

Aragon Primary School Attendance Policy



Attendance Lead: Rob Myers
Attendance Administrator: Dawn Siggery
Attendance Administrator: Zoey Kennett
EWO: Rebecca Fulbrook
Date: June 2025
Date agreed and ratified by Governing Body:

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and following any concerns and/or updates to the national and local guidance or procedures.

At Aragon, we believe that excellent attendance is essential if our children are to take full advantage of school and gain the educational and social skills which prepare them for adult life. We aim to work together with all our families to ensure all children attend school regularly and can achieve their full potential.

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.'

School Attendance Policy, DfE, 2020

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) (2024)

Merton Code of Conduct (2024)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

At Aragon we:

- Encourage and support parents and carers to recognise their legal responsibility in ensuring school regular attendance and in understanding the link between attendance and attainment and to work in partnership to encourage and promote good attendance.
- Encourage pupils through the curriculum, assemblies, and pastoral support to recognise the importance of good attendance in achieving their full educational potential and to develop good habits in preparation for the world of work.
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued, sending out a clear message that if a pupil is absent s/he will be missed.
- Work in partnership with other agencies such as the Educational Welfare Service to encourage and monitor attendance.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and the law relating to attendance.
- Evaluate procedures and systems on a regular basis and act early to address patterns of absence.
- Offer appropriate support to parents/carers and pupils who are experiencing difficulties with attendance.

- Fulfil statutory requirements.
- Inform all parents of the expectations relating to our attendance policy on the fortnightly newsletter.
- Recognise and value excellent attendance and improved.

All Teachers will:

- Be responsible for recording attendance twice a day by 08:55 and 13:15.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority by encouraging all children to attend school by providing high quality teaching together with interesting and engaging lessons.
- Encourage good attendance through encouraging children to want to be the best attending class in the school which is reported on the newsletter.
- Ensure all children are rewarded for good attendance.
- Know their children's absence rates from the previous school year so that they can build on improvements and target specific children.
- Inform the Attendance Lead/ Family Liaison Officer of any continued concerns relating to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Be responsible for setting work for long-term absentees and those on fixed term exclusion.
- Provide appropriate support to enable children with long-term absence to make a positive return to school.
- Inform parents of their child's attendance at consultation evenings and on the written report sent home at the end of the year.

All Parents/Carers will:

- Meet their legal obligation by ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time and in a fit condition to learn.
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late and the reason for this.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Ensure that children arrive at school between 08:45 and 08:50.
- Be aware that poor attendance could be deemed a safeguarding concern.
- Contact the school before 08:55 on the first day of their child's absence, and each subsequent day of absence, advising when they are expected to return.
- Provide medical evidence indicating attendance at the doctor/dentist/optician before the arranged appointment. Make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. If school time appointments are made, evidence must be provided.
- Where possible, give advance notice of absence for religious observance.
- Inform their child's teacher or the school office of any issue or problem which may hinder their child's regular attendance at school.
- Provide up-to-date contact numbers, more than one emergency contact number for their child and inform the school of any change of addresses.
- Only request leave of absence if it is an exceptional circumstance.

All Children will:

- Inform adults at home or a member of staff of any problems that may hinder their attendance

at school.

- Attend school every day, on time.

The Attendance Administrator will:

- Ensure all registers are accurate, up to date and completed correctly on Arbor.
- Ensure the correct absence codes are recorded, particularly for those children for whom medical evidence has been requested.
- Ensure registers close at 9:00am and 1:00pm for KS1 and 1:30pm for KS2. Any child arriving after the closing of registers will be recorded as 'U' which is an unauthorised absence.
- Ensure all absences are accounted for: call parents/carers if a child is absent without notification and refer if necessary if no notification has been provided.
- Notify the Attendance Lead of any outstanding unauthorised absences and students whose attendance has fallen below 95%.
- Keep a record of children who arrive late or who leave the school site early, in case of an emergency.
- Identify poor attenders and lateness, liaising closely with FLO and Attendance Lead.
- Send out absence letters as requested by Attendance Lead.

The SEND Team will:

- Ensure children with SEND are identified and given appropriate support.
- Ensure attendance is a target for children with SEND if it is an area for improvement.

