

CLOUNAGH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date Ratified:	June 2020
Reviewed:	May 2023
Next review:	June 2024

# Clounagh Junior High School



## Pupil 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. Clounagh Junior High will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. These values are reflected in our mission statement 'Empowering Pupils for a World of Change'

### Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Clounagh Junior High 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/carers and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

### Role of the School

- The Principal at Clounagh Junior High has overall responsibility for school attendance; (teachers/designated staff) should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his 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 initially recorded during registration period and throughout the 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:

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

### Role of the Attendance Co-Ordinator

- To monitor attendance and identify pupils who are experiencing difficulties;
- To liaise with Pastoral Vice-Principal regarding attendance matters;
- To engage with pupils in order to encourage better attendance practice;
- To liaise with parents/carers, staff and Educational Welfare Officer

- To complete referrals to the E.W.S.
- To collate and report attendance information;
- To assume responsibility for overall monitoring of attendance;
- To liaise with Form Teachers re provision of work for pupils on long term absence;
- To liaise with Home Tuition Service re schemes of work for home tutors.

### **Role of Year Head**

- To liaise with Form teachers to collect attendance information;
- To report attendance issues to the Attendance Co-Ordinator.

### **Role of Form Teacher**

- To develop trusting relationships with all pupils;
- To monitor attendance i.e. taking register, collecting absence notes and noting attendance patterns which may indicate a particular concern;
- To contact home if absence persists more than 3 days
- To follow up the return of absence notes;
- Talk to pupils about attendance issues;
- Promote a positive attitude to attendance in registration class;
- Liaise with Attendance Co-Ordinator re pupils demonstrating concerns;
- Provide support to pupils returning from a prolonged period of absence.

### **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 states that 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. 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 08:20 for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure children are punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on the daily attendance record.
- Parents/carers are urged to contact the school as soon as possible if a child appears reluctant to attend school. It is important to discuss the matter promptly with the designated teacher or Principal to ensure that parents/carers and young people receive appropriate support.

### **Role of Pupils**

- Each pupil at Clounagh Junior High School must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian or carer must be provided to your teacher when you return.

## **Absence Procedures**

- All Parents/Guardians are required to ring the school office or send in a personal note which provides a clear reason for any absence.
- Form Teachers will complete the recording of pupil attendance during registration period. This procedure will be repeated throughout the day by subject teachers using Lesson Monitor (SIMS).
- Absence notes to be recorded on SIMS using the comment option in lesson monitor.

## **Family holidays during term time**

Clounagh Junior High 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**

- Form teachers should regularly monitor attendance patterns, frequent or unexplained absences should be reported to the Attendance Co-Ordinator.
- The Attendance Co-Ordinator may consider it appropriate to speak to individual pupils and their parents if attendance is causing a concern.
- The Attendance Co-Ordinator and Pastoral Vice Principal will meet to review school attendance statistics on a weekly basis.
- An attendance 'audit' will be undertaken in order to identify pupils whose attendance has fallen below 85%.
- In consultation with the EWO appropriate action will be agreed ie first letter to parents, second letter to parents and then EWS referral.
- The EWO will be responsible for matters following a referral. Interviews may take place in school with individual pupils to monitor progress.

## **Education Welfare Service**

Education and Library Boards (ELBs) 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.

Mr Hill, Principal

Mr Blevins, Chair, Board of Governors

Date December 2020

## LETTER 1

**Child's Name:**

**% Attendance :**

Dear **[Parent(s)/Carer(s)]**

Over the past few weeks **[Child's Name]** attendance has been a cause for concern. Should this level of attendance continue in the coming weeks, I will be in touch to arrange for you to meet with myself or Mr Hill. Following this meeting, and a period of close monitoring of attendance if there is no further improvement, your child may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Unbroken attendance at school is important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 8.30am. It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty to contact you for so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.

Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems **There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs.**

We hope that these notes will help you to have a clear understanding about Clounagh Junior High School's expectations in this matter. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and we would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about our approach to maintaining and improving our attendance record.

Yours sincerely

Mrs H McDowell

Vice Principal (Pastoral)

**LETTER 2**

Dear Parent/Guardian

**Child's Name:** [Child's Name]

**Attendance:** [% figure]

It has come to our attention that [Child's Name] attendance has dropped. I enclose a copy of [Child's Name] registration certificate for your information. I would therefore like to invite you to attend a meeting that may enable us to discuss any issues that may be preventing (Child's Name) from coming to school.

**TIME:** am

**DATE:**

**VENUE:** Vice Principal's Office

It is important that you attend this meeting so that we can assist you to improve [Child's Name] school attendance.

Should you require an interpreter please let us know in advance.

If you are unable to attend please contact **Mrs McDowell** to arrange a more convenient time.

Yours sincerely

R Hill (Principal)

H McDowell (Vice-Principal)