

Ballinderry Primary School and Nursery Unit

Attendance Policy



Introduction

Regular school attendance¹ is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

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

Every child has a right to a Primary Education (UNCRC Article 28) and this is best achieved through high quality Teaching and Learning in a happy school. Hence our motto is: Learning, Caring, Achieving.

Aims

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

Role of the School

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her 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.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2018/12, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/DE%20Circular%202018%2012%20-%20Attendance%20Guidance%20%26%20Absence%20by%20-%20Updated%20Sept%202018.pdf>

Ballinderry Primary School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents/guardians have a legal duty² 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 school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

¹ "regularly" means in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school" – Lady Hale – Isle of Wight Council v Platt 6 April 2017

² Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school. 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.

Pupils are expected to be in school at Ballinderry Primary School 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 Ballinderry Primary School must attend 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.

Absence Procedures

All parents/carers are required to complete the attached absence notification form which provides a clear reason for any absence. If a reason for absence has not been communicated either orally or in writing the school will contact the parent in writing asking for a reason for absence.

Family holidays during Term Time

Ballinderry 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

Teachers record absence on the daily absence sheet according to the correct code and the School Secretary enters the information on SIMS. Teachers notify the Principal if they have a concern about a pupil's attendance. The Principal may contact the parents and/or seek advice from Education Welfare Service.

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² Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

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.

A Galbraith
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