

# Argoed High School



## Attendance Policy

**Agreed by Governors:**

.....  
(Signed by Chair)

.....*Date*

**Scheme due for review:**

.....*(date)*

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Argoed High School  
Tel: 01352 756414  
Email: [argoed\\_high\\_school@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:argoed_high_school@flintshire.gov.uk)

## 1. **Aims of the Attendance Policy**

The aims of the school's attendance policy are:

- To establish and maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality to maximise the value obtained from the education we provide in terms of academic and social development for our students.
- To maintain and, where possible, improve, the high level of attendance we have at Argoed High School.
- To satisfy the school's statutory obligations regarding the attendance of students at school.
- To protect the safety of students by ensuring they are on the school premises at all times when they should be, and when parents believe them to be.
- To relate attendance issues directly to the school's values.

## 2. **Guidance for parents/carers**

We expect all students to attend school regularly and to be punctual for the start of the school day and to lessons. Progress is affected by not attending school whatever the reasons, and is likely to impair the value of education for an individual student.

Educational research indicates that **less than 40%** of secondary students with an average of 15 days (or more) absence per year go on to achieve 5 GCSE passes (\*A-C).

### 2.1 **Parental responsibilities**

By law all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must be in receipt of full-time education. Parents are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering the child as a student at a school or by making other arrangements which provide effective education. Having a good education will help to give all children a good start in life.

If a parent suspects that their son/daughter may be unhappy at school, they must make contact with the school as soon as possible via reception. Alerting the school to any problems will help staff to resolve issues and allow every student to enjoy, and achieve at the school.

Argoed High School understands and supports students with religious observances. Flintshire has consulted with various faith leaders and schools, and has recognised that students can take time for religious observance in any academic year. Argoed High School follow Local Authority Policy and guidance.

### 2.2 **Parents must ensure that their child**

- Attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- Attends school prepared for work with the correct attitude, uniform and equipment.
- Support their child to meet the school's expected level of attendance. The school's current attendance target is at least 95%.
- Understands that their parents do not approve of them missing school.

### 2.3 **Procedures relating to absence from school in cases of unavoidable absence**

- If a child is ill, parents must contact the school on the first day of the child's illness before the start of the school day. Failure to do this will result in 'First day calling'.
- 'First day calling' is an automated system which highlights an absence and is made each morning in the form of a text sent to the parents on the student's first day of absence. If the text is not responded to by lunchtime then a phone call will be made.
- Written notification of the absence period and the reason for this from the parent/carer is required on the first day of the student's return, in addition to any phone contact.
- Medical appointments should, where possible, be arranged outside school time. If this is not possible then appointments need to be made either at the start or end of the school day to minimise disruption.
- Parents must provide a medical certificate to verify any absences of five days or more for illness.
- If permission is sought for a child to miss school for example because of a special occasion, parents should ask for permission in writing well in advance and give full details to the Head of House (HoH).
- **Holidays should NOT be arranged in term time as this disrupts learning and teaching.**

### 3. Categorising Absence

**There are two categories of absence - authorised and unauthorised.**

**Authorised absence** is an absence for which a valid reason has been given by parents and this has been accepted by the school. Absence for any reason may only be authorised by the school. Normally only unavoidable absences can be authorised. A note stating the reasons for an absence should be given to the form tutor on the day of return to the school. The tutor may have to verify the reasons given for absence. The main acceptable reasons for authorised absence are bereavement, medical/dental appointment, sickness, interview for full-time employment, and religious events.

**Unauthorised absence** is an absence for which a valid reason or an acceptable reason for the absence has not been given to the school. This includes absence where a parent has colluded in the disguising of an unacceptable absence. Unauthorised absence is deemed to be truancy. The HoH is responsible for deciding if an absence is unauthorised. The school is required to produce and publish unauthorised absence figures for its students.

