



ATTENDANCE AND REGISTRATION POLICY

“Love to learn, learn to love”

1 Corinthians 16:13

This policy considers the DfE statutory guidance, “Keeping Children Safe in Education” 2019 and “Children Missing Education” 2016 guidance.

Our school target for attendance is 97%.

Rationale

Archbishop Runcie VA First School is a Church of England First School. In harmony with the Christian ethos of the school, our attendance policy is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ. At Archbishop Runcie First School, we believe that each child is unique, with talents and abilities to be nurtured and developed in order for them to reach their potential. Each individual is entitled to the best opportunity and children need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professional and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. This included children in Nursery. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school (including Nursery) and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website or available from the school office for those without access to the internet.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher, staff and Governors at our school work together to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Aims and Objectives

Department for Education (DfE) guidance states that all schools should have effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance and investigating the underlying causes of poor attendance which should be set out in an attendance policy.

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality

- Achieve a minimum of 97%, apart from those with chronic health issues. The national average is 96%.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, loved and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility
- Establish a pattern for monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance
- Recognise the role of class teachers as they will be able to identify where attendance is having an impact on attainment

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer between year groups, key phases and their next school

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school

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

To help us to focus on this we will:

School Actions

- Follow up any unexplained absence with First Day Response (See First Day Response procedures), by home visits or telephone call.
- Give parents and carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Provide parents with letters (Attendance Traffic Light System) informing them if their child's attendance is a concern, at least termly, and informing them if any future actions will be taken
- Report to all parents and carers termly on their child's attendance and punctuality in their child's interim/annual report
- Contact parents and carers should a change in their child's attendance give rise to concern and/or below the school's target for attendance
- Contact parents and carers should their child's attendance drop to a level that would fall into the category of Persistent Absentee

- Contact parents and carers should their child's punctuality become a cause for concern
- Celebrate attendance and punctuality weekly via the newsletter and termly through attendance certificates
- Recognise good or improving attendance through letters home or certificates

Local Authority Actions

- Monitor attendance both Authorised and Unauthorised, and take part in legal proceedings where necessary
- Referrals to the Local Authority Attendance Service for Children Missing in Education when appropriate

Parent and Carer Actions – it is expected that parents and carers will

- Ensure every effort is made to get their child to school every day and on time
- Take responsibility to notify the school as soon as possible (after 8am) if their child is too ill to attend
- Make medical and dental appointments outside of school times whenever possible. Ensure any necessary requests for absence from school due to medical or dental appointments are supported by evidence e.g. an appointment card or letter
- Ensure any requests for absence are made well in advance of the required dates

Registration

- We expect all pupils to be lined up on the yard at 8.45am as the school day starts at 8.50am prompt and the doors will close at 8.50am.
- Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance.
- Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00am and by 1.05pm. All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority.

Registers

- Registers are legal documents and will be marked twice a day
- Parents must always give reasons for absence to the school
- The Headteacher will determine whether absence is authorised or unauthorised in exceptional circumstances, considering factors such as frequency, duration, attendance patterns, i.e. within reason. Staff must be observant of situations where absence is continually condoned by parents

Types of absences

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. **Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.**

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Illness

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card/letter or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries. Alternatively we may make a referral to the School Health Advisor to offer support.

Holidays in Term Time

The Headteacher and Governors are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement in law to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the Headteacher, in accordance with the school policy, as agreed by the Governing Body. Government advice from April 2013 is that family holidays (i.e. an absence from school which is not for medical

or sickness reasons, or religious observance) should no longer be authorised unless in exceptional circumstances. A family holiday would be unlikely to be considered as an exceptional circumstance.

