



## Attendance Policy



# Attendance Policy

## Rationale

To promote, maintain and improve attendance and punctuality which will help to raise achievement and progress and enable all students to realise their full potential.

## Purpose

1. To provide a consistent message to children and parent/carers.
2. To ensure continuity in the learning process.
3. To ensure a high standard of punctuality and attendance is achieved and maintained.
4. To provide a safe and secure environment for pupils.

## Legal responsibilities of parents in relation to school attendance (Education Act 1996 Section 7):

The parent of every child of compulsory school age must ensure that he/she receives efficient full-time education suitable to:

- His/her age, ability and aptitude
- To any special educational needs he/she may have; either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For pupils registered at a school, this means that pupils must attend regularly and punctually; failure to do so may result in their parents committing a criminal offence.

## Guidelines

1. School opens at 8:50 am for all children and registration begins at 9am (in the morning) and 12:45 or 1:15pm (in the afternoon). If a child arrives after 9:05 or 12:50/1:20 pm they will be marked late and parents will be informed.
2. Absence can only be authorised by the school for:
  - a) Sickness or unavoidable cause (solely affecting that child)
  - b) Religious observance
  - c) Other reasons, approved by the school
3. For all absences, there should normally be formal notification from parents. Only head teachers (or delegated members of staff) can authorise any absence and may refuse to do so unless it is felt that the absence is justified by one of reasons stated previously.
4. There is no automatic entitlement for holidays in term time. Parents should inform school in writing if they intend to take a child on holiday in school time.
5. If a child has 10 days absence for any reason during a school year no further absences will be authorised except in exceptional circumstances, parents will be informed in writing. This information will be shared with the Educational Welfare Officer.



6. In cases of unauthorised term-time holidays, head teachers can apply to the Education Welfare Service to generate a penalty notice warning letter. This will be done by completing a Penalty Notice Certificate of Absence Form and returning it to the penalty notice office.

#### 7. Medical Appointments

Parents will be expected to make appointments during school holidays or outside school hours. If this is not possible then the appointments should be taken either at the start or the end of the day.

- For hospital appointments parents should try to request times outside the school day, but it is recognised that this is not always possible.
- Appointments will only be authorised as a half day absence.
- Pupils will be recorded as M so that their absence is noted. This is then changed to a present mark if the pupil arrives before 10:30 am as appropriate.
- Medical evidence will be requested by the school for medical appointments. If this is not provided then each individual circumstance will be considered as to whether it is authorised or not.

8. Schools will liaise closely with parents advising them as early as possible if there are cases of unauthorised absence and lateness (If their child's attendance falls below 90%) or they have been absent for more than 10 days.

Late arrivals for non-medical reasons:

- Teachers will mark the register at the start of each session. Children who are not there at the time of the register will be marked with an absence mark. Children arriving after this time will result in a late mark.

If a pupil is persistently/considerably late then the U mark will be considered. This is an unauthorised absence mark which will affect the children's school attendance. The U mark will be considered for specific use after the official closure of registers if the pupil arrives after 10:30. Family circumstances or reasons for the poor punctuality may also be taken into consideration.

9. Where no explanation for absences is received, parents will be contacted by the school.

10. The Education Welfare Officer will be consulted in the following circumstances:

- Attendance of less than 90% by any pupil or 10 days absence for any reason.
- Where action taken at school level has failed to improve attendance/punctuality for a particular child.

11. Parents are to inform the school if a child is to be removed from the school roll. Details of the new school or the intended education provision should be provided, if parents are considering home education they will be referred to the EWO ASAP.



12. When a child stops attending school and no contact can be made to establish the child's whereabouts the current school will complete a (CME) 'Child Missing Education' form and return it to the EWO, after five working school days.
13. Schools will adopt a multi-agency approach in supporting children and their families to improve their attendance.
14. For Health and Safety reasons, schools need to be aware of where pupils are, particularly those leaving or arriving on the premises during a session.
15. Parents meetings, and other occasions can be used to stress to all parents the importance and benefits of regular attendance and punctuality. School newsletters should also be used.
16. School rewards and celebrates good attendance in many ways with weekly assemblies and termly certificates, prizes and gift vouchers. The children are all made aware of the importance of regular and punctual attendance.