

DRUMAHOE PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Developing the potential of everyone to the full, within a caring and stimulating environment.

Principal: T. R. McMaster B.Ed.



Attendance Policy:

Drumahoe Primary School recognises 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 Drumahoe actively promote a teaching and learning ethos which encourages all pupils to attend whatever their level of ability or need.

High levels of attendance will be recognised through the presentation of certificates to pupils. In accordance with other school policies, all members of the school community should be able to thrive, feel respected, safe and secure.

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 is proved impossible to make contact with a parent or carer.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, 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 has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents/ carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

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 before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a registration mark.

It is hoped that parents/carers, school staff and statutory authorities can work closely to overcome any problems which may affect a pupil's attendance. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This will only give the impression that attendance does not matter, and may make matters worse.

Registration:

Morning registration begins at 8.55 a.m. promptly and will be taken by the school Clerical Officer (Mrs Glenn). Only pupils who have a late taxi/bus pass may arrive after this time. Pupils who are late will be recorded as such in the register. Any pupil who is late on more than two occasions in a half term will be referred to the Principal

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Absence:

Pupils must bring a written explanation of the absence from his/her parent/carer to the first registration on returning to school. This note should include:

- the pupil's full name and registration class
- the date(s) of the absence
- as full an explanation as possible for the absence
- the name of the parent / carer in block capitals along with their signature

To assist in this matter a new proforma "Absence Note" has been devised (see attached) which must be used (additional copies available from Office).

If a pupil fails to bring a note within two days of returning to school they will be reminded about the importance of bringing it in and a **text reminder** will be sent to the parental contact. Pupils, who persistently fail to bring absence notes, will be brought to the attention of the Principal who will make contact with the home.

Absence for Medical reasons:

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. If there are frequent absences for medical reasons, parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence in the form of a doctor's certificate. An "Exeat Slip" pro forma has also been devised (see attached) for such a circumstance and must be used (additional copies available from Office).

Notes should be signed by the class teacher at morning registration and presented at reception when the pupil is signing out of school for their appointment. Pupils are expected to return to school following their appointment whenever possible.

If a pupil has a medical condition that may affect attendance and punctuality parents/carers are asked to contact the school to discuss possible arrangements with their child's class teacher.

Family Holidays during Term Time:

Drumahoe Primary School strongly discourages holidays during term time due to the impact that they have on pupils' learning. Parents/carers must contact the school, prior to booking any holiday to explain the need to remove a pupil from school during term time. The contact should be in the form of a letter addressed to the Principal.

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) However, if a pupil's attendance falls below 85% in a school year, the school concerned is obliged to contact the Educational Welfare Officer.

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Sample Copies:



EXEAT SLIP

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

The above pupil has an appointment to attend:

(Please indicate: doctor/dentist/hospital/; Or other - Please state)

(Date)/...../..... at (Time).....

He/She will/will not return to school. *(Please mark as appropriate).*

Parent/Guardian (Print): _____

Signed: _____

Signature of Teacher: _____



ABSENCE NOTE

To be given to your child's teacher on the day your child returns to school following any absence.

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

Date of Absence
From _____ to _____

Reason

Parent/Guardian (Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: / /

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