

**Model Primary School  
&  
Nursery Unit**



**ATTENDANCE  
POLICY**



**Reviewed February 2016**

## **Attendance Policy**

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.

The Model Primary and Nursery Unit will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

### **Mission Statement**

The Board of Governors of the Model School is anxious to uphold the charter of the Model Schools and to pursue the provision of “United Education” by welcoming pupils from all cultures and tradition.

1. Our primary purpose is to enhance children’s quality of learning through the effective and efficient delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.
2. We believe that our first responsibility is to our pupils and our parents, to meet their needs and to provide outstanding service.
3. We will provide a range of educational and social experiences appropriate to the age, ability and needs of our pupils.
4. We have consistently high expectations of our pupils and aim to meet these with high quality resources and learning strategies.
5. We are committed to honesty and responsibility in all relationships.
6. We will create opportunities for every individual in the school to develop his or her maximum potential.
7. We will manage resources to ensure maximum educational benefit.
8. We will create and sustain a professional learning environment.
9. We will adopt a philosophy of continuous improvement of every aspect of school’s work and life.

## Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Model School and Nursery Unit.
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 Education Welfare Service.

## Roles and responsibilities of the School

The Principal at Model Primary and Nursery Unit has overall responsibility for school attendance; the Vice Principal will 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 placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis. Our current target for attendance is: **94%**

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

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 **2013/13**

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

The Model Primary and Nursery Unit 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/she 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 will normally be done by a phone call to the school office. This must be confirmed with a written note/ note in their Homework Diary (P4 – P7) when the pupil returns to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9.00am for registration and the beginning of classes. Registration will close at 09:15; pupils who arrive after this time will be marked as LATE. This may have an impact on the overall attendance of the child.

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that his/her child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on the child's attendance record.

If a child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both the parent and the child receive maximum support.

### **Role of Pupils**

All children have the responsibility to attend school punctually and when required. Pupils must ensure that the written confirmation of any absence is passed on to their teacher.

### **Absence Procedures**

At the Nursery and Primary One Induction Meeting parents are advised of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. This message is reinforced through monthly newsletters Children are taught the importance of good attendance through the curriculum. For example; Celebrating Achievement assemblies and specific lessons and support materials provided by our EWO.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice daily, 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 is be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise, not the parents/carers. The cause of each absence is required in writing when the child returns.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons when the child does not attend school for a genuine reason (e.g. illness, medical appointment etc.) or for another unavoidable cause.

**Parents/Carers are asked, whenever possible, to make appointments 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. Parents/Carers will be asked to sign their child out of school providing details of the appointment

**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.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.

At the end of the month if no reason (code N) still appears on the register the school will send out a letter requesting an explanation for the absence.

### **Family holidays during Term Time**

The Model Primary School **strongly discourages** holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time

will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. **School will not provide work for children on holiday.**

### **Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

**Schools have a legal responsibility to report any pupil whose absence falls below 85% or where there has been an absence of more than 10 days and where it has proved impossible to make contact with a parent/carer to the EWO.**

The Vice Principal meets with the Educational Welfare Officer on a monthly basis to discuss children who fall into this category and possible reasons for absence.

- A letter will be sent out to parents/guardians to inform them that their child's attendance is causing concern.
- If there is no improvement parents/guardians will be invited to come into school to discuss reasons for absence if no satisfactory reason can be given.
- A referral will then be made to EWO if no satisfactory progress is evident following this meeting.

### **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service has a legal responsibility to ensure 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 (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair, Board of Governors

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_