From April 2013 it is our policy that:

- Requests for any term time holidays will not be authorised. Absence taken and not authorised for children reaching statutory school age, could be liable for a Fixed Penalty fine should the amount of unauthorised absence become a cause for concern
- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

When a child misses 10% of their schooling across a year, they become a 'Persistent Absentee'. This level of absence is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need the full support of parents to tackle this. Parents will be informed if their child is moving into this category, and the child will be monitored weekly.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors and parents.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the appropriate agencies of any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the Local Authority and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the head teacher who has responsibility for monitoring attendance.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Maintaining class electronic registers (SIMS) and completing them accurately in accordance with school policy.
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Where poor attendance re occurs ensuring appropriate school staff are informed.
- Ensuring appropriate school staff are informed of additional information provided by the child so it can be recorded in line with school policy
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary
- Provide background information to support referrals

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's LA Attendance Team

- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absences and lates are recorded on SIMs electronic registers
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home early
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head teacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance
- First Day Response: school office staff contact home if no reason for absence is received (phone call or message on ParentMail)

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with and support offered.

As a parent/carers you can help us by:

- Telephoning school on the same day as soon as possible (after 8am) or emailing (prior to registration) with the reason of absence and saying when the child will return
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Letting the school know of the date and time of medical appointments that need to be taken in school time, and when your child will be collected from and/or returned to school
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness
- Ensure that the school has up to date and more than one emergency contact numbers
- Booking family holidays during school holiday time rather than term time – there are 13 weeks every year where this is possible

First Day Response Procedures

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will follow the school's First Day Response (FDR) procedures by:

- Contact you to follow up unexplained absences by phone calls or text message as soon as possible
- If attendance is already a concern, a home visit may still be required, even when a reason for absence has been given.
- Contact you after two days of absence even when a reason has been given in order to support the child's return to school
- Make a home visit if phone calls are unanswered
- Make a home visit if it is felt that support is required or if the child is deemed as vulnerable (due to a varying range of factors)
- Inform any appropriate professionals or agencies working with the child or family
- Invite you to discuss any unexplained absences with a senior member of staff or Headteacher
- Refer the matter to the Newcastle City Council Attendance Service if your child's attendance fails to improve
- In exceptional cases, police will be informed if there are serious concerns about the welfare and safety of the child

Punctuality

- Registers are marked at 8.50am and your child will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in class by then. This is classed as a present mark, but displays that the pupil arrived late for school
- Children who arrive late (after the doors close at 8:50am) must be signed in by their parent/carer at the Admin Office, a reason for the lateness is also requested
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day. If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents/carers.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality, and you may be asked to meet with the Headteacher to discuss ways to resolve the problem. In the meantime if you are having problems with getting your child to school on time please let us know and we will do our best to help you

Late Registration

Arrival after the close of registration at 9:15am pupils will be marked as unauthorised absence (U) in line with the DFE guidance. For Health and Safety reasons parents MUST accompany late arriving pupils into the building in order to sign their children into school, and provide a reason for the late arrival. The U code is classed as an unauthorised absence because pupils are missing schooling; putting their educational progress at risk. Unauthorised absence can attract the interest of external agencies, including referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team and consideration of the use of legal measures, in just the same way.

Children who arrive late after the registers have closed due to a medical appointment will be marked M (in). For regular (e.g. once a week) medical issues causing lateness the child will have their code move from M to / (present). Any child arriving after 9:15am for any reason other than medical will be marked U (late after registers closed). Children who have to leave for any reason throughout the day should be signed out at the main office by their parent/carer or appropriate adult. This is strongly discouraged. Parents are requested to make dental or medical appointments outside of school hours just as school staff are required to make similar appointments outside school time.

Late Collection

School closes at 3:15pm and parents are expected to be on the yard, ready to collect their child(ren) at this time. It is not the responsibility of school staff to supervise children after this time. Staff are not required to be on site after 3:30 therefore there may not be appropriate supervision for uncollected pupils after this time. In this case staff will contact Children's Social Care.

If, for whatever reason, parents are going to be late they should contact the school office to advise staff who will in turn inform the child, as appropriate. If this is an area of difficulty, there are local childcare services available to parents as we do not run an after school club.

If parents and carers are repeatedly late to collect children, concerns will be raised with parents and carers. If parents persistently pick their child up late they may incur a charge.

Charges are as follows;

Up to 15 minutes late - £25.00

Up to 30 minutes late - £50.00

Over 30 mins late - £100

We have a duty of care to safeguard all children and may seek advice from Children's Social Care at any time.

