

Attendance Policy



Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible
September 2024	September 2025	Mr Smith

The pastoral care of our children is central to the aims, ethos and teaching programmes in Earview Primary School and Nursery and we are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our children and staff. Our Attendance Policy is part of our collective pastoral care policies.

Principles

Earview Primary School and Nursery aims to provide support to parents and carers to ensure that all children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children. School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents, carers and school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and ensuring that all children have a full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school we will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child arrives to school and returns home safely.

Children and young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in examinations and / or become involved in anti-social behaviour.

Our aim is to ensure that every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled and as a result 'succeed and thrive'. We endeavour for children to take responsibility for their own attendance, recognising the link between attendance and good learning.

As stated, an important factor in pupil achievement is **school attendance**. The significant majority of our children enjoy their time at school as evidenced by a number of key indicators.

- High Level of Whole School Annual Attendance. Which has increased year on year from 2021.
- A reduction in Low level of poor attendance i.e. < 85% since 2021
- Positive outcomes to the majority of attendance related issues.
- Each year many children have 100% attendance.
- Positive feedback from parents on an on-going basis about school and school-based activities.

Earlview Primary School and Nursery Expectations

We expect that all our pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day (i.e.; Homework, PE kit, reading packs, etc.).

We expect that our parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities by ensuring their children attend school regularly and arrive to school on time.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school either:
 - On the first day of absence, by telephone, before 9am or
 - In writing, detailing the reason for absence on the first day back after absence
 - Where this does not happen teachers issue the parent with a “fill-in” proforma.
 - Notify school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details.

We expect Earlview Primary School and Nursery will:

- Provide a welcoming, nurturing atmosphere
- We aim to greet children as they enter the school gates
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality and monitor each individual child’s attendance and punctuality
- Earlview Primary School and Nursery follows up on absences to:
 - *Ascertain the reason*
 - *Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken*
 - *Identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.*
 - Promote good attendance and punctuality and reduce absence through a system of reward and recognition
 - Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils
 - Where appropriate, inform parents / carers via a series of letters regarding their child’s punctuality and poor attendance. (Copies of all letters are enclosed at the back of the policy)
 - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
 - Act to address patterns of absence
 - Endeavour to keep in contact with families during a prolonged or significant absence.

Promoting and Celebrating Good Attendance

The school acknowledges that good attendance should be recognised and rewarded.

- (From 2020 / 21 on wards) At the end of the school year **100% Attendance Certificates** are awarded at our Prize Distribution.

- At the end of every half term the children are given a written copy of their attendance for that term.

Notifying Absences

- Every absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.
- Details how to inform school about an absence are noted above.
- If the absence is prolonged i.e. requires hospitalisation or is particularly significant, parents are requested to keep school informed.
- Sometimes a child may be reluctant to attend school. Where this is the case, we believe that effective home / school communication contributes to a solution. This will help us to identify the root cause of the reluctance to attend and plan the way forward together.
- When our staff become aware that a child has not arrived at school, we will promptly dispatch an automated text message to the primary telephone number provided by parents, assuming our system is functioning correctly. It is important to note that while we strive to deliver this service consistently, it should not be construed as a guarantee by parents.

The text message will convey the following: "#name has not attended school today. We kindly request that you contact the school immediately to inform us of the reason for the absence. Thank you."

In the event that we do not receive a response, a follow-up letter will be sent accordingly.

Authorised Absences

From time to time children need to be absent from school for other reasons such as medical appointments. Such absences usually **only take up part of a day**. School should be informed of such absences in writing in advance, with accompanying documents and children should be brought in to school for morning registration and back to school straight after the appointment.

Every effort, however, should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

100% Attendance	0 days missed	Excellent
95-99% Attendance	Between 1 – 9 days missed	Good – Very Good
95% Attendance	9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory

90% Attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Very poor
80% Attendance	38 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 days of absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed	Unacceptable

The table above is based on DENI guidance – School Attendance Matters – A Parent’s Guide.

Examples of authorised absences are:

- Illness;
- Religious observance by the religious body to which the child’s family belongs;

Examples of absences allowed by the school are:

- medical appointments
- exclusions
- family occasions e.g. close family wedding, bereavement etc.
- extreme family emergencies e.g. house fires, burglaries etc.

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given.

Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Unexplained absences i.e. the absence has never been properly explained to school
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips or holidays in term time
- Truancy

Holidays During Term Time

- Parents demonstrate their commitment to their child's education by not taking holidays during term time. Any child who is absent from school during term time due to holiday will miss out on important learning and may fall behind with their school work.
- Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as unauthorised absences. Under current legislation Earlview Primary School and Nursery may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore, our school will only authorise holidays in line with these regulations. Exceptional circumstances will only be agreed very rarely.
- Parents should inform school by letter if they are going on holiday. We appreciate the courtesy of this information although, usually, we cannot authorise the absence.

