

Acorn Integrated Primary School and Nursery School

Pupil Attendance Policy

Date of next policy review	**See policy review framework**
Name of persons responsible for this policy	**Governors, Mrs J. Fuller**
Date of issue	**See policy review framework**

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

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.

Acorn Integrated Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

The school endeavours to help each child realise their potential within a positive and caring learning environment.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Acorn IPS
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/Carers and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance, the teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded on a daily basis.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2023/11, which can be found at the following link:

https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Circular%202024-13%20-%20Attendance%20Guidance%20and%20Absence%20Recording%20By%20Schools.pdf

Acorn IPS is committed to working with parents/Carers to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Carers

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full-time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent/Carer has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is the parent's/Carer's responsibility to inform the school, by phone call to the school office of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note 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 8.55 am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/Carers to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support. If a parent/carer wishes their child to miss school for attendance at a religious festival or other significant event, they should seek approval in advance in writing.

Role of Pupils

Each child at Acorn IPS must attend school punctually and regularly. If a child has been absent from school, a written note from a parent/Carer must be provided to the class teacher when the child returns

Absence Procedures

Parents and carers should contact school, via the telephone, on the first morning of a child's absence informing school that the child will be absent from school and the reason why. Following this, all parents/carers are required to inform the school in writing providing a clear reason for any absence. This should be provided to school upon the child's return. The attached absence notification form can also be completed.

Family holidays during Term Time.

Department of Education 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. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

We aim to provide sensitive and appropriate guidance to parents/carers concerning pupil attendance, taking into account guidance from the Department of Education.

- We will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Through information at induction meetings and via newsletters.
- The Principal reports on attendance at Board of Governors meetings.
- We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.
- We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued.
- We give high priority to attendance and punctuality. Registration begins at 8.55 am and the register is closed at 9.10 am. A child who arrives at school after registration closes will be registered as late.
- We recognise the importance of early intervention and ask parents/carers for explanations of pupil absence. Parents/carers are contacted by the Principal and interviews arranged if necessary, as a result of attendance concerns.
- If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and if necessary the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve attendance problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.
- If necessary, we hold informal meetings and/or telephone calls with parents/carers to discuss reasons for a pupil's poor attendance – school absence letters are issued when levels of absence become a cause for concern.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/Carers meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

A child with 90% attendance will have missed 19 school days in one academic year. 85% equates to 28.5 days.

Acceptable Reasons for Absence

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointment
- Participation in religious event
- Due to family circumstances e.g., wedding / funeral

Unacceptable Reasons for Absence

- Term-time holidays/birthdays
- Looking after family members

Acorn
Integrated Primary

ABSENCE NOTIFICATION FORM

Please Note – This form must be completed for each period of pupil absence and returned to the school immediately.

Name of Pupil: _____

Class: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

Date(s) of Absence: _____

Reason:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed: Parent / carer _____ Print Name: _____

Date: _____