



Attendance Policy

June 2021

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. Botanic Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. Our mission statement states that we aim to provide an environment where children will have:

- Opportunities for joy
- Opportunities for discovery
- Opportunities for wonder

Our aim is for the children to delight in

- Effort
- Achievement
- Acceptance

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Botanic 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 Botanic 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 raised at their 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 day. 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.

Botanic is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

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. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school or by phone call on the first day of absence. Alternatively, you can call into school and speak to a member of staff. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by 9.00am. (At time of review, due to Covid 19 times are staggered. All children should be present at the clearly communicated starting time.)

During any period of Lockdown such as has been experienced due to the pandemic in 2020-21, children who do not complete online activities will be marked absent. The school will seek to work with parents to ensure children have access to whatever resources are necessary in this regard.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be notified and perhaps asked to meet with the Principal to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. Lateness is recorded on your child's attendance record.

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and not get vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and ultimately can potentially encourage absenteeism.

Role of pupils

Each pupil at Botanic Primary School has a duty to ensure that they 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.

Safeguarding:- Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance
Behaviour Management
Health and Safety
Access to the Curriculum
Anti- bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The Principal will keep a monthly log of high and low attenders in each class.

This overview will help to ensure children are appropriately rewarded and monitored.

To help us all to focus on this we may provide a reward for those pupils whose attendance is above 95% over a certain period of time. Punctuality may also be a factor at the discretion of the Principal. This aspect is subject to regular review with the Board of Governors.

Understanding types of absence:

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is better to never cover up their absence, or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Family holidays during Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.

Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority 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 (EWO) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.