Persistent Absenteeism

The school will continuously monitor each child's attendance record. The school follows a two-step process for any children who are persistently absent for any reason:

1) Each half term the Principal will review all absences and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 85% as a cumulative percentage. It is noted if attendance is improving or deteriorating within the previous month. Following this analysis a range of action may result:

- School may phone parents to discuss the matter and offer support.
- School may send a letter to the parents/carers of specific children whose attendance is causing concern. This will inform parents of their child's attendance, school's concerns and invite parents to contact school to avail of assistance in effecting improvement.

Very often these early interventions are successful in effecting improved attendance.

2) The list of children whose attendance is below 85% is also discussed with the Educational Welfare Officer on a termly basis and where school's action has not resulted in improved attendance, formal referral to the Educational Welfare Service will be discussed / agreed.

The Principal will liaise with the class teacher, SENCO and, when necessary, other professionals, if the need for support is identified.

Punctuality, Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

All children should be in the playground at 0845 ready to come into school when the bell rings. Registration ends at 9am. By this time the children should have said their goodbyes and be lined up with their class in the correct place. This creates a positive start to the school day and allows learning to commence promptly.

At 0905; the register will then be closed, this is a legal requirement.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and the time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can encourage absence.

A child arriving after 0900 is late. This matter is initially addressed by the class teacher. If work is missed there is an expectation that this will be 'made up' by the child.

A child arriving after 0900 will need to come to the main school entrance.

Registers

Registers are typically taken at the start of the school day. A child who is late into school will have received an L code (late mark) for that day. Should a child arrive after registers are closed it requires a further change to be made. If a child does not arrive into school a D code is used. This equates to an unauthorised absence and will be recorded as such on a child's annual attendance record. However, on a child's return, where a reason is provided, the D code is changed for example to I for illness.

If a child arrives after registers have closed – for reasons not considered acceptable by the school – they will be recorded as 'Late after registers closed'. They are marked as being on site but this does not count as a present mark and will show as an unauthorised absence and affect their attendance record.

School staff will categorise authorised and unauthorised absence using the codes set out by the Department of Education.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Class Teacher

Class Teachers will regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of children by correctly marking the register twice a day and will identify those pupils with irregular attendance patterns. They will aim to speak to your child if they are concerned and will provide further support to your child if they are returning to school following a long absence. They will initiate contact with parents and will remind pupils to ensure that absence notes are supplied. Persistent or unexplained absences are noted in a Continuous Monitoring form that will be passed on to the Safeguarding Team at the end of every month. In the space of one month if there are 3 incidents the Safeguarding team will be informed. Class Teachers will bring children who persistently fail to attend school to the attention of the Principal. They will further promote school attendance through the curriculum and will endeavour to recognise improvements in attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities of the School Clerical Staff

These staff have an important role to play in monitoring and recording attendance in school. They will record any messages from parents regarding their child's expected absence and pass these on to the relevant teacher. (Telephone calls should be followed up with a note from parents to the class teacher). Records will be kept in accordance with the guidelines issued by DENI which are available upon request. The Secretary will provide statistical information on attendance percentages to the education Welfare Officer as required.

Daily Registration Procedures

- The class teacher will mark the school register every morning and afternoon and record children as present, absent or late on SIMS.
- The class teacher will be responsible for keeping absence notes and other records.
- The Principal or teachers will inform substitute teachers about attendance procedures.

School Illness Guidelines

Please check that your child knows how to wash his/her hands thoroughly to reduce the risk of cross-infection. School attendance could be improved for all if children and families wash and dry their hands well five or more times a day.

The information below has been provided by the Health Protection Agency:

Rashes and skin infections	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Athlete's foot	None	Athlete's foot is not a serious condition. Treatment is recommended
Chickenpox*	Until all vesicles have crusted over	See: Vulnerable children and female staff – pregnancy
Cold sores, (Herpes simplex)	None	Avoid kissing and contact with the sores. Cold sores are generally mild and self-limiting
German measles (rubella)*	Four days from onset of rash (as per "Green Book")	Preventable by immunisation (MMR x 2 doses). See: Female staff – pregnancy
Hand, foot and mouth	None	Contact the Duty Room if a large number of children are affected. Exclusion may be considered in some circumstances
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted and healed, or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment speeds healing and reduces the infectious period
Measles*	Four days from onset of rash	Preventable by vaccination (MMR x 2). See: Vulnerable children and female staff – pregnancy
Molluscum contagiosum	None	A self-limiting condition
Ringworm	Exclusion not usually required	Treatment is required
Roseola (infantum)	None	None
Scabies	Child can return after first treatment	Household and close contacts require treatment
Scarlet fever*	Child can return 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment recommended for the affected child. If more than one child has scarlet fever contact PHA Duty Room for further advice
Slapped cheek (fifth disease or parvovirus B19)	None once rash has developed	See: Vulnerable children and female staff – pregnancy
Shingles	Exclude only if rash is weeping and cannot be covered	Can cause chickenpox in those who are not immune i.e. have not had chickenpox. It is spread by very close contact and touch. If further information is required, contact the Duty Room. SEE: Vulnerable Children and Female Staff – Pregnancy
Warts and verrucae	None	Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools, gymnasiums and changing rooms