### 4. Guidance for staff : following up absence

#### 4.1 General absences

- With the exception of absence caused by school closure on a day when attendance of students would normally not be expected (e.g. Staff Training Day) all other absences should be recorded in the register.
- Any student leaving school during a session for any reason (except to take part in an organised school activity when different rules apply) must obtain prior permission to leave and must **SIGN OUT** at Reception *with a note from the parent/carer that has also been signed by the form tutor/subject teacher*. A red flag note must also be put on SIMS (Schools Information Management System) to highlight to all staff that the student has signed out. If the student returns during the school day he/she must then SIGN IN again at Reception.

- Any student who has left school without permission or who has given an unsatisfactory reason for leaving should be sanctioned accordingly. **The parents and Head of House should be informed immediately.** If the offence is repeated, the Head of House will place the student on an attendance report to monitor attendance to school and lessons.
- Some absences (e.g. visit to a dentist) can be foreseen and the student should bring a note to explain the absence before being absent. Failing this a student must bring an absence note on return to school and must hand it to the form tutor.
- In the case of an absence which has not been foreseen, the parent/carer must telephone the school to explain the absence. A letter on the student's return to school should support this.
- **It is very important to determine the reason for every absence from school and to signify this in the register.** For any absence resulting from an activity organised by the school (e.g. school trip, study leave, exclusion) the form tutor/subject teacher may enter the appropriate code without notification from parents. For all other absences the code may only be entered after confirmation of the reason for absence has been received from a parent/carer.

#### **4.2 Unexplained absences**

Form tutors should be vigilant for signs of possible truancy including suspicious patterns of absences over time and should bring this to the attention of the HoH. Unexplained absences can fall into one or more of the following four categories:

1. Students who have been absent continuously for a significant period of time without explanation, where no absence note has been received.
2. Students who have frequent absences, e.g. 2-4 sessions each week, or every now and then, without adequate explanation.
3. Students who have repeatedly failed to provide absence notes or whose notes are irregular.
4. Students whom the form tutor suspects of truanting.

The procedure in following up such absences is likely to be as follows:

1. If there is no response from parent or carer on the day of unexplained absence, the reception staff email the Head of House.
2. Head of House contacts home on that specific day.
3. If there is no response from home, reception staff will send out a letter the following day.
4. On that same day Head of House liaises with ESW (Education Social Worker).
5. ESW to investigate.

#### **4.3 Extended Absences**

The form tutor should bring to the attention of the HOH the names of any students who have been absent for more than two weeks or who intend to be absent from school for more than two weeks for reasons other than illness.

If the school has received no forewarning about an extended absence, the ESW will be asked to investigate. Such investigations are initiated to ensure the safety and well-being of students. If the school has been advised in advance of the absence and date of return, parents will be warned of the possible educational and legal consequences of extended absence.

## 5. Extended Holidays

**Holidays must NOT be arranged in term time as this disrupts a student's education.** The school will only grant leave in term time in the most exceptional circumstances. Absence taken without permission of the Head teacher will be recorded as unauthorised, and the parent/carer may be liable to a Penalty Notice (PN). Argoed High School follow the Local Authority Policy and guidance.

## 6. Procedures relating to punctuality

1. When the warning bell rings at 8:45am every morning, all students should make their way to their form rooms for morning registration, and registers will be taken at 8.50am. The school has taken the decision to use the registration for period 4 as the second registration of the day. This lesson registration, which takes place at 1.10pm, is automatically converted into the PM registration.
2. All students who arrive at school between 8.50am and 9.10am should go straight to their form tutor and will be signed in late for registration.
3. Students who arrive at school after 9.10am must sign the late book at reception.

### Sanctions for poor punctuality

<b>Lateness</b>	<b>Sanction</b>	<b>Issued by</b>	<b>Parental involvement</b>
Student is late to school once in a week	15minute detention with HoH at break time that day	HoH	N/A
Student fails to attend detention	Will attend break time detention the following day	HoH	N/A
Student fails to attend second detention	Will attend a lunchtime detention with HoH	HoH	Phone call home
Student is late to school twice in a week	Will attend a lunch time detention with HoH	HoH	Phone call home
Student fails to attend lunchtime detention	Extended detention with HoH after school	HoH	Phone call home and letter home
Student fails to attend HoH detention	Extended detention with SLT	SLT	Letter home Parents to meet with SLT

### Role of Form Tutors and Subject Teachers

Form tutors and subject teachers are responsible for encouraging punctuality and should act as role models for students. Lateness should be investigated and,

where appropriate, sanctioned. Late arrival at school and lessons is disruptive to the learning of all students and will be challenged by staff.

