



Attendance and Truancy Policy



Revised by:

Date:

Date:	Policy reviewed:	Policy amended:
February 2015		
February 2017		
February 2019		

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

This policy is based on and complies with DENI Circular 2015/02 on Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording by Schools

This policy highlights : 'Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that their children regularly attend the school at which they are registered. Pupil attendance and educational achievement are inextricably linked.'

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

At Newbuildings Primary School, we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. Newbuildings is a happy school. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about each child's welfare. As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, this school places great emphasis on this in communication with parents. The school will do all that it can to encourage good attendance and children arriving on time.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Newbuildings 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 at Newbuildings Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance. Teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/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 meetings.

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. At the Pre-school induction meetings, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. The importance of children arriving in school on time, is also stressed, as is the necessity for children being picked up on time. The latter can be very upsetting for young children, if they are the ones who are left.

It is the policy of Newbuildings Primary School that all children in Primary 1 are hand delivered to a parent or a known adult at the back gate. Any child not picked up on time is brought to the office to wait there for safe collection.

Children who come late to school, must come to the office to explain why they are late and to sign and date the late book. This is referred to regularly to see if there are certain children who are persistently late at school. This can then be followed up by Home links teacher, to establish if there is problem that the school is unaware of. If it is considered necessary then the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted.

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. 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 8.55am 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.

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.

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

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Newbuildings 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

If a child is absent from school, parents are asked to contact the school explaining the absence. They can telephone school initially, or send in a school note with a brother or sister or inform the class teacher in person. A daily record of absentees is kept, recording the date, class, child's name and reason for absence. This is completed by the class teacher on SIMS. If there is an unexplained absence, the secretary follows this up with a phone call to the child's home. Thus any unauthorised absence can be acted upon

immediately. These records are kept within SIMS on the school computer system and used as a record for identifying those children who are often away from school. Children returning to school after an absence are still required to bring in a note explaining their absence (**Appendix 1**).

If a child needs to leave school for a dental appointment etc. they must bring in a note informing school about it and come to the office to await collection by a parent (**Appendix 2**). Parents are always encouraged to call to the office to say that they are in school to collect a child.

Family holidays during Term Time

Newbuildings 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. Any parent wishing to remove their child from school during term time must complete the appropriate form (Appendix 3) and return it to the principal BEFORE the leave of absence is due to commence.

Concerns

If a child is regularly late for school or absent from school, the class teacher informs the Principal who sets up an informal meeting with the parents to discuss the problems. If there is an urgent concern the teacher will contact the Principal immediately, who will contact the relevant authorities if things need to be taken further.

Truancy

The staff of Newbuildings Primary School are concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although an extremely rare occurrence, if there is a concern that a child may be truanting, then action will be taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Principal is notified, who then contacts the parents, by phoning or calling at the home, and the Educational Welfare Officer. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to school so that the reasons for the child not wanting to be at school can be discussed and hopefully resolved. If the parents are unavailable, then the Principal will talk to the child concerned to try and ascertain the problem. This will then be discussed with the class teacher and Pastoral care teacher and appropriate action will be taken. Parents will also be informed of any action taken.

EWO

The school's Educational Welfare is Theresea Melaugh. The Principal and EWO will meet on a termly basis to monitor attendance within the school.

The Principal will review attendance on a $\frac{1}{2}$ termly basis and complete a referral form to the EWO expressing concerns about any child's attendance and inform the parent at the same time.

Appendix 1



ABSENCE NOTE

To be given to your child's class teacher following any absence from school.

Pupils name _____

Class _____

Date of absence

From _____ to _____

Reason for absence



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Appendix 3

Leave of Absence (holiday in term time) Request Form

Full name: _____

Date of birth: _____

School name: _____

Parent/Carers Details

Full name: _____

Relationship to Child: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postcode: _____

About the request for your child/young person's

Please state the reason for taking your child/young person out of school:

Length of absence: (school days) _____

From: (Date) _____ To: (Date) _____

Parent/guardian's signature:Date:.....

(Parent who lives with child or has day to day care of the child)

Please complete and return to school **BEFORE** the leave of absence. Please note, unless special circumstances have been agreed with the principal this will be noted as an unauthorised absence.

Appendix 2



EXEAT SLIP

Pupils name _____

Class _____

The above pupil has an appointment to attend:

Date/...../..... at (time) _____

He/she will /will not return to school (*please complete*)

Parent/Guardian (*Print*) _____

Parent/Guardian (signed) _____

Class Teacher (signed) _____



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Pupils name _____

Class _____

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Date/...../..... at (time) _____

He/she will /will not return to school (*please complete*)

Parent/Guardian (*Print*) _____

Parent/Guardian (signed) _____

Class Teacher (signed) _____



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Pupils name _____

Class _____

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He/she will /will not return to school (*please complete*)

Parent/Guardian (*Print*) _____

Parent/Guardian (signed) _____

Class Teacher (signed) _____



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He/she will /will not return to school (*please complete*)

Parent/Guardian (*Print*) _____

Parent/Guardian (signed) _____

Class Teacher (signed) _____