The Headteacher will:

- Consider regular non-attendance as a safeguarding matter.
- Complete requests for leave of absence, taking individual exceptional circumstances into account.
- Implement this policy.
- Monitor school-level absence data and the impact of attendance strategies being implemented.
- Support staff with monitoring attendance of individual pupils.
- Issue PN where necessary.

The Governors will:

- Promote the importance of school attendance policies and ethos.
- Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data.
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school.
- Ensure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Attendance Lead will:

- Lead attendance across the school.
- Ensure parents receive weekly attendance figures via the newsletter.
- Ensure all staff are aware of attendance issues and how to deal with them.

- Collect and analyse attendance levels for different groups in the school e.g. year group, gender, disadvantaged and take action to address significant differences.
- Implement strategies to support persistently and severely absent students.
- Deliver targeted interventions to support pupils and families where attendance is a concern. Refer to and work alongside external and internal agencies where appropriate.
- Promote and reward good attendance through displays and a variety of incentives.
- Monitor attendance levels in non-statutory aged children in Reception to identify potential poor attendees.
- Refer any child with less than 90% attendance (if there are any other concerns) to the Education Welfare Officer and meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss these cases.
- Report current attendance facts and issues to governors.
- Consult with the School Health Service if the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

The Family Liaison Officer will:

- Liaise with the Attendance Lead regarding individual students with less than 92% attendance.
- Provide welfare support to children and their families and through assessment of their needs, help in engaging a multi-agency response to addressing those needs where required.
- Meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to identify and support those children whose attendance or punctuality is a source of concern.

The Education Attendance Officer (EWO) will:

- Liaise with the Attendance Lead and Family Liaison Officer regarding individual students with less than 90% attendance.
- Work with selected pupils and families to raise pupil attendance and timekeeping using a range of interventions, including home visits.
- Prepare and maintain clear, accurate records of actions and responses for individual students, including those records that will support court action where this is necessary, and to ensure the passing on of relevant information for any student attracting a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Act as Issuing Officer in relation to Penalty Notices, maintaining clear and detailed records. Aragon Primary School can issue a Penalty Notice or initiate legal proceedings for unauthorised absence, which meet the criteria of the Local Authority Code of Conduct.
- Complete the appropriate paperwork for the issuing of a PN fine/prosecution, at the request of the headteacher.

Attendance Monitoring

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly, and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed at 9.00am will be marked as absent, using the 'U' code.
- Ongoing punctuality issues will be identified by the school attendance officer who will liaise with parents, senior staff in school and the Education Welfare Officer.

Following up Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends and wider family. In the event of an absence of three or more days without contact from the family, a home visit will be made, either by senior leaders from Aragon Primary or the School Education Welfare Officer to ascertain the safety and wellbeing of the child. The Headteacher will also take advice from the Merton Early Help Hub.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will involve the Education Welfare Officer.
- Once contact has been made, school will identify whether the absence is approved or not.

Understanding Types of Absence Coding

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED and it is the Headteacher who decides whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing. Medical evidence may also be required in the form of a copy of a prescription, appointment card etc. Types of absence that are likely to be authorised are illness, medical or dental appointments that unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies.

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable, and which will not usually be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents.
- Birthdays.
- Minding other younger children in the family.
- Sibling unwell.
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell.
- Day trips and holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances that have been approved by the Headteacher.
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark (After the close of registration).
- Truancy.
- Death of a pet.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents should telephone or come into the school office to give details in advance of the appointment and will be advised that usually only a half day absence will be authorised, and pupils should be in school before or after the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Leave of absence during term time

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion and if it is granted the Head will also determine the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

All requests for leave of absence in term time will be considered on their individual merits taking into account the exceptionality of the circumstances.

Reasons not deemed exceptional include:

- Availability of cheap flights and/or holidays.
- Availability of desired accommodation.
- Parent/carer work commitments unless there is clear evidence that the leave cannot be taken in school holiday times.
- Poor weather experienced during school holiday periods.
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term, half term.

Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, using the 'Leave of Absence Request' form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher requires evidence to support any request for leave of absence. All requests must be put in writing and any verbal requests will be recorded in writing by school staff. Parents will be informed of the decision by the school within 7 days.

Authorisation for absence will not be granted retrospectively. Any leave of absence that is not authorised and meets the Penalty Notice threshold is very likely to result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice fine by the London Borough of Merton.

