

TEMPO PRIMARY SCHOOL



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

May 2024

Chair of Board of Governors: _____ Date: _____

Principal: _____ Date: _____

"One more step along the world I go"

Introduction

Our vision of Tempo Primary School is one of a school that is a community where children, staff and families feel welcomed and have a sense of belonging and purpose.

We aim to:

- Provide a safe and happy environment.
- Promote a stimulating and challenging environment.
- Enable children to become confident, resourceful, enquiring and independent learners.
- Promote the acquisition of skills and knowledge in all areas of the curriculum.
- Identify any special educational needs and work through the Code of Practice to respond to the identified needs.
- Foster children's self-esteem.
- Help children build positive relationships with other people.
- Develop children's self-respect and encourage children to respect the ideas, attitudes, values and feelings of others.
- Help children grow into reliable, independent and positive citizens.
- Take advantage of the wealth of support available from the community including the use of reading partners, visiting speakers, educational visits.
- Identify areas where professional development is required.

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. We aim to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance, and which will ensure that every child enrolled will feel valued and want to attend school and learn.

Roles and responsibilities

Parents

If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9.10am. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children arrive at school punctually. Lateness is recorded at registration and will appear on children's attendance records.

If a child is reluctant to attend school, it is important that this is discussed with the class teacher and / or Principal.

It is a parent's responsibility to:

- Inform the school, e.g., by phone or email, of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence.
- Send a note to school on the first day the child returns. The note should give the dates of absence and the reason.
- Send a note/complete form if a child is absent for part of a day e.g., arriving late or collected early. Remember for children in Primary 1- 7, the roll is marked twice daily.
- Send a note of planned absences e.g., for medical appointment, in advance.

If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Tempo 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 very exceptional circumstances, in consultation with the EWO, will a holiday be authorised.

Class teachers

Effective practice in relation to managing individual pupil attendance depends on the class teacher. It is important for class teachers to develop trusting relationships with all pupils and parents and to promote class attendance through the curriculum.

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we adhere to the guidance provided in the relevant Department of Education Circular/s.

Class teachers keep the attendance records for each pupil. Rolls are marked in each classroom in the morning and afternoon and self-registration boards indicating whether children are taking school dinner or packed lunch are used to involve the children in this. Teachers ensure that attendance records are up to date on Sims and work with the secretary to endeavour to ensure that there is always a reason recorded for an absence.

Teachers bring to the attention of the principal any concerns they have regarding the attendance of individual children including any patterns of lateness or absence which they identify.

School secretary

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we adhere to the guidance provided in the relevant Department of Education Circular/s. The school secretary supports the class teachers in doing this and endeavours to ensure that the reasons for any absence are recorded on SIMS. If absence notes are not sent to school by parents by the Monday of the week following the absence a 'Notification of absence form' is sent home to the parents requesting its completion and return. A text message or phone call will be used to follow this up if the 'Notification of absence form' is not returned. The secretary collates, on a monthly basis, attendance information for the principal providing a printout showing children whose attendance is close to or falling below 85%.

Principal

Overall responsibility for attendance on a day-to-day basis lies with the principal.

The principal has the role, along with the Board of Governors for determining resources and staffing to deal with attendance issues and will lead in policy development. She will ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities in relation to attendance and the attendance policy of the school.

The principal will monitor attendance and respond to concerns raised by teachers and / or by the monthly attendance printouts.

The principal will liaise with class teachers, parents, and the Educational Welfare Officer in relation to individual pupils.

The principal will make referrals to the Educational Welfare Service as deemed necessary.

The principal will ensure the Board of Governors are informed about attendance issues and include this in principal reports to Governor meetings. The principal will liaise with the school secretary to ensure that statistical information is provided as required by the Department of Education.

Pastoral Care Team

When deemed appropriate the principal will liaise with the Pastoral Care Team. When deemed appropriate, if a child is on the SEN register or had a Social, Emotional Behavioural or Well-Being need, improving attendance levels may be included on an Individual Education or Intervention Plan. Consideration may also be given to referral to the Pupil Personal Development Team (EA).

Educational Welfare Service

The Educational Welfare Officer monitors pupil absences at school level during regular audits and can be contacted at any time to provide advice and support to the principal. If a pupil's absence causes concern or if their attendance falls below 85% the reasons for absence are checked and referrals are made to the EWS for support when deemed required.

The Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's attendance policy and practice. School attendance will be included in the principal's report at every Board of Governor meeting.

Attendance Procedures

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we adhere to the guidance provided in the relevant Department of Education Circular/s. Parents are informed of the importance of attendance and attendance procedures through:

- The school prospectus
- Information in the September newsletter
- Distribution of the information in the DE publication 'School Attendance Matters A Parent's Guide' through reminders throughout the year in newsletters.

School meal Registers are marked in each classroom in the morning and afternoon. In the case of P.1 - 3 there are self-registration boards relating to dinner / packed lunch.

Teachers / classroom assistants enter the information into the attendance section of the SIMS system and ensure that attendance information on the system is up to date by the end of each week.

Forms are completed, recording information passed on through phone calls / word of mouth on the first day of absence. This information is normally taken by staff in the school office. These forms are kept in the school office.

Notes sent in on the first day a child returns to school are used to update the reason for absence in the SIMS system. These are kept in the school office.

If absence notes are not sent to school by parents by the Monday of the week following the absence a 'Notification of absence form' is sent home to the parents requesting its completion and return.

A text message or phone call to parents will follow up on the non-returning of 'Notification of absence forms'.

The school secretary collates information on individual pupils whose attendance levels are standing at 85% or below on a monthly basis and passes this to the principal. If teachers have raised concerns about particular pupils, the registration form for these children will be printed out and analysed for patterns emerging. We will not wait for children to fall below 85% to act on concerns.

When deemed appropriate, the principal will have informal meetings and/or telephone calls with parents to discuss the reasons for a pupil's poor attendance.

The principal will write to parents of children identified as having attendance less than 85% making them aware of their attendance levels and encouraging them to ensure that their child attends when able.

The principal will liaise with class teachers, parents, and the Educational Welfare Officer in relation to individual pupils.

When deemed appropriate, if a child is on the SEN register or have at present a Social, Emotional Behavioural or Well-Being need, improving attendance levels may be included in an Individual Education or Intervention Plan.

The principal will make referrals to the Educational Welfare Service as deemed necessary.

It is also important to **avoid children arriving late to school or being collected early unnecessarily.** The school office records late arrival and early collection. If a child is going to be late due to, for example, a medical appointment parents will be asked to phone the school. We will be recording any child sent home early due to illness / accident on a new form and anyone collecting a child early for any other reason will be asked to complete this simple form (name of child, time collected and reason) at the office.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Review of this policy

This policy will be kept under review in light of future information made available by the Department of Education, Education Authority and Education Welfare Service.

It will be formally reviewed every three years as part of the School Development Planning process.

A summary and evaluation of the school's strategy for promoting pupil attendance is always included in the School Development Plan.



Primary Attendance Matters

Record of children arriving late to school and those collected/ sent home early

Name of child: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Complete as appropriate:

Time arrived at school _____

Time left school _____

Reason given: _____

Signed: _____

This may be signed by the teacher, executive officer or parent dependent on circumstances e.g. telephone record of parent phoning in about a child attending a medical appointment before school may be signed by executive officer or teacher.

Children sent home early due to an accident/ illness may be signed by teacher or executive officer.

Children collected early from school for any reason other than illness reported by school must be 'signed out' by person collecting them.