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF THE INTENDED ABSENCE.