Diarrhoea and vomiting illness		
	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Diarrhoea and/or vomiting	48 hours from last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting	
<i>E. coli</i> O157 VTEC*	Should be excluded for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea	Further exclusion is required for young children under five and those who have difficulty in adhering to hygiene practices
Typhoid* [and paratyphoid*] (enteric fever)	Further exclusion may be required for some children until they are no longer excreting	Children in these categories should be excluded until there is evidence of microbiological clearance. This guidance may also apply to some contacts of cases who may require microbiological clearance
Shigella* (dysentery)		
Cryptosporidiosis*	Exclude for 48 hours from the last episode of diarrhoea	Exclusion from swimming is advisable for two weeks after the diarrhoea has settled
Respiratory infections		
	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Flu (influenza)	Until recovered	See: Vulnerable children
Tuberculosis*	Always consult the Duty Room	Requires prolonged close contact for spread
Whooping cough* (pertussis)	48 hours from commencing antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of illness if no antibiotic treatment	Preventable by vaccination. After treatment, non-infectious coughing may continue for many weeks. The Duty Room will organise any contact tracing necessary

Other infections	Recommended period to be kept away from school, nursery or childminders	Comments
Conjunctivitis	None	If an outbreak/cluster occurs, consult the Duty Room
Diphtheria *	Exclusion is essential. Always consult with the Duty Room	Family contacts must be excluded until cleared to return by the Duty Room. Preventable by vaccination. The Duty Room will organise any contact tracing necessary
Glandular fever	None	
Head lice	None	Treatment is recommended only in cases where live lice have been seen
Hepatitis A*	Exclude until seven days after onset of jaundice (or seven days after symptom onset if no jaundice)	The duty room will advise on any vaccination or other control measure that are needed for close contacts of a single case of hepatitis A and for suspected outbreaks.
Hepatitis B*, C, HIV/AIDS	None	Hepatitis B and C and HIV are bloodborne viruses that are not infectious through casual contact. For cleaning of body fluid spills. SEE: Good Hygiene Practice
Meningococcal meningitis*/ septicaemia*	Until recovered	Some forms of meningococcal disease are preventable by vaccination (see immunisation schedule). There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. In case of an outbreak, it may be necessary to provide antibiotics with or without meningococcal vaccination to close contacts. The Duty Room will advise on any action needed.
Meningitis* due to other bacteria	Until recovered	Hib and pneumococcal meningitis are preventable by vaccination. There is no reason to exclude siblings or other close contacts of a case. The Duty Room will give advice on any action needed
Meningitis viral*	None	Milder illness. There is no reason to exclude siblings and other close contacts of a case. Contact tracing is not required
MRSA	None	Good hygiene, in particular handwashing and environmental cleaning, are important to minimise any danger of spread. If further information is required, contact the Duty Room
Mumps*	Exclude child for five days after onset of swelling	Preventable by vaccination (MMR x 2 doses)
Threadworms	None	Treatment is recommended for the child and household contacts
Tonsillitis	None	There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic

Appendix 1 Template letters



Earlview Primary School and Nursery
2 Manse Drive
New Mossley
Newtownabbey
BT36 5US

Tel: 028 9034 2203
Fax: 028 9083 0228

Principal: Mr. P. Smith BSc (Hons), PGCE, PGCert, ~~MEd~~
Email: psmith519@earlviewps.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk
Website: www.earlviewprimary.co.uk

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are writing to inform you that we have noticed that _____
was absent from school on _____. However, we have not
received any information regarding the reason for their absence.

As part of our commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of all our children, we are
required by the Department of Education Northern Ireland to collect information regarding
absences.

Please take a moment to fill in the space below with the reason for the absence.

Reason for Absence:

Signed: _____

Your cooperation in providing this information is greatly appreciated. It helps us maintain
accurate records and ensures that we can provide appropriate support to our families when
needed.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding the absence or any other school-related
matters, please feel free to contact us at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Mr. P. Smith



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Principal: Mr. P. Smith BSc (Hons), PGCE, PGCert, ~~WEd~~

Email: psmith519@earviewps.newtownabbey.ni.sch.uk
Website: www.earviewprimary.co.uk

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are writing to inform you that we have noticed that _____
was absent from school on the following dates _____/
_____/_____. However, we
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As part of our commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of all our children, we are
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