

Arden Primary School

Believe Respect Reflect Achieve



Attendance Policy

Reviewed by: Full Governing Body

Approved on: 7.2.18

Next review: February 2021

Introduction:

Arden regards attendance and punctuality as a high priority. This policy has been devised to make clear the school's policy on attendance. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time for every day that the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The development of good habits in these areas must be emphasized right from Early Years. We are all responsible for attendance – parents and carers, pupils, all members of staff and the Educational Welfare Service (EWS).

The attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all. Regular school attendance is a legal requirement, and the responsibility to make sure this happens lies with parents/carers. Failure to send a child to school regularly and punctually can result in legal proceedings (Section 444, Education Act'96)

Aim of the Policy:

- To provide a strategy within which the school, EWS, parents, carers and other agencies can work in partnership to improve school attendance.
- To provide a strategy that will enable DfE targets to be met
- To provide a strategy to enable the utilisation of available resources to maximise attendance and punctuality

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why it is important that parents contact us to let us know about any absence.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave of absence" 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 (after 9.25am)
- shopping, hair appointments, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which do not fall under exceptional circumstances (see below)

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. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and can make things worse.

The school will encourage good attendance by:

- Recording absences and lates on a child's annual report
- Make it clear to children and parents at every opportunity how much the staff care about school attendance

- Follow up on absenteeism for vulnerable children/families quickly
- Give support to children returning from a period of absence
- Be available to talk to children about difficulties they are having in school and offer advice if appropriate
- Remind parents of their responsibilities regarding attendance and punctuality and offer help to resolve difficulties they may be having in fulfilling this responsibility eg personal conversation with the Learning Mentor, TAC meeting, parent meetings, attendance leaflet, attendance panel
- Celebrate the achievements of those with good attendance and punctuality eg Attendance Parties, Class attendance bears within each Key Stage

Key triggers for absence concerns:

Attendance below 95% (Autumn term - 90%)

>4 lates in a half term

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible (and always before 9.30am) on the first day of absence if possible, otherwise a note must be sent on the child's return to school. Failure to do either of these will result in an **unauthorised absence**.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first morning of absence if we have not heard from you (soon after 9.15am)
- The possibility of a home visit if school fails to make contact with a family.

Lateness:

If your child misses the start of the day they miss work and do not hear vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. Arriving late can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage further absence.

How we manage lateness:

At Arden Primary, the school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in school at that time. Doors open at 8.45 in order to give your child time to put away their belongings and make their way into the classroom.

The doors close at 8.55am and, if your child arrives after then they must come into school by way of the main school office. If this is the case, they will automatically receive a late mark in the register.

At **9.25am** the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an **unauthorised absence**.

Monitoring Absence and Lateness:

At Arden we have to report our absence figure regularly to the authority and Governors. The Attendance Team monitor and maintain a monthly spreadsheet to check our overall attendance, absence %'s and attendance 90% and below (persistent absence). This includes notes of actions taken, letters sent to parents/carers, EWO referrals and Education Penalty Notice applications.

The absence % is evaluated half termly and the action plan altered accordingly.

For pupils whose attendance is less than 95% (90% in the autumn term,) the school's 1st Attendance letter will be sent, unless in exceptional circumstances.

If attendance is still below 95 % (90% in the autumn term,) after a subsequent four week period, the school's 2nd Attendance (Attendance Panel) letter will be sent and parents/carers will be invited to school to discuss their child's attendance and ways to work together to improve it. At this meeting an action plan will be written with parents and put in place. It is our aim that any attendance issues would be resolved by this point. If difficulties remain the school will ask for support from the Educational Welfare Officer and our School Age Plus Worker.

The Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) visits Arden every half term to complete register checks, monitor attendance and support school with attendance issues or concerns.

Holidays In Term Time:

Important amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1st September 2013. These amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

Defining 'Exceptional Circumstances'

Parents and Carers with parental responsibility who wish to request authorised leave of absence must complete and submit a 'Pupil Leave of Absence' request form. Only in exceptional circumstances will holiday leave be authorised during term time and current attendance figures may be taken into consideration. Holidays should not be booked prior to a request for authorisation. Such exceptional circumstances will include:

- *In the case of significant family occasions involving a close family member (no more than 5 days' leave will be granted under this heading.)*
- *Where service personnel, NHS staff, members of the police force or other employees, are prevented from taking leave during school holiday times. These requests may be granted upon receipt of documentary evidence in support of the application and only if the holiday, in the view of the headteacher, will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education. No more than 10 days' leave will be granted under this heading. A pupil's rate of attendance AND punctuality must BOTH be at 95% or above in order for the request to be authorised.*

Other occasions which fall outside of the above descriptions may be considered. Where possible, these should be submitted in good time.

Holidays cannot be authorised if the request:

- Is during assessment weeks, National Curriculum SATs or examination periods;
- Overlaps with the beginning or end of a new term;
- Is due to availability of the desired accommodation;
- Is due to availability of cheaper holidays;
- Is due to poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.

