



HOWARD PRIMARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

Regular school 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.

Howard Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance.

Howard Primary School is a vibrant, happy place, where the children's needs come first. Howard provides a safe and motivating environment where every pupil is valued and supported to become confident individuals, challenged and successful learners. We are proud of what our pupils achieve and with good attendance we believe that their years in Howard provide a firm foundation on which to build their future hopes and dreams.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Howard 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 and Vice Principal have overall responsibility for school attendance; class teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to Mrs McWilliams' or Mr Calvert's 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 each school day.
- To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02, which can be found at the following link: www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm

Howard Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. All families are given a copy of the Department of Education's 'School Attendance Matters - A Parent's Guide' (<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-attendance-matters-parents-guide>). If the school has concerns regarding a child's attendance or 'late arrivals at school' a letter is sent home to parents informing them of their child's attendance and/or a record of late arrival to school. Any child whose attendance falls below 85% is discussed with the Education Welfare Officer who visits the school regularly.

Role of Parent

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.

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

- If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.
- It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence (either via a seesaw message or telephoning the school office). This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school (absence notes on school website).
- If no explanation is provided parents will be sent a letter asking to provide a reason for the absence.

- 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.
- If a child is returning to a country of origin to renew passports or visas, parents should complete an Extended Leave of Absence Application Form.
- Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.45am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record. Latecomers arriving between 8.45am and 9.00am are recorded as an 'L'. Pupils arriving after 9.00am will have a 'U' recorded - this will have an impact on overall attendance.
- 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 Howard 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.

Absence Procedures

- All Parents/Guardians are required to complete the attached absence notification form which provides a clear reason for any absence.
- Medical/dental appointments, if possible, should be arranged for outside school hours.
- If appointments are during school hours, a copy of appointment letters should be sent into your child's class teacher.

Family Holidays during Term Time

Howard 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

- The school secretary will telephone parent to enquire about child.
- The Principal will telephone to enquire about the child and to identify if there is an underlying issue for absence.
- The Vice Principal and class teacher in consultation with the parent/carer will put in place an individual action plan to address the issue (flexible provision, buddy system, etc)
- Capacity building of staff to assist with pupil's individual needs for example social, emotional behavioural difficulties or attachment issues.
- Incentives to award and celebrate regular attendance, through pupil certificates, class rewards.

Education Welfare Service

- Education Authority (EA) through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education.
- If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85%, 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.

Signature - Principal

Signature - Chair, Board of Governors

Date - 2023

