



S P E R R I N
INTEGRATED COLLEGE

M A G H E R A F E L T

Attendance Policy

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Rationale

A pupil's attendance is fundamental to the success of their school life. Regular attendance to school will provide pupils with all the opportunities available to them as well as developing knowledge through learning. Pupils who attend school achieve in all areas of school life. Therefore school places a high value and importance on attendance and the monitoring of attendance patterns.

Aims

1. To set high yet realistic targets for improvement in school attendance.
2. To monitor individual pupils, class groups, year groups and whole school attendance statistics.
3. To monitor individual pupil punctuality and carrying out sanctions where appropriate.
4. To use intervention strategies to encourage improvement in school attendance.
5. To encourage regular school attendance for all by ensuring staff, pupils and parents are aware of the importance of school attendance.
6. To reward and acknowledge good attendance.
7. To seek support of external agencies including Education and Welfare Officers where appropriate.
8. To work with and support parents of individual pupils who have low attendance records.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. Parents are required to contact the school on their child's first day of absence. On the child's return to school parents must provide a written explanation for absence. Parents are requested not to book holidays during term time. Parents are informed of school expectations in relation to attendance and punctuality during the Induction Process and at Key Stage information events.

Pupils

Pupils have a responsibility to attend school regularly and on time. Senior pupils are required to take a mature attitude to school attendance and be aware of the direct effect school attendance has on performance.

Learning Tutors

The Form Teacher has a vital role in the monitoring of pupil attendance.

- Learning Tutor have a responsibility to ensure their form class works towards improvements in attendance by ensuring attendance matters have a high level of importance within their class.
- Display attendance Awards on Form class notice board.
- Pupils report to their form room in the morning to be registered. The form teacher has responsibility for using the SIMS system to record attendance. (Appendix 1-Teacher Guide-Registration using SIMS.net)

- When a pupil provides a note explaining an absence the form teachers are required to change the code. (Appendix 2-Attendance Codes) They must also follow up if pupils do not produce absence notes.
- On the second day a pupil is absent from school form teachers are required to contact the parent, if contact hasn't already been made. Form Teachers should always check with the administration staff prior to making contact.
- Any concerns regarding absences or concerns about pupils must be raised as soon as possible to their Year Head.

Year Heads

Year Heads have an important part in monitoring pupil, class and year group attendance.

- Communicate the highest expectations in attendance and punctuality the pupils and their parents.
- Ensure that Form Teachers are following the 'second day contact' procedure. Parents of pupils with known patterns of poor attendance should be contacted on the first day of absence by Year Head.
- Check pupil and class attendance regularly.
- Speak to pupils and parents in relation to attendance concerns.
- Forward names of pupils whose attendance falls below 85% to Vice Principal Pastoral.
- Ensure attendance issues are highlighted at Year Team meetings.
- Promote regular attendance within classes and Year groups by addressing issues in assemblies.
- Reward certificates to best attending form class each month.

Vice Principal

- Devise strategies and set targets for whole school improvements in attendance.
- Ensure these strategies are incorporated into the whole school development plan.
- Refer pupils with 85% and below attendance to Education and Welfare Officer. Liaise with the EWO to support pupils to improve attendance.
- Liaise with parents and other agencies to address individual attendance issues.
- Conduct the review of attendance procedures and implement changes to policy and practice.
- Provide leadership to staff and pupils by promoting regular school attendance.
- Oversee the rewards system in relation to attendance.
- Monitor and analyse school attendance statistics and act as required with the view to improving school attendance.
- Inform the Principal of attendance patterns and trends.

Principal

- Monitors the management of the attendance policy.
- Ensure that the whole school development plan has reference to strategies to improve school attendance.
- Set whole school attendance target in conjunction with the SLT.
- Ensure attendance has a high profile in the school.

Administration Staff

One member of the administration staff has responsibility for overseeing that registers are complete by 10am daily and afternoon {Period 5} Administration staff contact teachers if registers are not complete on time. In addition administration staff provide data to EWO, Year Head and Vice Principal.

Subject Teachers

All staff are required to complete class registers using SIMS. Teachers are to report immediately any pupils who are not in attendance to their class. {This is normally done via an alert e-mail to all staff, including the Year Head}

Staff Vigilance

Staff are encouraged to be very vigilant about pupil attendance .This includes teaching and non-teaching staff. Staff are to challenge pupils if they are concerned why a pupil is out of class.

Office staff are to report pupils leaving the school without permission to the Year Head and Vice Principal.

Recording Attendance

Form Registration-Morning and Afternoon

Attendance registers are taken twice daily once in the morning by the Form Teacher and again after lunch at the beginning of period five by the subject teacher. All registration is done using SIMS. Staff are required to report to the office if there is a discrepancy between the morning and afternoon registers. Year Heads are informed if pupils have unexplained absences in the afternoon. All classes are registered using SIMS.

