



CREGAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

"A Family of Learning at the Heart of the Community"

Attendance Policy



Revised: March 2018

Next Review: March 2020





Cregagh Primary School - Attendance Policy

Cregagh Primary School recognises that punctual and regular attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning and is therefore committed to maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality. To this end we in Cregagh actively promote a teaching and learning ethos which encourages all pupils to attend whatever their level of ability or need.

Children are expected to attend school for 190 school days each year. Attendance is recorded on the Computer Attendance Module twice daily (morning and afternoon sessions) and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved activity off site or absent. If a pupil is absent every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. For this reason, information about the cause of each absence is required from parents.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This includes:

-  Parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
-  Truancy before or during the school day
-  Absences which have never been properly explained
-  Children who arrive at school too late to get a registration mark for morning session

Children who are representing the school in a competition or perhaps taking a music, dance or drama examination organised by the school will be recorded as having attended school. Absences due to attendance at non-school organised activities (drama, dance, music) will be recorded as an Authorised Absence.

There are three steps parents should follow in relation to any absence planned or unplanned, brief or otherwise:

- A- Contact the school by telephone on the first morning of the absence and inform the school the reason for and expected length of the absence
- B- Keep the school informed if the absence is going to be more prolonged than initially anticipated
- C- On return to school provide teacher with written explanation for the absence

Medical/Dental appointments where possible should be taken outside school hours. If an appointment has to be made during school hours a written explanation must be provided stating clearly the time of the appointment. If a child attends an appointment during school hours a present mark is awarded providing the child returns to school for the remainder of the school day.

It is hoped parents/carers, school staff and statutory authorities can work closely to overcome any problems which may affect a pupil's attendance. If a pupil is reluctant to attend it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This will only give them the impression that attendance does not matter, and may make matters worse.

Parents are furnished with details of the school holidays at the beginning of the school year, again at the beginning of each new full term. They are also posted on the school's Website and Facebook page.

The school discourages parents from taking children on holidays during term due to the impact on pupils' learning. Parent/Carers must contact the school prior to booking any holiday to explain the need to

remove a pupil from school during term time. The contact should be in the form of a letter addressed to the Principal. Any holidays in term time are considered unauthorised absences. Children will not be given work by their teacher to complete during the holiday absence.

All children should be in school by 8.55am A full attendance involves being present the entire school day. A record is kept of all late arrivals. Children arriving after 8.45 report to the office to have their time of arrival recorded and those arriving after 10.00am and 1.00pm will be marked absent for the appropriate session. If a child goes home in the morning due to illness he/she will be marked absent for the afternoon session.

Class teachers have an important role to play in managing attendance by marking the attendance register each day, collecting absence notes and identifying pupils with irregular attendance patterns. Teachers can speak to pupils about their attendance and to parents about their child's attendance. They will also promote class attendance through curriculum activities.

In the course of the school year the Principal monitors pupils' attendance. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% parents will receive a letter from the school informing them of their child's attendance level. When attendance falls below 85% the school is obliged to bring the matter to the attention of the school's Educational Welfare Service which will offer support in resolving the attendance issue. The school will also communicate with Parents whose child has more than five late arrivals during a calendar month. The Board of Governors is made aware of any attendance issues.

The school continues to operate its own Full Attendance Award Scheme. Certificates are awarded to those pupils who have not missed a day during the school year. The class with the highest attendance each month will also be presented with a certificate and funds for a celebratory class party.

Cregagh Primary's School Attendance Policy will be monitored annually by the Principal and the outcomes of any evaluation recorded in the Annual Report of the Board of Governors.

Accompanying documents shared with parents:

- a) School Attendance and Absence - Advice & Support (October 2017)
- b) Department of Education publication, *Miss School = Miss Out*

School Attendance and Absence Advice

Regular school attendance is an important part of giving your child the best possible start in life. Talking to your child and their teachers could help solve any difficulties in getting your child to go to school - and there are other forms of support available if you still have problems.

Regular school attendance - why it's so important

Going to school regularly is important for your child's future. For example, children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams.

Good attendance shows potential employers that your child is reliable. Research suggests that children who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime.

All schools are required to record details of pupils' attendance and absence at school. They do so at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. If your child is absent, it is required that you inform the school the reason for the absence.





The school will record the absence under a particular category preset by the Department of Education (DE). This data is then available to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) for each pupil. DE also receives annually the overall data for each school.

By law, all children of compulsory school age (normally four to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. For most parents, this means registering their child at a school - though some choose to make other arrangements to provide a suitable, full-time education.

Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to do so, you risk being prosecuted.

Preventing your child from missing school: what you can do

You can help prevent your child skipping school by:





-  making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
-  taking an interest in their education - ask about school work and encourage them to get involved in school activities
-  discussing any problems, they may have at school – inform their teacher or Principal about anything serious
-  not letting them take time off school for minor ailments - particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work

Arranging appointments and outings after school hours, at weekends or during school holidays will help to prevent disruption to your child's education and to the school. Under normal circumstances you should not expect the school to agree to your child going on holiday during term time.

Support on school attendance

There are many different issues which can affect school attendance.

Examples include problems with:

-  bullying
-  housing or care arrangements
-  transport to and from school
-  work and money

If your child starts missing school, there may be a problem you are not aware of. Ask your child first, then approach their teacher or form tutor.

Support from the school

Your child's school is the first place to go to discuss any attendance problems. The school should try to agree a plan with you to improve your child's attendance.




A small number of schools are working with the Education Authority (EA) to undertake the 'Primary Attendance Matters' programme which aims to show primary aged pupils the benefits of school and to reward them for good attendance.

If your child's attendance gives the school reason for concern (the trigger point for this is normally when attendance **drops below 85 per cent**) they will refer your child to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in the EA in your region.

Support from the Education Authority

The EA in your region can also help if you are struggling to ensure that your child goes to schools.

Potential forms of support include:

-  home tuition for children with long term and recurring illnesses, so they do not fall too far behind
-  support to help reduce the burden on children where families are in difficulty (for example, if a child is spending a lot of time caring for someone)
-  working with families and schools to overcome bullying and other serious problems

The EWS in the EA is a specialist education support service which helps young people of a compulsory school age and their families to get the best out of the education system. The EWS can offer advice and support to help you and your child to have good attendance at school.

More advice and support can be found by going to:

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/parents.htm>



MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT

WHY ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL IS SO IMPORTANT

If a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school it is essential that they attend their school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- To learn.
- To make new friends.
- To experience new things in life.
- To gain qualifications.
- To develop new skills.
- To build confidence and self-esteem.
- To have the best possible start in life.

Key Point

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.

CAN ATTENDANCE MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO EXAM RESULTS?



Source: School Leavers 2014/15

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP

- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Make sure your child goes to school regularly and follows the school rules.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time - not late.
- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours when possible.
- Always inform the school if your child is absent due to illness - this should be followed up with a written note when your child returns to school.
- If your child is not attending school as you expect they may be putting themselves at risk - Who are they with? What are they doing?
- Do not take family holidays during term time.
- Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work (including homeworks).
- Attend parents evenings and school events.
- Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- Always support school staff in their efforts to control difficult or challenging behaviour.

Key Point

Parents of children aged 4-16 who are enrolled in school are legally required to make sure they attend.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed