



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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**November 2016**

<b>Signed (Chair of Trustees):</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	October 2016
<b>Date of Review:</b>	November 2017

*The Arbor Academy Trust reviews this policy annually. The Trustees may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the Government introduces new regulations, or if the Trust receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved. This document is also available in other formats e.g. e-mail and enlarged print version, on request to the School Offices and is displayed on the schools' websites.*

The law requires compulsory attendance at school for pupils five years old and above. As an Academy Trust, our expectation is that all pupils should strive for full and punctual attendance. However, we do recognise that some individual pupils and their families may need support in order to achieve this. In considering the authorisation of absences, the school will take into account any circumstances that are in line with the protected characteristics as outlined by the Equality Act 2010.

## 1. Key Points

**A written explanation will be required for every occasion on which a pupil is absent from school.**

If, following enquiries, no satisfactory reason has been provided, the absence will be regarded as unauthorised and the register will be annotated accordingly.

The Trust reserves the right to query the validity of an explanation and refuse to authorise an absence.

Parents/Carers do not have the automatic right to remove a child from school for family holidays during term time. The Governors have agreed that any holidays or visits should be confined to school holidays and will not be authorised if taken during school time.

The Trust works closely with the Education Welfare Service to promote regular attendance and punctuality.

## 2. Registration

Registration times for the morning and afternoon sessions are between 8.55am – 9.10am and 12.55pm – 1.05pm. Registers should be completed between these times and returned to the office promptly.

Any pupils arriving after 8.55am will report to the office to be marked late.

## 3. Avoiding Unauthorised Absences

We encourage parents/carers of children who are absent from school to inform us and explain the reason for nonattendance by 10.00am on the first day of absence. A member of the office staff will attempt to contact all parents/carers who have not telephoned the school, to try to ascertain a reason for the child's absence.

All messages received regarding absence will be recorded. Verbal and telephone messages are acceptable and will be noted by the person receiving them. **We require a written explanation for every occasion on which a pupil is absent from school regardless of whether you have told your child's teacher or phoned the school office.** A member of the office staff will then enter the reason for absence into the computer system. Copies of all letters/doctor's notes or appointment cards received will be placed in the child's file. Letters regarding unexplained absences and lateness will be sent home weekly.

If a child is away from school for a period of 10 days, and after attempts have been made to contact the family by telephone and letter, the Education Welfare Officer will be asked to visit the home address. This may result in the child's name being removed from the register if the child does not return to school 10 days from the school's last letter, totalling 20 days of no contact by the parents/carers.

## 4. Medical Appointments and Sickness

If your child is unwell, please contact the school on the first day of absence. If the illness is prolonged we will request that you provide medical evidence. This can be in the form of a doctor's note or certificate. We encourage parents to make doctors/dentist appointments outside of school time so as not to disrupt your child's learning. Where this is not possible we will require proof of appointment, such as a medical card/ appointment letter, this will allow us to

authorise the absence. Where possible, we expect you to inform the school in advance that your child will be absent. Prolonged absence (3 days or more) for medical reasons will require additional evidence in addition to parental notes. Absences will not be authorised without medical evidence.

## 5. Holidays

Parents do not have a legal right to take their children out of school on holiday. Waltham Forest is committed to a policy of minimum unavoidable absence from school during school time. In light of this The Arbor Academy Trust will only grant 3 days absence from school for **exceptional circumstances**.

**Holidays taken during term time will not be approved, therefore will be marked as unauthorised. In such cases, a fixed penalty notice referral will be forwarded to the Education Welfare Officer.**

**If your child is absent from school for 20 days consecutively, the child's name will be removed from the school roll. Upon return you will need to contact the Admissions Department to apply for a school place.**

## 6. Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality

The Education Welfare Officer will check pupil attendance records fortnightly. If it is found that a child's attendance has fallen below **95%**, a standard letter will be sent to the parent/carer. **Where absence has been agreed for exceptional circumstances, or where there is a known serious illness, this will be taken into account.** Further monitoring will be carried out to see if attendance shows improvement. Additional absence will result in a further letter being sent home. If poor attendance continues, an official referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer and a home visit will be made. Copies of all letters sent will be placed in the child's file.

