



Term Time Absence

Dear Parents,

Please find attached the **Arnewood Policy for Attendance** which has been agreed by the Arnewood Pyramid of schools.

Like you, we want the best for your children and we know that children who are in school do better than those that are not. Just 90% attendance can have a significant impact on a child's learning as is clearly illustrated on the final page of this document.

We ask that you read this document carefully before submitting any request for absence and hope that you will not find it necessary to take your child out of school again next year.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Adams - Hordle Primary School
Kelvin Geary - New Milton Junior School
Clare Skerrett - New Milton Infant School
Sarah Dibben - Ashley Infant School
Ian Rix - Ashley Junior School
Jacquie Persson - Tiptoe Primary School
Nigel Pressnell - The Arnewood School

Arnewood Pyramid

TERM TIME

Every Lesson Counts



Convention on the Rights of the Child
Article 28: Every child has the right to an education.

“every lesson in school matters and children who have time off often find it difficult to catch up and do well at school...”

DCSF 2006

The Arnewood Pyramid of schools, in line with Local Authority and National DfE requirements, have agreed the following protocols with regard to attendance and absence from school. Each school will publish their attendance policy on their website, and it is the responsibility of parents to familiarise themselves with the requirements of this policy.

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

What has changed?

If you take your child out of school for 5 or more days (10 or more sessions) unauthorised absence, including lates, (consecutive or non-consecutive) in any 50 school day period, families will be fined £60 per child, per adult in the family home. This also applies to unauthorised absence caused by children being late AFTER THE REGISTER HAS CLOSED. This means you must ensure your child arrives at school by 8.20am and is registered. A student arriving up until 9am will be marked as late, and **after 9am unauthorised absent**.

An instant fine will also be issued for **unauthorised absence** during assessment and testing weeks. E.g. Year 7 exam week, external exams. It is the parents' responsibility to check the school website to ensure that they are aware of these dates.

What is a Penalty Notice?

It is a fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. If it is paid it does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record.

Is there a right to appeal?

There is no statutory right to appeal. Once a Penalty Notice has been issued, it can only be withdrawn if it can be shown that it was issued in error.

What happens if I do not pay?

For a £60 fine you will have up to 21 days or, for a £120 fine, you will have 28 days, from the date of posting, to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If you fail to do so, the Local Authority is required, by law, to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of poor school attendance. If convicted of this offence under the Education Act 1996, there are a number of possible sentences including a fine of up to £1000 (in the case of a prosecution under 444(1)) or a fine of up to £2500 and/or a period of up to 3 months imprisonment (in the case of a prosecution under Section 444(1A)).

What will happen now when I apply for a holiday?

From September 1st 2015, when you apply for holiday using the school's Leave of Absence Form, you will be issued with a warning letter. This letter will inform you that if you take your child out of school you will be issued with a Fixed Term Penalty Notice unless the school deem that there are exceptional circumstances – see overleaf. There will be no further warnings apart from this letter. This initial warning letter can also be found on the school's website.

What will happen if I choose to ignore the warning letter and take my child out of school on holiday anyway?

If you take your child out of school for holiday you will be issued with a £60 Fixed Term Penalty Notice. This notice will be served for each child and to each adult. For instance: For a family of 2 children going away with two adults in the family home (including non-married partners and step-parents) **each adult would be fined £120 - £240 for the family.**



If a child misses just one day a week, over the course of their school career they will miss two years of schooling.

What is unauthorised absence?

Unauthorised absence is absence that is not approved by the headteacher and will be coded on your child's attendance record as either:

- O – Unauthorised absence
- U – Late after close of registration
- G – Non-approved leave of absence (Holiday)

What if my child is ill?

This is an authorised absence and is not included in this procedure. Please ensure that you contact the school by telephone or email. A note explaining the absence will be required when the student returns to school.

It is worth noting that the school will be required to take action if there is a pattern of persistent authorised absence. This is more likely to take the form of engaging with external agencies, but ultimately may lead to a local authority penalty notice if it is felt that the parents are condoning unnecessary absence.

What if I am separated – will we both still be fined?

No. Only the adults, in the family home at the time of the holiday, will be fined (regardless of whether they accompany the children on holiday or not).

What if I don't declare my holiday?

If your child reports to us that they have been on holiday, the absence code will be changed to unauthorised absence without consultation with the parent. We have no reason to believe that children lie to us about taking holiday. The Local Authority are clear that a child's declaration is sufficient legal evidence to pursue a Penalty Notice.

Can I get help if my child is not attending school?

Yes. The school is available to provide advice and support and signpost you to other support agencies in the Local Authority. You can also contact 0300 555 1384 (Hants Direct.)

Are there any exceptions?

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short.

Obviously, each case is taken on its own individual circumstances and headteachers and Governing Bodies have the authority to make exceptions. If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence.

Examples of times when absence might be authorised might include:

- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the **funeral service only**, not extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances; for the ceremony and travelling time only, not extended leave or for regular or recurring events.
- The needs of the families of service personnel are taken into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- Making reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Giving families time together to recover from trauma or crisis.
- Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.

Headteachers may take a student's previous record of attendance into account when making decisions.

It is important to note that head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

90% ATTENDANCE



Simon is in Year 7. His attendance rate is **90%**. He thinks this is pretty good.

MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI

90% attendance means that Simon is absent from lessons for the equivalent of **one half day every week**.

38 SCHOOL WEEKS	
SEPTEMBER	JULY

In year 7, Simon's **90%** attendance rate means that he missed the equivalent of **four whole weeks of lessons** in the school year.

If Simon continues to attend for only **90%** of the time, then over 5 years he will miss the equivalent of about **one half year of school**.

	SEPTEMBER	JULY
Y7		
Y8		
Y9	HALF YEAR ABSENT FROM SCHOOL	
Y10		
Y11		

Attending school on a regular basis is the key to your child doing well at school and will set them up with good habits for later life and the working world. It will also give your child the opportunity to:

- make lots of friends and feel included
- learn new things and develop many skills
- increase their confidence and self-esteem
- improve their social skills
- be part of a school team or club
- have better career prospects
- achieve their potential and fulfil their aspirations
- better exam results



Further information about school attendance and parental duties in relation to school attendance can be found on:

www.parentscentre.gov.uk



