

## **Attendance Policy**

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**Reviewed by: Mark Hunter**

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## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Compulsory School Age

- This policy applies to children of compulsory school age. A child becomes of compulsory school age on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. If a child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates then they reach compulsory school age on that date.

### Aims and responsibilities

- The school aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, with the intention of enabling all children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them at Annan School.
- The school aims to work together with parents to ensure that all children registered at the school attend both regularly and punctually.
- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age, registered at the school, attend on a regular and full-time basis.
- The school has a statutory responsibility to maintain a record of attendance and absences and record any absences as authorised or unauthorised.

### Authorised and unauthorised absence

Parents may not authorise their child's absence - only the school can do this on the basis of the explanation provided by the parents. Should parents fail to provide a satisfactory reason for their child's absence, or should the reason fall outside the school's ability to authorise it, the school will record such absence as unauthorised.

#### (i) Illness

Parents should contact the school **before 8.45am** if their child is not well enough to be at school that day. Contact can be made by phone or e-mail. As the classes are small it is important that we know **each day** which children will be in so that the teachers can plan accordingly. We would therefore ask that you ring **each day** before 8.45 if your child remains unwell.

**Absences for sickness will be authorised without the need for a doctor's certificate.** However, should there be a repeated pattern of absences due to illness or the time away from school seems excessive with regard to the nature of the illness, parents will be informed that continued absence can only be authorised with a doctor's certificate.

#### (ii) Holidays in term time

Parents should not take a child on holiday in term time - it can be disruptive to the child's learning and to the learning of the other children in the class.

The school is only permitted to authorise the dates of holidays in term time in very exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in writing to the Principal at least two weeks in advance of any proposed holiday. The parent must state clearly the exceptional circumstances for needing to take the proposed holiday. The school will only agree to authorise the dates for a holiday during term time in exceptional circumstances, which will also include consideration of the child's attendance record, the learning needs of the child and any planned activities for the class during the period in question. It is entirely the school's decision and is not a parental right. Parents should not book their holiday until the dates have been agreed by the school.

Unless the school regards the circumstances as exceptional, the proposed holiday should be rescheduled to take place during the school's published holiday dates. Should the proposed holiday proceed any absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents should be aware that they will be failing to meet their legal duty (compulsory school age children only).

*Note: All absences of compulsory school age children (whether or not agreed) will be marked against the child's and the school's record of attendance.*

### (iii) Other absences

The school may be able to authorise other absences such as:

- medical and dental appointments, but only when the appointment cannot otherwise be made outside school hours or during school holidays. A copy of the appointment letter/text may be requested as proof of appointment;
- days of religious observance;
- exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement;
- late arrival due to unforeseen car breakdown, but not if other arrangements could have been planned for in advance to get your child to school (ie other parents/taxi etc);
- adverse weather conditions that may make getting to/from school unsafe.

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- sickness of brothers, sisters or parents
- birthdays
- late nights/tiredness
- seeing relatives
- avoidable late returns from holiday
- cheaper flights/travel outside school holidays
- work commitments of parents

### School Responsibilities

- The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
- Teachers will complete registers in accordance with the guidance contained in the Policies folder.
- If a child is absent and the school has not been informed of the reason for the absence the school will telephone the parents to ensure:

(a) that the child is safe

(b) to establish the reason for their absence and then complete the register accordingly.

Parents will be telephoned during the first morning of absence. Where telephone contact cannot be made, parents will be contacted by email or text and asked to contact the school office.

If no contact can be made by a second day of absence the school will telephone a named emergency contact. The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead should be consulted where the reason for absence is unclear or unexplained in accordance with the school's ***Children Missing from Education Policy***

- The school secretary will check the registers daily in order to enter the appropriate attendance codes for authorised/unauthorised absences. The school will also compile other data from the registers in line with the ***Admission and Attendance Registers Policy***.

## **Strategies to promote regular, punctual attendance**

- The school will communicate regularly with parents on attendance matters
- Appropriate personal encouragement or congratulation will be offered to individual children
- The attendance expectations will be issued to all new parents
- Parents will be reminded of the attendance expectations when necessary
- The school will publish the dates of forthcoming holiday periods on the website and also make these available to parents on request to the school office
- Details of annual attendance will be issued with the end of year school report for each child

## **Problems with attendance**

If a child has more than 10 consecutive days of absence for any reason (not including weekends), then details of their absence and a copy of their attendance to date for the year, will be notified to the school Principal/school director for further action.

A letter will be sent to the parents of any child identified as having attendance problems informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending. The child's attendance will be closely monitored and if after a further period there appears to be no improvement the parents of the child will be invited to a meeting with the head teacher to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the child from attending.

If after such meeting the attendance of the child does not improve, or there are further unauthorised absences, a formal letter will be sent outlining the school's intention to implement the **Exclusion Policy** which could lead to the child's name being removed from the school register. The school has a statutory responsibility to inform the local Authority of all school age children whose names have been removed from the school register.

The Local Authority has the statutory duty to ensure to that all children of compulsory school age are receiving a satisfactory full-time education and has the power to prosecute under the Education Act 1996 Section 444.

## **Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored by the Proprietors and staff of the school and will be reviewed for changes in procedures and statutory guidelines in accordance with the school's policy review schedule.