

Wheatfield Primary & Nursery School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Introduction

In Wheatfield Primary and Nursery School, we believe that children should maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality in order for them to make the most of their education and reach their potential. It is our school motto to:

'Believe, Achieve, Succeed'

We strive to ensure that each child is motivated and encouraged concerning good attendance and punctuality.

Aims

In relation to attendance, our aims as a school are:

- To improve and maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- To define set procedures in regards to non-attendance and ensure that these are adhered to by pupils, parents/guardians and staff alike.
- To encourage pupils to be independent and develop their own time keeping skills.
- To encourage parents/guardians to ensure their child/children come to school every day and arrive punctually for the start of lessons.
- To reward individual children who maintain high levels of attendance.
- To keep parents/guardians informed of children's attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with the Education Welfare Officer in regards to attendance and/or punctuality matters.
- To present monthly award for classes and prizes to individual pupils on a termly basis for good attendance.

The Importance of Good Attendance and Punctuality

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential. Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- To learn and have fun.
- To make new friends.
- To experience new things.
- To develop awareness of other cultures, religion and ethnicity.
- To achieve and gain qualifications.
- To develop new skills.
- To build confidence and self-esteem.
- To have the best possible start in life.

'Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in examinations and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.'

Source: adapted from *'Attendance Matters – A Parent's Guide'* (DENI, 2013)

School Timetable

Below is a copy of the daily timetable set for each year group:

Nursery:

Monday – Friday

8.45am – 1.15pm

P1-P3:

Monday – Friday

8.45am – 2.00pm

P4-P7:

Monday – Thursday

8.45am – 2.40pm

Friday

8.45am – 2.00pm

**After school clubs will be held on specified days until 3.30pm*

**After school clubs are attended on a voluntary basis providing written permission has been given to school from parent/guardian. Full attendance is expected at after school club when a pupil has committed to it.*

Role of School Staff

PRINCIPAL/COORDINATOR OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- The principal is responsible for the overall management of school attendance.
- The principal will liaise with the coordinator of school attendance.
- The coordinator will organise an incentive scheme to promote good attendance and punctuality in school.
- The coordinator with the support of the class teacher, will analyse attendance numbers on a monthly basis and monitor pupils whose attendance and/or punctuality levels are low.
- Letters to parents/guardians will be issued by the school if a pupil's attendance falls below 90% with no suitable explanation stating that a referral to the EWO will be completed if attendance continues to fall.
- The coordinator/class teacher will complete a referral to the EWO if pupil attendance falls below 85% with no suitable explanation. This will be authorised by the Principal before being submitted to the EWO.
- The coordinator and/or principal will follow up any referrals made to EWO if and when necessary.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

- To provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets.
- To ensure attendance is a regular agenda item at meetings.

CLASS TEACHERS/CLASSROOM ASSISTANTS

- To keep records of daily attendance of pupils in own class using the Daily Register printout and ensure that is returned to the school office each day.
- To ensure that late procedures are correctly followed in class each day.
- To record lateness using Class Dojo or a telephone call to notify parents.
- Speak to parents about repeated lateness.
- Speak to the school attendance coordinator about any attendance concerns.

Role of Parents/Carers

*'It is the **duty of parents** who have a child of compulsory school age to **ensure their child receives efficient, full time education** suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and to any special educational needs they may have. Such education may be **provided by regular attendance at school** or otherwise.'*

– Article 45(1) of *The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986*

- If a child is registered at school, it is the parent's/guardian's legal duty to ensure they attend regularly.
- If a child is unable to attend school, parents/guardians should inform the school on the first day of absence and confirm with a written note given to class teacher upon child's return to school.
- Parents/guardians should encourage and motivate their child to attend school each day and on time.

Role of Pupils

- Pupils should always ensure they attend regularly and arrive on time each day.
- Pupils should ensure they are organised and ready to commence work each day.
- If a pupil is absent from school, they must give a written note from parent/guardian to their class teacher on the day they return.

