

EA, North Eastern Region

TEMPLEPATRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL and NURSERY UNIT

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Templepatrick Primary School and Nursery Unit fully recognises that good attendance is central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Principal and Board of Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents/carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Education and Welfare Service to improve attendance whenever poor attendance has been identified.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued thus encouraging high attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents are aware of their responsibilities concerning their child's attendance at school.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting parents/carers and pupils who have been experiencing difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.

Definitions

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example:
 - A child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence (written note on return).
 - Medical appointments.
 - Family occasions – close family wedding / bereavement etc.
 - Representing school/locality at a Cultural or Sporting Event.
- Only a school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer. For example:
 - Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
 - Unexplained absences – the absence has never been properly explained to the school.
 - Holidays in Term- time.

Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents/carers to improve individual pupil attendance and punctuality - letters will be issued on a Half-Termly basis to parents if their child's attendance has dropped below 90%.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- All staff will be aware that they must raise attendance/lateness concerns with the Principal.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class Teacher

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for absence offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Principal where there are concerns.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.

Principal

- Overall monitoring of school attendance, including trends in authorised and unauthorised absences..
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the EWO service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Keeping the Board of Governors informed of attendance data.

Administration Staff

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Principal.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

Parents

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. – we would encourage appointments to be made outside school times.)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Governors

- The Principal will report attendance data to Governors on a termly basis.

Lateness

- The outer gates will close after the children have entered their classrooms (no later than 9.05 am). Any pupil arriving after this time should enter school via the main entrance. Any pupil who comes into school this way will be marked as late in the attendance record. Any child who arrives after 9.20am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning.
- Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.20am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence.
- It must be remembered that children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning that each child is expected to achieve.
- Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for the parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

- Parents/carers contact the school on the first day of absence stating the reason for the absence.
- On return to school the parents/carers should furnish their child with a note giving a reason for the absence.
- Where we have not received a reason for a child's absence the class teacher will speak with the pupil (Depending on age) or the parent to request a note of explanation.

Illness

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to ensure that appropriate work is made available for collection by the parents/carers.
- If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for home tuition outside school.
- Where over the course of the academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will ask the parents/carers to provide medical evidence for each future period of related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or a copy of a prescription.

School Illness Guidelines

The information below has been provided by the Health Protection Agency

Absence from school – inclusive of Weekends:

Chicken Pox	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 days from the onset of rash
Slapped Cheek	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 days from the onset of rash
Whooping Cough	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 days from commencing antibiotics
Hand Foot & Mouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 days from the onset of rash/blistering
Scarlet Fever	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 days from commencing antibiotics
Diarrhoea / Vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Until diarrhoea / vomiting has settled for 48 hours
Headlice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None - once treated

Please note:

- If a child arrives to school with any of the symptoms of the above – they will be sent home immediately to prevent the spread to others.
- School will provide some work activities, on request, when a child is off for a prolonged length of time (exceeding 2 days).

Registers

- Registers are typically taken at the start of the school day. A child who is late into school will have received an L code (late mark) for that day. Should a child arrive after registers are closed it requires a further change to be made. If a child does not arrive into school an N code is used. This equates to an unauthorised absence and will be recorded as such on a child's annual attendance record. However, on a child's return, where a reason is provided, the N code is changed for example to I for illness.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

- Please note that the Principal is not in a position to consider any such request.
- Absence from school due to a holiday is not encouraged and the school will not provide any work for the pupil during the period of absence.

Attendance Targets

- The school expects individual attendance of at least **95% and an overall school attendance of 97%+ over the academic year.

*** A note will be sent to parents if their child's attendance drops below 90%.*

Attendance Information Data

100% Attendance	0 days missed	Excellent
95-99%	1-8 days absence	Good – Very Good
95% Attendance	9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Very poor Referral to EWS
80% Attendance	38 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 days of absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed	Unacceptable

The table above is based on DE guidance – School Attendance Matters – A Parent's Guide. (This guide is issued to all P1 Parents at the time of enrolment.)

TEMPLEPATRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT
ATTENDANCE ALERT: November

Pupil Name _____ Class _____

Attendance % up to Half-Term _____

On reviewing attendance records up to the Half-Term break I note that your child's percentage has dropped below 90%. I would therefore ask for your help in ensuring that this improves over the next number of weeks.

Attendance will be reviewed at the end of the Term.

Principal

TEMPLEPATRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT
ATTENDANCE ALERT: January

Pupil Name _____ Class _____

Attendance % up to end of Term _____ %

On reviewing attendance records up to the end of Term I note that your child's percentage has dropped below 90%. I would therefore ask for your help in ensuring that this improves over the next number of weeks.

Attendance will be reviewed at Half-Term.

RD Cromie
Principal

TEMPLEPATRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT
ATTENDANCE ALERT: February

Pupil Name _____ Class _____

Attendance % up to Half-Term _____

On reviewing attendance records up to the Half-Term break I note that your child's percentage has dropped below 90%. I would therefore ask for your help in ensuring that this improves over the next number of weeks.

Attendance will be reviewed at the end of the Term.

Principal

TEMPLEPATRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT
ATTENDANCE ALERT: January

Pupil Name _____ Class _____

Attendance % up to end of December 2016 _____ %

On reviewing attendance records up to the end of Term I note that your child's percentage has dropped below 90%. I would therefore ask for your help in ensuring that this improves over the next number of weeks.

Attendance will be reviewed at the end of February.

Principal

TEMPLEPATRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT
ATTENDANCE ALERT: January

Pupil Name _____ Class _____

Attendance % up to end of December _____

On reviewing attendance records up to mid-June I note that your child's percentage has dropped below 85%. I would therefore ask for your help in ensuring that this improves over the next number of weeks.

Attendance will be reviewed at the end of February.

Principal