Children Missing From Education & Safeguarding

A child going missing from education can be a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. All staff and volunteers will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeated occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, undergoing female genital mutilation, forced marriage or travelling to conflict zones and to help prevent the risk of going missing in the future (Keeping Children Safe in Education, updated September 2018 and Children Missing in Education Nov 2013, updated September 2016).

All Schools are required to make the Local Authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12. The school may need to work alongside other multi-agencies to carry out investigations. This means liaising with Children's Services (formerly Social Services), the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2018 states that "Parents should provide the school with more than one emergency contact number to give the school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern". By giving us the information we require, unnecessary investigations can be avoided. This Attendance Policy is part of broader suite of Safeguarding policies including the schools Child Protection Policy.

Leavers

If your child is leaving other than at the end of Year 4 to go to Middle School, parents/carers are required to:

- Give the school full information about their plans, including date of move, new address or at least the town you will be moving to, new school and start date when known, and reasons for moving. (a form is available at the school office)
- Confirm the school has your current mobile phone number and an emergency number
- Take our school's compliments slip so the new school can easily contact us and records be transferred
- Let us know when you move

Addressing Attendance Concerns

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. The school aim is to work with families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home, parents may be offered a parent contract. A parent contract is an agreement / action plan which looks at ways to work together to improve attendance. (See Appendix A) There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the LA Attendance Service. The Attendance Service will look at each case and may issue fixed penalty notices (fine) to parents where there is poor attendance. If a penalty notice is not paid the LA would then progress the case for court prosecution. From September 2017, the threshold for a referral into the Attendance Service for legal action has changed, meaning that children whose attendance falls below 90% with 10 unauthorised absences (half day = 1 absence) which is 5 full school days, may meet the criteria for a referral.

If attendance was particularly poor, or it was not a first offence, the LA would refer straight to court.

Monitoring Attendance

Our office and Headteacher has the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with staff to discuss any attendance concerns and appropriate actions.

We have a Service Level Agreement for a part time Attendance & Welfare Officer to work in school.

Why attendance matters:

Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance

14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance

20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance

30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

The guidelines below will support clarify, but not define, whether absence will be authorised or unauthorised:

AUTHORISED

- Illness
- Medical/ Dental Appointment (with evidence provided)
- Family Bereavement
- Religious observance
- Sport/ Music/ Exams
- Excluded children
- Agreed other educational reasons at the discretion of the Headteacher.

UN-AUTHORISED

- Absence without valid reason
- Latecomers
- Leave of absence which has not been agreed in advance
- Special occasions

Procedures for Monitoring and improving attendance

The Administration Officer will produce for the Headteacher a fortnightly report to show each child where attendance is less than 97% and/or more than 3 sessions have been entered as late. The child's attendance will be categorised as follows:

GREEN 97% attendance and above.

We expect children to have Green attendance throughout their education. Those in the Green are more likely to do well in examinations, have better job opportunities and can develop strong friendships within school.

AMBER 93%- 96% (missing 8 days+ education)

Students in this zone are still at risk of underachieving due to the absence level. Students who miss school regularly are more likely to suffer from school related stress. At the amber stage the class teacher will discuss this with the parent to establish the reasons and whether the school can support.

RED 92% attendance and below (missing 3 weeks+ education)

Students in the red zone are more likely to underachieve, find making friendships difficult and misbehave. Legal action may also be taken against Parents/Carers of Red Zone pupils. Parents may be offered intensive support and will be referred to LA if attendance is showing no signs of improving and this may result in legal action.

- This will be monitored by the Headteacher over the half term and at the red stage or if there are any continuing issues identified concerning absence, illness or lateness these will be addressed by the Headteacher contacting the parents to agree strategies to be put in place to improve attendance.
- At termly parent-teacher consultations, attendance figures are shared with parents including whether their child has been at the green, amber or red stage of monitoring and any concerns discussed.
- Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be identified (pupils with more than 10% absence rate) and an action plan will be put in place to address the underlying reasons for the absence level.
- Advice can be sought from the LA if legal action may need to be taken as a result of attendance failing to improve.
- Parents will be thanked for their collaboration where improvements achieved or move to legal proceedings where child's education continues to be detrimentally affected by attendance / lateness.