When are Education Penalty Notices issued?

As a school we will always seek to issue penalty notices in a fair and equitable manner, without fear or favour. Penalty notices will be issued where there is:

- 1) Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more (one school week) which have been previously declined by the headteacher/governors; **and**
- 2) An overall attendance of below 88% for the 12 calendar months ending with the last day of the period of absence.

School takes a particularly dim view when no request for authorised absence has been received prior to a child being away from school for 10 sessions or more. This is a safeguarding concern for the school and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body:

The Governing Board (GB) will discuss attendance figures with the Headteacher termly and report them in the Full Governing Board Minutes

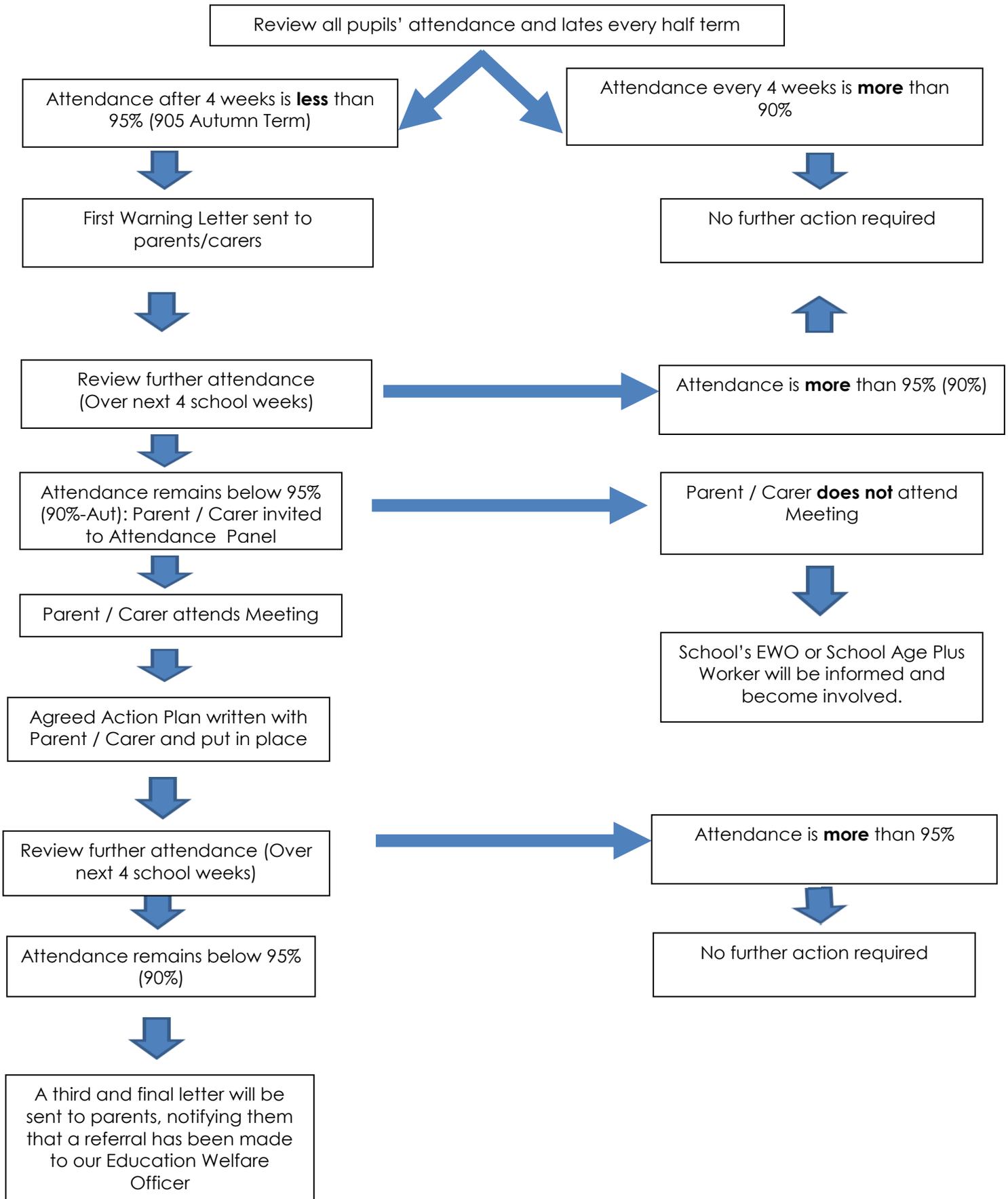
The GB will review the Attendance Policy every 3 years.

Updated: December 2017

Agreed by Governing Board: February 2018

Review: December 2020

Flow chart for monitoring pupil attendance



Arden's Attendance Improvement Plan

Pupil:		Rate of attendance at date of review:	
Date of Birth:		Review date:	
Year Group		Target rate of attendance:	

Actions:	Desired outcomes:	Time scale:

Parent/ Carer Signature _____

Headteacher Signature _____