

Portavogie 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 full potential.

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

Aims

1. To improve / maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Portavogie 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 and designated staff 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 by the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link:

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-2017/15-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools

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

Role of Parent / Guardian

Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable 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.

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 9.00am 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 Portavogie 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.

At Portavogie Primary School we encourage all children to take increasing responsibility for themselves.

We expect the following from our pupils:

- That they will attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

Absence Procedures

Parents are advised to contact the school on the first morning of a child's absence by telephoning the school office. Parents should, as far as possible, provide an estimate of the likely duration of absence. If an absence is likely to be prolonged, parents should maintain regular contact with the school

throughout the duration of the absence so that the school can assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

If children are to be absent from school for a portion of the day after registration parents / guardians should report to the school office / Principal to request that their child is released from class into their care. The class teacher should be given as much advance notice as possible of any appointments arranged for during the school day.

If children are attending appointments in the morning and consequently miss registration, their parents / carers should return them to school after the appointment. The class teacher should be given as much notice of these appointments as possible so that the appropriate code is used in the attendance register.

All Parents / Guardians are required to complete the attached absence notification form which provides a clear reason for any absence. Further copies are available upon request from the school office.

Authorised Absence – where the school has been consulted and can approve the absence.

Examples include:

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental
- Bereavement
- Exceptional family circumstances.

Procedures for Managing Attendance

The daily register is completed by the class teacher at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions on SIMS.

This information is then recorded electronically on the Department of Education's system. At this time attendance levels are also monitored on an individual and a whole school basis.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Where the class teacher has concerns about the level or pattern of a pupil's attendance they are discussed with the Principal. Where deemed appropriate the Principal will manage the absenteeism using the following procedures:

1. Contact the family and arrange an appointment to discuss the issue in order to agree a strategy for improving attendance.

2. Should such contact fail to resolve the issue the school may refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Service for additional direction and support.

Parents will be advised if a referral to the Education Welfare Service will ensue if no improvement has been made.

The Principal will meet with the Education Welfare Officer each term and together they will review the attendance of any child falling below 85%. At the review the Principal and the EWO will determine the next steps which should be taken which could include making a referral to the Education Welfare Service for any child about whom there is a significant concern.

After a referral has been made, the Education Welfare Service will engage with the family in a supportive way in order to improve the child's attendance.

Punctuality

The school day begins promptly at 9.00am. Pupils who are frequently late disrupt their own education and that of others in their class. Pupils who are late for school without prior arrangement or without approved reason will be marked absent for the morning session and this will appear as an authorised absence on their school record.

Family holidays during Term Time

Portavogie 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.**

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.

This Attendance Policy has been prepared in consultation with all school staff and Governors.