## 7. Registration of Pupils

### **Roles and responsibilities of Executive Headteacher, Head of School, Assistant Headteacher, EWO governors**

The **Head of school** will ensure that:

- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Attendance targets are set for individual pupils, classes and year groups
- Parents/carers are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised
- Pupil attendance and lateness are monitored regularly
- The reward system for good attendance is implemented
- School attendance statistics are reported to the LEA and Local Governing Body
- The LEA officer is provided with registers of attendance and supported in following up long-term absences
- Pupils absent for long periods because of ill-health receive appropriate learning support

All **teachers** are expected to:

- Register pupils accurately and efficiently
- Report pupil attendance and lateness daily
- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and inform colleagues if there is a problem that may lead to absences

**Pupils** will be encouraged to:

- Attend school regularly
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences

**Parents and carers** will be asked to:

- Ensure the child attends school regularly
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance (e.g. family holidays, special occasions).

The **Local Governing Body** will ensure that the LEA is informed about the long-term absence of any pupils.

## **8. Punctuality**

Persistent lateness does not constitute full school attendance (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Pupils arriving after the opening of the register up to and including the 30<sup>th</sup> minute will receive an 'L' (Late) coding and those who arriving after the 31<sup>st</sup> minute will receive an unauthorised 'U' coding.

A member of the office staff will check the computer records fortnightly. If it is found that a child has been late on one or more occasion, a letter will be sent home reminding parents/carers of the need for punctual attendance. If a child is late on two further occasions a second letter will be sent, with a warning that further lateness will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. After monitoring the situation for a further two weeks and if there is no improvement a referral to the education Welfare Officer will be made. Again copies of all letters sent will be placed in the child's file.

## **9. Fixed penalty Notices**

**Under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, local authorities are required to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to the parent/carer of a child who has irregular school attendance, where the absence is unauthorised by the school.** The penalty notice imposes a fine of £100, which is reduced to £50 (per child) if paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid within 28 days or £100 in 42 days from the first date when the notice is issued, the parent/carer will be prosecuted in a Magistrates Court for the offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## **10. Parental Responsibilities**

It is the parents/carers legal responsibility to ensure their children receive full time education. This extends beyond ensuring regular and punctual attendance and requires that the child comes to school in a fit state to learn. Parents cannot determine what constitutes authorised absence; this is for the Executive Headteacher and Local Governing Body to decide. The fact that a parent/carer has offered a reason for absence does not oblige The Trust to authorise the absence, if the reason given is not regarded as a valid justification for non-attendance. If we have reason to believe parents/carers are condoning unjustified absences, the education Welfare Officer will be involved at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, excessive amounts of authorised absence will seriously disrupt the continuity of learning for the pupil. Any patterns for individual pupils or families which emerge during monitoring will be investigated.

It is the parent/carers responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day and if required, to provide any further information. The school accept notification by personal contact, telephone message

or by note. If absence is due to illness, the school should be notified of the nature of illness and if possible the date a child is expected to return to school.

**As a parent you are committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly.**

The Arbor Academy Trust working alongside the Education Welfare Service will be monitoring and targeting pupils who:

- Have below 95% attendance
- Have unauthorised absences
- Are persistently late to school
- Have a number of absences due to sickness/medical reasons
- Have requested/taken leave for holiday purposes

**11. Parental Responsibilities when collecting their child from school and afterschool clubs**

It is the parent/carers responsibility to collect their child from school at 3.15pm. It is the parent/carers responsibility to inform the school if they will be late and/or if an alternative carer will be collecting their child.

If the parent/carers is late then the child will be automatically placed in afterschool club, where the parent/carers will be expected to pay a fee of £9 (if there is a second child there will be a charge of £8.50).

If the parent/carers is late in collecting their child after 6.00pm, then the parent/carers is expected to make contact with the school. If the parent has made contact - from 6.05pm the school will charge a fee of £5 per child that will be expected to be paid immediately. If the child has not been collected within 30 minutes of contacting the school then the school will make contact with Social Services.

If the child has not been collected and the parent has made no contact with the school then Social Services will be called immediately, just after 6.00pm.