Attendance Contracts

An Attendance Contract may be offered to support an improvement in attendance and is a written agreement between the school and the parent/carer. The aim is to identify the reasons for absence and offer appropriate support to improve attendance. If there is no improvement against the targets set after 4 weeks the Attendance Contract can close.

Notice to improve

A notice to improve is a final opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate

but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, a notice to improve will usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support. The Headteacher can choose not to use one in any case, including cases where support is appropriate, but they do not expect a notice to improve would have any impact on a parent's behaviour (e.g. because the parent has already received one for a similar offence). The attendance will then be monitored by the school as appropriate and if attendance does not improve within a 3-6 week period, a decision will be made as to whether a Penalty Notice should be issued.

Penalty Notice

In accordance with the Merton Local Code of Conduct (2024) and S4444I Education Act 1994 and Working together to improve school attendance (2024) for Aragon Primary School will seek to issue a penalty notice when:

- A parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so, for example where the parent has failed to engage with any voluntary or supportive measures.
- Attendance contracts have been unsuccessful or not complied with (within the specified timescale agreed at the initial meeting).
- A child has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions within 10 school weeks with one of, or a combination of the following codes:
 - (a) code G (the pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday),
 - (b) code N (the circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established),
 - (c) code O (none of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies), and
 - (d) code U (the pupil attended after the taking of the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies)

Children Missing from Education (CME)

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer, then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME). The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

If a pupil moves too far from Aragon Primary to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad, the parents must complete a school leaver form available from the school office. This will provide Aragon Primary with the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

Ten days' unauthorised absence and fifteen days attributed to illness

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME).

The Education Welfare Officer will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents are asked to help us by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. We must also provide the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of illness.

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Conditions
- Health and Safety Policy

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Application for Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances during Term Time

Appendix 2 – Suspension from school

Appendix 3 – Part-time Timetables

Appendix 4 – Children missing in Education (CME)

Appendix 5 - Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

Appendices

Appendix I - Application for Leave of Absence for exceptional Circumstances during Term Time

As parents and carers, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education Regulations 2024, state that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If your requested absence is not granted and leave is taken without permission, the absence will be unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences may result in a Penalty Notice being issued by the Education welfare service in accordance with Aragon primary school's Attendance Policy. The penalty notice is £160, per child per parent/carer. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80.

Please complete and submit this form if you would like your request to be considered by the Headteacher.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons carefully and you will be notified of the decision.

Name(s) of Child(ren).....

Year/Class.....

Home address.....

Dates of absence: From..... To:.....

Reason for request (additional evidence may be required) / Who is travelling?

.....
.....

Signed: Parent/Guardian

.....

Email address:.....

Contact number:.....

Date form submitted:.....

The above request for leave of absence in term time for..... has/has not been authorised.

If authorised, your child/ren should return to school on.....

Signed..... Designation.....

For school office use only

Pupil's name	
Previous leave of absence requested/taken (last 2 years)	

Nature of exceptional circumstances and evidence provided	
Number of days granted (if any)	

Appendix 2 - Suspension from school

With effect from the 1st September 2022, any pupil who has been suspended from school, and provision arranged, if the student does not attend the provision this shall be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This may result in further action taken by the school, please see also the penalty notice section.

Appendix 3 - Part-time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. ([Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)).

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision.

There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised and code in the register as a C, which is an authorised absence.

Appendix 4 - Children Missing from Education (CME)

If a pupil moves too far from Merton Park Primary to attend the school/moves out of the area/abroad the parents must complete a school leavers form, available from the school office. This will provide us with the pupil's new home address, potentially their new school name and contact details and contact information for their parents/carers. If no/insufficient detail is provided to the school, the pupil will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing from Education and the Local Authority will need to make appropriate checks.

Appendix 5 - Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

The school attendance officer will work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. This includes Public Exam provision and the education of siblings where the family have had to travel and stay away from the home for medical reasons. Please see Supporting Children with Medical Needs policy for further information.

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Acts 1996 and 2002](#)
- [The Children Act 1989](#)
- [The Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#)
- [The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Sentencing Act 2020](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#) [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Education \(Information about Individual Pupils\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)

Next review: June 2026