

Pupil Attendance Policy



Ballyhenry Primary School

"Achieving Potential in a Caring Environment."

Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
2021	2023	Mrs L Knocker
Date ratified by Board of Governors: 04-11-21		

Rationale

At Ballyhenry Primary School we aim to develop a strong community of individual children who achieve the highest levels of academic success and personal distinction. We believe that strong partnerships between home and school enable children to work realistically towards their potential and that regular attendance and punctuality are important. As a general rule, children are expected to attend school all day every day and attendance that is less than 85% is considered unsatisfactory.

Ballyhenry Primary School is a Rights Respecting School which means that everyone puts the rights of children at the heart of our school. One of these rights is a child right to an education...

Article 28

You have the right to a good quality education. You should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level that you can.

We believe that good attendance is essential to ensuring children access high quality learning and teaching and this will ensure that the education we provide meets the needs of each child.

Procedures

Children can enter the school from 8:45 a.m. and they should go straight to their classroom to prepare for school. First Bell rings at 8:55 am.

Children should be in their classrooms for registration at 9.00 am (Second Bell).

Children not in school by 9:00 am will be recorded as late. We have introduced an iPad registration system for those children who arrive after the bell. The time of arrival and any explanation from an accompanying adult, a parent's note or a telephone call will enable the attendance records of late children to be updated accordingly.

The principal or class teacher will investigate repeated lateness with the intention of supporting improvement. "Minutes Late" is recorded and reported to parents during parent-teacher meetings, via pastoral phone calls and through letters home.

To alleviate anxiety about children whose whereabouts may be unknown, parents are asked to contact the school on the first day of a child's absence and to send a note of explanation, signed by a parent upon the child's return to school. This can now be done digitally via the school's app.

Routine medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours whenever possible. Where unavoidable, a note requesting withdrawal should be sent with the child on the morning of the appointment. This will be signed and dated by the principal and retained by the class teacher. No child is permitted to leave school without a note or the presence of a parent. If a pupil returns on the same day he/she should report to reception. Parents are encourage to use the app to inform the school of medical/dental appointments in advance.

Pupil attendance figures will be used to:

- praise good attendance;
- identify pupils with poor attendance and any related problems; and
- negotiate attendance targets for pupils with poor attendance.

The school is obliged to consider unexplained absences as unauthorized.

Authorised Absences

Absences can only be authorised if judged to be reasonable. The following are examples of acceptable reasons:

- illness. (In cases of prolonged absence the Education Authority (EA) may require a child to visit a nominated doctor);
- medical appointments that could not be made out of school hours, eg hospital;
- attendance at a funeral or wedding of close family members;
- severe disruption to a pupil's usual method of transport, that leaves no alternative method of travelling to school;
- a family emergency; or
- extra-curricular activities, such as participation in a sporting event.

Leaving School Early

We understand that parents/carers sometimes need to take their child out of school early. This is still considered "an absences" and will be recorded as such (i.e. the time the child left school and the reason will be recorded). For the purposes of Health and Safety as well as Child Protection it is vital that we record early departures. Parents/carers are kindly asked to sign their child out of school. This will now be done via the registration iPad.

Recording Attendance

Teachers will only mark children present if they arrive in class on time. Attendance and absence codes will be recorded daily by teachers and these will be transferred onto the office computer at the end of each week, thus allowing attendance patterns to be monitored effectively by the principal, EWO and DENI.

Monitoring attendance:

Every attempt will be made to support improvement in a child's attendance. The principal will monitor attendance and punctuality at the end of each month and liaise with the EA's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). It is important that parents/carers are aware of their child's attendance. (See Appendix 2) If there is a pattern to the absences the principal may contact the child's parents. Should a child's attendance fall below 85% a letter will be sent home alerting the parents to the situation. Further appropriate action may be identified to improve the pupil's attendance. Continued attendance of less than 85% may result in visits from the EWO and/or a court appearance.

Each child's attendance will be recorded on the annual report issued in June. In order to facilitate the writing of reports the percentage will be based on attendance up to the end of May or the closes day possible to the distribution of reports.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Appendix

I. Absence Form

Dear _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Date: _____

Your child _____ was absent from school on _____.

Please reply stating reason for absence in the space below.

Yours sincerely

Class Teacher

Reason for absence

Signed: _____
(Parent/Guardian)

Appendix 2: Keeping Parents/Carers Informed

Monthly Updates in Newsletters regarding each classes attendance and the reminders as to the importance of good attendance

October Interviews—All parents/carers informed as to their child's attendance and minutes late (if any)

December/January—Formal letters to all parents/carers whose children's attendance fall below 90%

December/January—Formal meetings with any parent whose child's attendance falls near or below 85%

December/January—Referral to EWO if attendance falls below 85%

January to June—Monthly updates all parents/carers who child's attendance was deemed to be "at risk". Referral to EWO to be considered if attendance does not improve and/or falls below 85%.

February Interviews-- All parents/carers informed as to their child's attendance and minutes late (if any)



EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS –

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Attendance percentages can be misleading.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
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
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

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that's nearly 4 school weeks.



Give your child the best start in life – every school day counts.