

Ashgrove Primary School

Policy for
Pupil
Attendance

10 September 2010
Version 1:2

Pupil Attendance Policy

Rationale

At Ashgrove 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.

Procedures

Children should be in their classrooms for registration at 8:55 am. (Doors open at 8:40 am.)

Children not in school by 9:05 am will be recorded as late.

Any children arriving after 9:15 am must report to the office where they will be marked 'late after close of registration' for the morning session in line with guidance from Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI).

An 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.

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.

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.

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 North-Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) 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.

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, education welfare officer (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 a NEELB EWO. 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. Parents will be kept informed of low attendance percentages with additional letters. 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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.