

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Introduction

Regular school attendance is a prerequisite to a good education. Full access to the curriculum and hence the opportunity for a pupil to achieve to his/her potential can only be achieved by the maintenance of high levels of attendance. By failing to attend school regularly, pupils diminish the value of education provided for them and may also damage the learning of others as pupil group numbers may restrict the scope for effective teaching.

Omagh Academy will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Excellent attendance is celebrated by:

- Issuing full attendance certificates at the “End of Year” assembly.
- Awarding a merit point (Key Stage 3) for full attendance in each half-term.

## Aims

This policy aims to:

- promote good attendance among pupils;
- provide a framework that defines roles and responsibilities;
- provide advice, support and guidance to pupils and their parents/guardians;
- promote effective working relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

## The Role of Parents and Pupils

*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

*Education Act 1986*

Parents are expected to:

1. ensure that their child/children attend school regularly;
2. ensure that their child/children are in school for the start of the school day (8.55am);
3. telephone the school by 9.30 am on the **FIRST** day of any absence;
4. liaise with their child's Year Head if an absence is likely to be prolonged so that the pupil's education can be appropriately supported over the period of absence;
5. provide a clear, written and signed reason for any absence on the pupil's return to school (an absence chit from the back of the pupil's school diary can be used);
6. arrange, as far as possible, routine appointments e.g. medical and dental check-ups, outside the school day;
7. refrain from taking family holidays during term time. (Note: Family holidays taken within term time will be coded as unauthorised, in line with DE guidance);
8. report reluctance to attend school at an early stage so that maximum support can be given in addressing the issue.

Pupils are expected to:

1. attend school regularly and maintain an excellent record for attendance. Pupils should only be absent when there is a very good reason e.g. illness;
2. be in school before 8.55am and to attend registration and all classes punctually;
3. remain in school throughout the day and attend all timetabled lessons unless given permission to leave school through the issue of an exeat by the Head of Year;
4. bring an absence note/chit explaining the reason for any absence on the first day back to school;
5. sign the “Lates book” at the school office, if he/she comes into school after the close of registration at 9.05am;
6. obtain permission and an exeat from the Year Head for all appointments scheduled for the start of the next school day;
7. in the case of an emergency show the office staff a parental letter confirming the appointment, if

this is the reason for being late.

## **The Role of the School**

The Board of Governors will provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets.

The Principal will:

1. retain overall responsibility for attendance issues;
2. provide support and guidance to staff, parents and pupils in addressing attendance issues;
3. provide updates on attendance issues to the Board of Governors.

The Vice-Principal (Pastoral) is expected to:

1. advise and support staff on attendance issues, as required;
2. meet regularly with the Educational Welfare Officer;
3. make referrals to the Education Welfare Service, as necessary;
4. keep a record of referrals made to the Education Welfare Service;
5. set an annual target for whole school attendance;
6. award certificates for full attendance at the end of the academic year.

The Head of Year is expected to:

1. keep an overview of attendance within the Year group;
2. monitor the “Lates book” and apply sanctions, in line with the pupil behaviour management and discipline policy;
3. communicate with parents on issues relating to attendance and/or punctuality;
4. up-date the VP(Pastoral) on concerns relating to unsatisfactory attendance and/or punctuality.

The Form Teacher is expected to:

1. accurately mark the register each morning, recording as present only those pupils present in the registration session;
2. collect and code absence notes;
3. interview pupils about attendance and/or punctuality issues;
4. issue and monitor a punctuality card as deemed necessary by the Form teacher;
5. monitor attendance and punctuality e.g. through lesson monitor software;
6. communicate concerns about attendance and/or punctuality to the Head of Year.
7. award a merit for full attendance over a half term (Key Stage 3 only)

## **Notes**

1. The school regards full attendance as achievable and it is expected whenever possible.
2. Attendance rates of less than 90% are regarded as a cause for concern and may be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Service.
3. Attendance rates of less than 85% will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.
4. Persistent failure to attend may result in a pupil being withdrawn from a public examination.
5. Where a parent has failed to contact the school on the first morning of an absence the school may attempt to contact the parents to establish the reason for the absence.
6. The sporadic absence of a pupil at Key Stage 4 has the potential to adversely affect the delivery of examination assessment tasks, with cumulative effects across the curriculum.
7. Employers may ask for records of attendance, especially over the last two years of school life.
8. Frequent absence may be indicative of more serious Child Protection issues.
9. The school is legally bound to publish statistics on attendance.
10. To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2018/12.

11. The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibilities towards their children's attendance. EWS is committed to supporting staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair, Board of Governors)

Date \_\_\_\_\_