Procedures

- Pupils should be in school by 8.45am each day.
 - Nursery children should be taken straight to the nursery by a parent/guardian.
 - P1 – P3 pupils should line up at the specified area at the school entrance where they will be collected by their class teacher/assistant at 8.45am when the bell rings.
 - P4 – P7 pupils should line up at the designated area in the school playground **ONLY** when the bell rings at 8.45am, where they will be collected by their class teacher. ***Pupils are NOT permitted onto school grounds before 8.45am except for those pupils who attend Breakfast Club.***

- Registration will be taken at 8.55am by the class teacher each day therefore, any child who arrives into class after this time will be marked as late for the day.
- If a child arrives after 10.00am without school having been given prior notice, then they will be marked as absent for half a day, which will impact on the child's attendance percentage.
- If a child is unable to attend school, a parent/guardian should contact the school office or class teacher through Class Dojo on the first day of absence explaining why the pupil is unable to attend school and where possible, say when the child is expected to return to school.
- The pupil should also ensure they supply their class teacher with a written note detailing the reasons for their absence when they return.
- The appropriate absence code will be registered on the child's record.

Categorising Absences

Absence will be categorised as authorised or unauthorised.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical appointments e.g. hospital appointment/emergency doctor appointment*
- Participation in religious event
- Exceptional family circumstance e.g. grievance/funeral/wedding
- Representing their club/school/country in a particular event e.g. sporting competition or music competition etc.

****Medical Appointments***

- Routine medical appointments e.g. doctor/dentist appointment should be made out of school hours where possible.
- If a child does have an appointment during the school day they **MUST** be collected by a parent/guardian to be signed out – ***children will NOT be permitted to leave the premises without an accompanying adult during school hours.***
- Pupils should return to school where possible and sign in at the school office.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- Sibling is ill and absent from school
- Birthday
- Visiting relatives
- Pupil is unnecessarily absent from school
- Family holiday or long weekend break**
- No written explanation is given upon return to school after an absence.

*****Holidays during term time***

- Wheatfield Primary and Nursery School discourages holidays and/or long weekend breaks being scheduled during term time.

- Any holidays/breaks that are scheduled during term time will be marked as an absence affecting the child's attendance percentage.
- Only in very exceptional circumstances will an absence due to a holiday/long weekend break will marked as authorised after approval has been granted by both the principal and Board of Governors.

Rewarding Attendance

Pupils who maintain good levels attendance will be rewarded. This will include:

- Class with the overall best attendance will be awarded on a monthly basis. They will be awarded a class trophy and Class Dojo points.
- Pupil(s) in each class with the best attendance at the end of each term will receive a prize and Class Dojo points.
- Top pupils in the whole school with 100% attendance throughout the whole school year will be given a certificate and a special treat at the end of the school year.
- Class with the overall best attendance at the end of the whole school year will be given a special treat.

Levels of all class attendances will be on displayed creating a healthy competitive spirit and as a means of encouragement.

Managing Attendance

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% without an explanation, it is a cause for concern and parents/guardians will be notified. The child's attendance will be monitored for a period of 6 weeks beginning from the date issued on the letter to allow for improvement to be made.

Should the level of attendance continue to fall to 85%, parents/guardians will be contacted by letter and a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

Punctuality

The school day begins at 8.45am. A child is considered late to school if they are not in class by **8.55am** when the class teacher is taking register.

- If a child is late, they sign the late book in their classroom detailing their name, date, time they arrived into the classroom and the reason for lateness.
- If a child has repeated lateness, the class teacher will contact parents/guardians using Class Dojo or a telephone call.
- If a child has repeated lateness of more than 5 days within a 2 week period, a letter will be issued to parent/guardians to notify them.
- Punctuality will then be monitored over the following 4 weeks to allow for improvement to be made beginning from the date issued on the letter.
- A second letter will be issued if no improvement has been made and a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer on the basis of consistent late arrival at school.