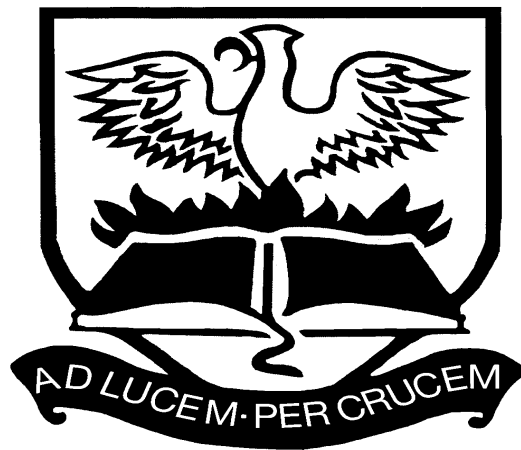


ARCHBISHOP BLANCH SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

POLICY WRITTEN BY:

J Griffiths

DATE POLICY PREPARED:

October 2008

DATE FIRST RATIFIED BY GOVERNING BODY:

DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW:

Autumn 2010

Introduction

Archbishop Blanch School believes that good attendance and punctuality are key factors both in learning and raising achievement and that they are important for lifelong learning. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is important, therefore, that parents and carers make sure that their child attends regularly and this policy sets out how the school and the family can achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important

High standards of attendance and punctuality demonstrate a commitment to education and they are a sound preparation for the world of work; any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect learning. Ensuring their child's regular attendance at school is the **legal responsibility** of all parents and carers and permitting absence without a good reason may result in prosecution.

Encouraging regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – pupils, parents/carers and all members of staff.

To help maintain the focus on good attendance the school will:

- Register attendance and punctuality accurately in line with Health and Safety regulations
- Report on attendance and punctuality in each pupil's regular academic report
- Contact parents if the level of an individual's attendance and/or punctuality gives cause for concern
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying class and year group achievements, awarding certificates every term for 100% attendance and giving prizes for 5 and 7 years' perfect attendance and punctuality at the school's annual Evening to Celebrate Achievement

Absence Procedures

If their child is absent, the parent/carer should:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the morning of the first day of absence by using the school's dedicated absence line – **0151 706 9760**
- Send a letter into school on the first day of their child's return with an explanation of the absence; **this should be done even if telephone calls have been made during the absence**

If a pupil is absent the school will:

- Telephone home on the first day of absence if we have not heard from a parent or carer
- Invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation with the relevant Year Tutor or the Deputy Headteacher [Pastoral] if attendance or punctuality is giving cause for concern
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance and Education Welfare Officer [PAEWO] if attendance falls below 90%

Different types of absence

Every half day absence, known as a “session”, has to be classified by the school as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. This is the reason why information about the cause of absence is always required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments which **unavoidably** fall in school time and emergencies.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school and the Governing Body do not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority’s use of sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Such absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily
- Leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed
- Looking after other children, birthdays or shopping
- Truancy during the school day

Whilst any pupil may be away from school because they are unwell, on rare occasions they can be reluctant to come to school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out quickly between the school, the parents/carers and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend it is unwise to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This can only make the situation worse.

Persistent Absence [PA]

According to the Government, a pupil becomes a “persistent absentee” when they miss 20% or more schooling across the year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to a pupil’s education at all Key Stages. For example, at Key Stage 4, it has been proved nationally that GCSE success is affected negatively by regular absence.

The table below is based on national, not Archbishop Blanch School, statistics:

LINK BETWEEN ATTENDANCE AND ATTAINMENT

% Attendance	Average absence	% 5 A*-C	% 5 A*-G
100 – 94%		75%	98%
93 – 91%	½ day per fortnight +	53%	93%
90 – 85%	1½ days per fortnight	34%	84%
80% and below	1 day per week	26%	77%

The school will monitor all absence thoroughly and any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absentee level, **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark, will be given priority and parents/carers informed immediately. All persistent absentee cases will be referred automatically to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer, however, each case will be discussed individually with the PAEWO by the Pastoral Staff.

The Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer

Archbishop Blanch School enjoys a high level of pupil attendance which has been achieved by strong home/school partnerships. However, where there are unresolved difficulties, the school may have no option but to refer the pupil to the PAEWO. If efforts to improve the pupil's attendance fail, the PAEWO 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 Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or carers may wish to contact the PAEWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and can give impartial advice.

Holidays in term time/Extended Absence

Parents sign a Home/School Agreement when they accept a place at Archbishop Blanch School for their daughter, which includes a statement that holidays will not be taken during term time. **Therefore, there is the expectation that pupils will not be taken out of school for this reason.** The Governing Body believe that holidays taken in term time will affect a pupil's schooling as much as any other absence; it should be remembered that any savings made by taking a holiday out of peak times are offset by the cost to a pupil's education.

There is **no entitlement in law** to leave of absence in term time. Under regulation 7 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 it may only be granted where the school "*considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the special circumstances relating to that application*".

That is to say, the school would be acting unlawfully if it allowed holidays in term time unless there are special circumstances.

Any application for leave must be made by letter to the Headteacher well in advance of the absence. Parents/carers may be required to attend an interview to discuss any proposed holiday in term time.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of the time agreed, must be classed as **unauthorised** and can attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

The law says that if a pupil is absent in the circumstances set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, regulation 8, they **shall be removed** from the school roll. In these circumstances the parents/carers must formally apply for re-admission. In the event of the school being over-subscribed there is no guarantee of re-admission.

Contact telephone numbers

There are times when the school needs to contact parents/carers about a number of important issues, including absence; therefore, it is necessary for our records to be up to date particularly where contact numbers are concerned. Parents/carers should inform the school immediately whenever there is a change in contact information.

Lateness

A poor record of punctuality is unacceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the day they can miss work and important information. Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the individual and can encourage absence.

The school day begins at **8.35 am** and pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their form rooms before the Late Bell rings at **8.40 am**. The registers close at **9.15 am**; in accordance with LA regulations, unless prior arrangements have been made with the school, a pupil arriving after that time will receive a mark that shows their presence on site, but will not count as a present mark. This will result in an unauthorised absence and could lead to a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority if the problem persists.

Parents of pupils with a persistent record of lateness will be invited into school to discuss the problem with either the appropriate Head of Year or the Deputy Head [Pastoral]. Parents are encouraged to approach the school if they are experiencing problems getting their child to school on time.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish pupils' absence figures to their parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All the staff at Archbishop Blanch School are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.