Substitute Teachers

If a substitute teacher is taking a register they are provided with a form class absence slip which is returned to the office after registration. (Substitute Teachers do not have access to SIMS). Administration staff record attendance.

Assembly Registration

On two mornings per week staff cannot access SIMS as they are required at assembly. Administration staff provide manual registration sheets which are completed and returned to the office. Administration staff record attendance on SIMS.

Punctuality

Arriving to school on time is a very important aspect of school life. School starts at 9.00 and pupils are expected to line-up outside their form room for registration at this time. At Sperrin it is our expectation that

pupils come to school on time. Lateness, like absenteeism, is a symptom that all is not well. The school is aware that some pupils are persistently late through no fault of their own due to Translink /Bus issues.

Pupils and parents are aware of the following procedures to monitor lateness:

- Pupils receive a late mark if they are late after registration begins(for example at 9.05am)
- If pupils are late between 9.05am - 9.15am they go to their form rooms where the teacher will record a late mark.
- If a pupil is late after registration is over they must report to their form teacher who will record a late mark.
- Pupils who are late due to bus issues will not receive a late mark (Form Teachers and Year Heads are aware of this group of pupils)
- If a pupil is late after 10.07am (Period 1) they must sign the 'Late Book' at the office. Administration staff will make the changes on SIMS.
- Form teachers will monitor punctuality closely and carry out sanctions three invalid reasons for lateness within a term will result in an after school detention.
- If pupils are late to class three times within a term they will receive a detention. Subject teachers will record pupil lateness using SIMS.

Medical and other Appointments

It is recommended that parents make medical and dental appointments outside school hours. If this is not possible parents are asked to provide a note of explanation along with an appointment card sent to the form teacher. The form teacher will inform the Year Head who will sign the pupil out using 'Permission to leave School' book. Pupils are expected to return to school after such appointments.{unless medical advice has been given }

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school unless they have been signed out by their Year Head and report to the office. In the event of an emergency this book will be brought to the emergency contact point and will be cross referenced with attendance registers.

Private Holidays during term time

It is recommended that parents do not book holidays during term time. Pupils will be marked absent during this period. {These are recorded as unauthorised absences}

Long term Illness/Absence

Pupils who are unable to attend school due to serious or long term illness will be supported not only by the school but by the external support agencies that have specific expertise in this area. School will liaise with these agencies and provide work where appropriate.

School Refusal

Pupils who, despite every effort by the school and other agencies refuse to attend school maybe (depending on age and circumstances) referred to Educational Psychology Service. If a pupil is in Year 11 an application may be made to the EOTAS programme.

Leaving school without permission

This is deemed as a serious offence and parents will be informed immediately .A standard sanction of a Friday detention will be applied. Support will be provided by the Year Head depending on the child's needs.

Truancy

As soon as truancy is detected parents will be informed. Often this behaviour is symptomatic that all is not well. Pupils will be required to make up for lost school hours, normally a series of detentions after school. Support will be provided by the Year Head based on the needs of the child.

Non-Attendance to class without permission

This is deemed as a serious offence and parents will be informed as soon as it is detected. Normally a sanction will apply (After School Detention) Support will be provided by the Year Head as required.

Individual Monitoring

School attendance is monitored closely by all staff in the pastoral system. Where issues arise in relation to attendance the Year Head will contact the parent by telephone outlining school concerns. Issues may include patterns of absence on particular days, lack of absence notes or low attendance record. If issues still persist a parent may be requested to attend a meeting at school to discuss strategies for improvement. Throughout the year standardised letters will be sent to inform parents of concerns regarding attendance.

Referral to Education and Welfare Service

When a pupil's school attendance falls below 85% the school will make a referral to the Education and Welfare Service. (Appendix 3-Referral Form for EWO) Pupils whose absence is valid for a reason such as a long term medical issue will not be referred. These cases will be discussed at regular meeting with school and the Education and Welfare Officer. The school provides attendance statistics to EWO on a monthly basis. A service level agreement is made between the school and the Education and Welfare Service at the beginning of each academic year.

Communication of the Attendance Policy

Parents, staff and pupils are made aware of the Attendance Policy by:

- Induction Events
- Homework Diary
- Staff training (Using SIMS)
- Staff Handbook (Teacher guide to using SIMS)
- Pastoral Handbook
- Year Head Meetings
- Assemblies
- Letters

Monitoring and Evaluating

The staff team (all staff members) at Sperrin have their part to play in the monitoring of school and individual attendance. The Vice Principal has responsibility for monitoring the systems and strategies to improve attendance. This is done in consultation with the Learning Tutors, Year Heads, Pupil Council, Principal and SLT.

Whole School Attendance Target and Action Plan

In August prior to the new academic year the Principal and Vice Principal together with the SLT set the attendance targets for the academic year. Strategies to improve school attendance are incorporated into the school development plan.