- During registration, the form tutor will discuss, where appropriate, reasons for lateness with individual students and record on SIMS.
- A student, who arrives at school during registration but after the register has been called, receives a late mark and will serve a 15 minute detention that day at break time.
- If a student is persistently late to registration, the form tutor will discuss concerns with the HoH. Students who are late to registration on two occasions in a week will be issued with a HoH lunch detention.
- If the situation does not improve, the HoH will liaise with the ESW which will result in a home visit or some other form of communication.
- Teachers must take a register promptly at the start of each and every lesson. If a student is late then the number of minutes late must be recorded on SIMS using the 'L' coding. All registers must be accurate and taken within 10 minutes of the start of the lesson. These are legal documents and the lesson monitor and AM/PM registrations will form the basis of *EWS (Educational Welfare Service)*

### **Role of Reception staff**

Students who arrive late to school should sign in at reception and the reason why they are late recorded.

At the beginning of Period 2 reception staff will produce a report of all students late to registration that morning, which will also include details of where the student will be during Period 2, and email it to the Pastoral team.

### **Role of Pastoral Support Worker/Inclusion Officer**

The Pastoral Support Worker/Inclusion Officer will receive the 'Minutes Late Report' from reception via email at the beginning of Period 2. After adding anyone who did not attend the detention the previous day to the report they will go round classes informing students who are on this list that they have to attend a 15 minute detention at break time that day.

Once all students on the list have been informed the list is passed to the HoH who is manning the detention that day. They will then mark who has attended the detention and also record their reasons for being late.

Following the break time detention each HoH collates the list of any student in their house who has:

- missed two break time detentions
- been late more than once during the week

### **Role of Head of House**

Once notified by email of any student in their house that has been late:

The HoH will man, on a rota basis, the break detention and note reasons.

Any student who is late more than once in a week will have a lunch time detention with their HoH.

Any student who misses their break time detention twice will have a lunchtime detention with their HoH.

Each HoH will compile a weekly late report for their house. They will review and decide on any action required as necessary. This may include meeting with parents and involving the ESW.

## **7. Monitoring and rewarding good attendance and punctuality**

'First day calling' is made each morning to the parents of students on the first day of their absence. The school compiles percentage attendance data for all form groups. These figures are made available to the tutors to use with their form groups. Each term certificates are awarded for excellent attendance & punctuality and improvements in attendance.

Each HoH liaises with the ESW once a week. The ESW checks the registers with the HoH and agrees action on the students who do not attend regularly. The ESW accepts referral forms and agrees home visits.

## **8. Support for exceptional circumstances**

Argoed High School recognises that students that have been absent for an extended period will require support during and after the period of absence.

If the school has been told that a period of absence for a student will follow, the HoH will arrange for school work to be set by teachers and will communicate with parents to pass on the work. Once the work has been completed, it is the role of the parent/carer to deliver the completed work for marking and written feedback. Close communication between the school and parents is essential. Students with long term illnesses may also qualify for home tuition during their absence.

When a student returns to school the relevant HoH involves the parents, the subject teachers and the ESW to plan the process of return. A special programme is worked out to meet the individual needs. This may involve part-time re-entry and/or the provision of additional support staff. Staff are also made aware of the kinds of difficulties that students may experience on their return. The student may also be put on an attendance monitoring report and will therefore report to the tutor/HoH or SLT. In some cases it is possible to assist the student by providing extra mentoring.

The school also has provisions for the education of students absent due to broken limbs or those returning from operations/hospital stay. This minimises absences and therefore disruption to learning while also allowing students to gain access to more school resources.

### Glossary

ESW – Education Social Worker (Linda Ellis)

HoH – Heads of House

SLT – Senior Leadership Team (Headteacher, Business Manager and Assistant Headteachers)