



Our Attendance Policy

UN CRC Article 28

All children have the right to a primary education

Adopted: May 2018
Due for Review: May 2021

Rational

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to our school curriculum and reach their potential.

Whiteabbey Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Whiteabbey Primary School.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to our parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

1. The Principal has overall responsibility for our school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/her attention.
2. The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.
3. Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning sessions.
4. To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link: www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools
5. Whiteabbey Primary School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Guardian

"Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise."

1 Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

- If a child is registered in our school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend.
- It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to inform our school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This can be completed using the ParentMail absence report system. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable our school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

- Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.50am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.
- If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Whiteabbey Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a ParentMail notice or note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

Family holidays during Term Time

Whiteabbey Primary School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

1. The school will continuously monitor each child's attendance/late record. The school follows a two-step process for any children who are persistently absent/late for any reason:
2. Each month the Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will review all absences/lateness and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 85% as a cumulative percentage.
3. It is noted if attendance/lateness is improving or deteriorating within the previous month. Following this analysis, a range of action may result:
 - a. At 95% school will send a standard "Attention Attendance!" reminder highlighting the child has fallen below 95% of possible attendance.
 - b. Below 90% school will phone or write again to parents to discuss the matter and offer support.
 - c. School will send again a letter to the parents/carers of specific children whose attendance is causing concern. This will inform parents of their child's attendance, school's concerns and invite parents to contact school to avail of assistance in effecting improvement.

Very often these early interventions are successful in effecting improved attendance. The Pastoral Care team will liaise with the class teacher, SENCO and, when necessary, other professionals, if the need for support is identified.

The list of children whose attendance is below 85% is also discussed with the Educational Welfare Officer on a termly basis and where our school's action has not resulted in improved attendance, formal referral to the Educational Welfare Service will be discussed / agreed.