

CREGAGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

“Aspire, Belong, Believe, Achieve”



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE POLICY

“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 is it 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

Early intervention is key and there should be ongoing engagement with pupils, parents/carers & teachers regarding attendance.

You can help prevent your child skipping school by:

- 🌐 making sure they understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- 🌐 help them see education as a positive thing that creates life opportunities
- 🌐 taking an interest in their education - ask about school work, attend school meetings 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.

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 90 per cent**) we will contact you with a letter informing you of reaching 'step 1'. The second stage is if your child's attendance falls below 85% when we will contact the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in the EA in your region, with regards to your child's attendance levels. If your child's attendance falls below 75% we will make a referral to the EWS, following a phone call with the parent.*

Any attendance concerns, before letters are posted, are usually shared with the parent through a phone, face to face conversation or during a parent/teacher meeting.

Cregagh Primary School has an annual target for attendance, usually 95%. We have a monthly prize for the class that has the highest attendance percentage.

Incentives for improving attendance will be reviewed if they are deemed to be ineffective.

Support from the Education Authority

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

Potential forms of support from the Education Authority 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>

Appendix A

Copy of Attendance notification letter sent to parents

Step 1: normally if attendance levels is below 90%

Step 2: if attendance levels falls below 85%

Step 3: if attendance falls below 75%

Attendance audits are arranged with the EWO and completed every half-term when the EWO, alongside the Pastoral lead Senior Teacher, to identify those children whose attendance levels have fallen below 85%.

Appendix B

Copy of attendance supplementary letter sent to parents if there is known medical or health concerns related to absence of the child.



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.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential.



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.

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.

CAN ATTENDANCE MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO EXAM RESULTS?

Greater than
95% Attendance



87% of pupils achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths when they attended more than 95%



Less than
90% Attendance



63% of pupils achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths when they attended less than 90%



Less than
80% Attendance



49% of pupils achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths when they attended less than 80%



Source: School Leavers 2019/20

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

nidirect.gov.uk/miss-school-miss-out