Reintegrating long term absentees

Following a long period of absence, a child may feel vulnerable, so staff may wish to arrange a phased or gradual return, and all staff will be made aware of the situation. The Family Support Advisor may support this process.

Data Analysis

Attendance data is submitted to the DfE, most schools use the management information systems via the school census. This data is published by the DfE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

Analysis of data helps to identify the main causes of absence within the school and plan appropriate action to ensure all pupils attend school regularly.

Attendance data is analysed to identify particular groups of children whose absences cause concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils.

Attendance data is analysed attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender to help identify areas of concern and attendance patterns.

Monitoring the policy

The governors will receive termly information from the Headteacher regarding attendance figures and the data analysis and use this information to monitor the effectiveness of the policy. This policy will be reviewed every two years, or in light of changes in legislation or national and local guidance.

Conclusion

At Archbishop Runcie CE First School we want our children to “love to learn” and have the best possible opportunities. To this end, we will encourage regular attendance with parents by placing value on attendance and punctuality and through the consistent application of this policy. We will encourage attendance and punctuality with children through good role models, through positive relationships and by providing a stimulating curriculum which inspires the children to participate.

Date	Reviewed / updated	Staff involved
September 2007	New policy	HT & staff
June 2009	Reviewed	Curriculum & Performance cttee
December 2011	Reviewed	JRo
December 2013	Reviewed	JRo
September 2015	Reviewed	Curriculum & Performance Cttee
June 2017	Updated	SP and KM after consultation with staff and governors.
January 2018	Reviewed and updated	DH, Teaching and Learning Committee -consultation with staff and governors.
March 2019	Reviewed and updated	KM/LM
June 2019	Updated following LA Meeting	KM
September 2019	Issued to all staff	KM
January 2020	Updated and agreed by Gov Cttee	KM/KW/JB/DT

Appendix A

Parenting Contracts for attendance – guide for parents

What is a parenting contract?

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent or carer and either the school and / or the local authority. A parenting contract may be offered if your child has failed to attend school regularly. A parenting contract is meant to support you, the school and the LA to identify and address the issues surrounding your child's irregular attendance at school and encourage a positive working relationship to improve attendance. It is not intended to be a punishment.

What does it involve?

Everyone signed up to the contract will agree to take certain actions which are realistic and which address the issues of non-attendance for a specified period of time. You might agree to do things like getting your child up on time, signing a daily report card and reporting any difficulties to school as soon as possible. School might agree to inform you if your child does not arrive at school, deal quickly with any problems and involve other agencies that might be able to offer you additional support. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

Do I have to enter into a parenting contract?

Entry into a parenting contract is voluntary but it does provide you with an opportunity to get support to improve your child's attendance at school. If you do take up the offer of a parenting contract and try to comply with it, this may assist your case if the local authority decides to take legal action against you for your child's irregular attendance. If you refuse the offer or don't comply without good reason this may also be presented as evidence. If you decide not to enter into a contract, you will need to try to find other ways of improving your child's attendance and it may be worth discussing how you intend to do this with the school or local authority.

How is a parenting contract arranged?

You will be invited to a meeting in school with a school representative. The local authority Area Attendance Officer may also attend. Depending on their age and understanding, your child can attend part or all of the meeting. At the meeting you will be asked your views on your child's attendance and whether there are any underlying issues. Try to think about the reasons behind your child's absences, any particular difficulties you are experiencing at the moment and what would help you to improve your child's attendance. Also think about what you can do to improve attendance. School will explain what support they can offer and whether any other agency including the local authority might also be able to help you and your child. You will be able to discuss what is expected of both you and the school and then agree the actions that will support improved attendance. If you choose to accept the offer, the final contract will be signed by you, the school representative and in some cases the area attendance officer.

National contacts

www.direct.gov.uk School attendance, absence and your child

www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport Behaviour and attendance - Parental responsibility

familylives.org.uk Truancy Helpline: 0808 800 2222

Local contacts

www.newcastle.gov.uk Schools – Attendance

You can phone the Attendance Service on 0191 277 4500 or Email attendanceservice@newcastle.gov.uk