

Portadown Integrated Primary School

We deliver the rights of the child

Article 28

You have the right to education.

Belief Statement

At Portadown Integrated Primary School we recognise that punctual and regular attendance alongside high standards of behaviour is an essential prerequisite to effective learning and is, therefore, committed to maintaining high levels of attendance, punctuality and positive behaviour. To this end we in Portadown Integrated Primary actively promote a teaching and learning ethos which encourages all pupils to attend whatever their level of ability or need.

We regard the child's time at school as a partnership between school and home and we hope to have the support of parents/carers in ensuring that their children make the most of their time here and attend regularly. The school takes the view that every lesson counts.

We monitor school attendance in order to identify students falling below the agreed attendance percentage. We believe that the early detection and assessment of the causes of school non-attendance and the provision of organisational structures to support improved attendance are vital.

Aims and Objectives

Portadown Integrated Primary School aims to ensure that every child will want to attend school. This will be achieved by creating a warm, welcoming and secure atmosphere where the pupils feel valued, and a stimulating and accessible curriculum is delivered in a physically clean, bright and attractive environment.

Portadown Integrated will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority in daily school life and the school development plan.
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other communications to parents.
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly.
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc)
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence

- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents.
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs.
- Share good practice with other schools.
- Consider the needs of the children settling in after a long absence.

The school aims to promote, among parents and pupils, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance through the following means:

- All new parents are introduced to the Policy and information on attendance in the School Prospectus.
- The newsletter is used as a vehicle to promote this aspect of school life and serves as a reminder.
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Maintain and promotion of class activities which relate to punctuality and attendance.
- Invite the EWO to talk to the whole school on his/her role regarding attendance and punctuality.

Roles and Responsibilities

PARENTS

“To ensure that children have an efficient education suited to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs”

Education and Libraries Order 1986

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence.
- Telephone or e-mail the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing.

- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return.
- Provide a note or e-mail indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- Provide an e-mail or note when the child returns from an absence due to sickness. This should be on the first day of the child's return to school.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day, between 8.50am – 9.00am. It is of the up most importance that children are not in school before 8.30am as they are not supervised or covered by insurance.
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.
- Parents wishing to collect students for an early departure must also report to the front office with an explanation and sign their children out. Should they return the children to school after some time out, e.g. a dentists visit, the students need to be signed back in to the school at the front office.

LEADERSHIP

Overall responsibility for attendance on a day-to-day basis lies with the Principal and Vice Principal. The Principal has the role, along with the Board of Governors for determining resources and staffing to deal with attendance issues, ensuring the Board of Governors are informed about attendance issues and ensuring statistical information is provided as required by government.

The Principal and/or Vice Principal will:

- liaise with the education welfare service about individual pupils.
- talk to pupils with irregular attendance.
- send letter to parents of pupils who are absent from school on a regular basis without explanation.
- make a referral to the Education Welfare Service if improvement in attendance is not made.
- collate and report attendance information take responsibility for overall monitoring of attendance.
- provide information in the newsletter relating to attendance.
- issue parents with pupil's attendance termly.

TEACHERS

Effective practice in relation to managing individual pupil attendance depends on the class teacher. In Portadown Integrated Primary School the class teacher is responsible for:

- Developing trusting relationships with all pupils.
- Monitoring attendance, e.g. mark register, collect absence note, identify pupils with irregular attendance patterns and liaise with the Principal
- Following up pupils absence if notes are not produced (Appendix 1)
- Talking to individual pupils about their attendance.
- Promoting class attendance through the curriculum and school ethos.
- Referring pupils to the principal / vice principal.
- Liasing with the Education Welfare Officer if required.
- Provide work for the children when asked by parent/carer.
- Proving support to pupils after a long absence from school.

OFFICE STAFF

Office staff have an important role to play in monitoring attendance in school. The following are some of the roles they may undertake:

Operating the C2K Attendance system

Taking phone messages or e mails from parents when pupils are absent.

Maintaining the late register.

Compiling lists of absentees.

Collating registration data.

Advising the Principal/ Vice Principal of regular late arrivals/absences

Registers

The method of maintaining the class registers is through SIMS Attendance Module.

Registers close at 9.00a.m./ 9.10 am Lateness after this time is classed an unauthorised absence unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Principal.

AUTHORISED ABSENCES

In normal circumstances the following types of absences will be classified as authorised:

Illness (when note, phone call or e-mail is provided by parent)

Hospital / dental appointments (when prior notice is given)

Family bereavement

Representing the school / county / country at an approved event

Taking music / ballet / drama examinations

Religious holidays (when prior notification of absence is given)

In special circumstances, parents may apply for a leave of absence for their child. The authorisation of the absence is at the principal's discretion and must be requested in writing, prior to the absence. In exceptional circumstances, when a written request is impractical, parents should contact the principal, in person, to discuss the matter in confidence.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

In normal circumstances the following types of absence will be classified as unauthorised:

birthday

on a shopping trip with parents

staying at home with ill parent or sibling

term time holiday

family events

When a pupil is absent on a regular basis, a letter will be sent to the parents to highlight the school's concern. This letter will detail the attendance percentage, please see (Appendix 3)

Where there is cause for concern, i.e. when attendance is below 85% in any term, the reasons for this will be investigated and where appropriate, discussed with the EWO during one of their regular visits.

Punctuality

In Portadown Integrated Primary School punctuality is strongly encouraged. The school day begins at 8.50 am / 9.00a.m. when the register will be taken. Children arriving after 9.10 a.m. should enter school through the main entrance and report to the school office.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply. It will be explained that the lateness can cause anxiety and embarrassment for the child, and it not only interrupts their child's education but also causes serious distraction for the teacher and the rest of the class.

If a child arrives 10 mins late, with no reason given by their parent, this will constitute an unauthorised absence.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained. In rare circumstances where the school is made aware of a situation, an arrangement allowing a degree of flexibility can be discussed with the Principal.

Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and/or Social Services where relevant.

Medical Appointment

Parents must sign their child(ren) out and back in again when attending appointments during the school day.

If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Principal.

Holidays

Parents are asked to avoid taking their children away on holiday during term time if possible. Currently there is no legislation in Northern Ireland with regard to holidays in term time (as there is in the rest of the United Kingdom)

Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday, unless the child/ren has experienced severe trauma and/or a doctor advises the child/ren would benefit from a absence from school.

Where the school and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence is marked as unauthorised.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the day they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on the after their return. There is a consequent of underachievement, which you and we must seek to avoid.

Attendance Targets for 2018/19

Primary School Attendance Target for N.I./SELB:
Portadown Integrated Attendance for 2017/18 : 94.24%
Target for 2018/19: 96%

Monitoring and Review

The staff has worked in partnership with the school's Education Welfare Officer to develop a policy that ensures consistency. The policy will be reviewed every 2 year to determine the success or otherwise of the attendance strategies employed within the school.

Portadown
Integrated Primary
School

Attendance and
Punctuality Policy.

