

# Attendance Policy



Author:	Adopted by Governors on:	Signed:	Signed:
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G Walker (Principal)	October 2022	CHAIR	PRINCIPAL
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## Introduction

In Crawfordsburn Primary School our ethos is “Caring, Creative, Confident.” We have a primary responsibility for the care and welfare of all the pupils in our charge. We will carry out this duty through our Safeguarding of Children Policies, which demonstrate how we aim to provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, valuing individuals for their unique talents and abilities, in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential.

One way in which we seek to protect our pupils is by helping them to appreciate and understand the need to be in school; to see the value of education and learning, and to ultimately encourage them to be life-long learners. Regular 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.

## I Aims

- 1.1 To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Crawfordsburn Primary School.
- 1.2 To monitor efficiently the attendance of our pupils and to reward positive outcomes, with the hope that children will be encouraged to improve attendance where necessary.
- 1.3 To provide advice, support and guidance to parents / guardians.
- 1.4 To inform parents of their role in ensuring that their children attend school. The procedures that we have put in place also allow for open and objective lines of communication between school and families regarding the attendance of their child/ren at school.
- 1.5 As a school our ethos is to be proactive and therefore we believe it is important to educate our pupils about the need for good attendance at school and to reward positive behaviour and attendance. Rewards include termly House Point attendance awards and a reward for the best attending class each term.
- 1.6 We focus on positive character traits through our Personal Development / Mutual Understanding (PDMU) programme and attendance will be focussed on as part of this programme.
- 1.7 To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

## 2 The Role of Parents

- 2.1 Parents 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. If a child is registered in a school, their parents/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school
- 2.2 There are often genuine reasons for a child’s absence from school. These include;
  - ✓ Sickness
  - ✓ Injuries
  - ✓ Scheduled medical/dental appointments (as far as is possible try to schedule these for after school hours)
  - ✓ Wedding of an immediate family member (inform the school in advance)

- ✓ Bereavement
  - ✓ Taking part in competitions, examinations or tournaments relating to their progression in skills beyond the school e.g. gymnastics, instrumental exams, ballet exams etc.
- 2.3 On the first day of an unexpected absence, we would ask parents to make contact with the school – either by ringing the office or by sending a SeeSaw message to the class teacher, informing why the child is absent and the expected length of the absence.
- 2.4 School then must be provided with a reason for any absence in writing. A SeeSaw message will constitute a reason in writing.
- 2.5 School will provide a reminder for parents/guardians to provide a reason in writing.
- 2.6 If no reason is provided the absence will be recorded as an unexplained absence.
- 2.7 If it is apparent that any absence will be up to or more than 3 days, then it is important that the school are notified by phone and if necessary arrangements can be made for work to be sent home so that your child does not miss out on vital areas of their learning.
- 2.8 If you know that your child is going to be off school for any reason, then please inform the school in advance in writing.
- 2.9 Pupils are expected to be in school at 9:00am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual. From 9:10am lateness is recorded on the official register and on your child's attendance record.
- 2.10 If your child is 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.

### **3 Holidays During Term Time**

- 3.1 The Principal must be informed in writing if a child is being taken out of school for a holiday during term time.
- 3.2 As a school we do not support a child being kept off for school to celebrate a birthday or for a family holiday during term time. On these occasions your child's absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

### **4 The Role of the School**

- 4.1 The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance. Teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention. 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.
- 4.2 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:
- 4.2.1 [www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools)
- 4.3 On a half termly basis the attendance figures will be analysed and the names of all children whose attendance is below 87% will be printed. Based on those figures at that time the teachers will be asked if reasons have been given by parents/guardians as to why the figures are below 87%.

- 4.4 Further clarification will be sought from parents in the following circumstances:
- a) if illness has not been explained via a letter on return to school
  - b) if a child has been on holiday during term time
  - c) if there are too many single days of absence e.g. every Friday and/or a pattern is starting to emerge
  - d) if there are too many “lates” on their child’s attendance record.
- 4.5 Parents may be asked to attend a meeting with the Principal if the attendance is between 80-85% in the first term or less than 87% with no valid reason.
- 4.6 Opportunities and strategies for the child’s attendance to improve will be given.
- 4.7 A child will be referred to the Education Welfare Service if parents have made no attempt to explain their child’s absence; have not engaged in intervention strategies or have not met with the Principal when asked.

## **5 Role of Pupils**

- 5.1 Each pupil at Crawfordsburn Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

## **6 Education Welfare Service**

- 6.1 If a pupil’s absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.