ANTRIM PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Attendance Policy

Next Review Date: Sept 2026

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.

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

Antrim Primary School is dedicated to providing every child in our care with a high-quality education that meets their individual needs. Our committed, skilled, and highly motivated staff support learning within a welcoming and well-equipped environment.

We believe that each member of our school community is a unique and valued individual. Our school aims to nurture and guide everyone on their life-long journey toward achieving their full and distinctive potential. We encourage all members of our community to take ownership of their role as active citizens—both locally and globally.

We celebrate self-worth, recognise personal talents and achievements, and seek to develop understanding and empathy toward others. We value diversity, embrace individual differences, and strive to demonstrate respect for all through our daily actions and procedures. We accept our responsibility to ensure that our vision is reflected clearly in everything we do.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Antrim 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 Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal at Antrim Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers 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 meetings on a regular basis.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of each school day. A record of latecomers is also kept. To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02

Antrim Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. All families are given a copy of the Department of Education's 'School Attendance Matters - A Parent's Guide'. If the school has concerns regarding a child's attendance or 'late arrivals at school' a letter is sent home to parents informing them of their child's attendance and/or a record of 'lates'. Any child whose attendance falls below 85% is discussed with the Education Welfare Officer who visits the school regularly.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. 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 to ensure that your child

is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded 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.

Absence Procedures

All teachers record their class's attendance and any latecomers. This information is keyed onto SIMS which is the school's computerised system for recording attendances and latecomers. Codes are used to describe the cause of the absence and hence it is important that parents always inform the school of the cause of the absence to ensure their child/children's records are accurate.

The school must be informed if a child needs to be absent from school to attend routine hospital appointments and should, where possible, attend school either before and/or after this. Parents should endeavour to make all routine doctor and dental appointments for after school hours.

All absences and 'lates' are regularly monitored. and any child whose absence falls below 85% is routinely reported to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Family holidays during Term Time

Antrim 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.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Non-attendance at school will be clarified and the school will provide support and advice to help to rectify the situation. If the non-attendance continues the Education Welfare Officer will then become involved.

Education Welfare Service

Education and Library Boards through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.