



# Pupil Attendance & Lateness Policy

**REVIEW DATE – SUMMER 2026**

## **Aims**

Newtownards Model Primary School recognises that punctual and regular attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning and is, therefore, committed to maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality.

We also believe that encouraging good attendance will help children to develop self confidence, independence, self discipline and a sense of responsibility for themselves. Good attendance habits established at a young age will prepare our pupils for the future opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

In contrast, poor attendance and poor timekeeping will foster opposite attributes and skills to those listed above.

## Parental Responsibility

The duty of a parent, in relation to the education of their children, is found in the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 which states:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her efficient full time education suitable to his /her age ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

### Parents should:

- Ensure that their child/children attend school regularly.
- Ensure that their child arrives in school punctually. Our school opens its doors at 8.45am and children can proceed to their classrooms from that time. School starts at 9.00am.
- Contact the school **on the first day** of their child's absence giving reasons (suspected or confirmed) for absence and expected duration of the absence.
- **Provide the school, on the day the child returns, with a signed note giving reasons for the absence- this can be completed on the school app or by emailing the Principal.**
- Contact the school in confidence if there is a problem which is affecting attendance or punctuality.
- Communicate with the school if their child is a reluctant attender. The school will work with and support the parents. Parents should not cover up a child's reluctance or give in to pressure from their child to excuse them from attending school as this will cause long term problems.
- Not book holidays during term time
- Arrange medical/ dental appointments outside school hours.

## Pupil Responsibility

At Newtownards Model PS we encourage children to take increasing responsibility for their attendance.

### Children should:

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time punctually.
- Tell a member of staff about any problem that may prevent them from attending regularly or being punctual regularly.

## Governors Responsibility

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for pupil attendance, but on a day to day basis, this responsibility is delegated to the Principal. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's Attendance and Lateness Policy. **The Principal reports to the Governors on these matters and issues are placed on the agenda of full Board of Governors meetings during each academic year.**

## School Responsibility

### The school should:

- Make daily, accurate recordings of attendance, for morning and afternoon sessions.
- Analyse attendance trends ½ termly.
- Correspond with parents if there is a concern.
- Provide the Educational Welfare Officer with a printout **on request**, of all children who have an attendance percentage of **85%** or below.
- Complete a Referral to the E.W.O. if deemed necessary.
- Provide an annual attendance figure on each School Report in June.
- Recognise good attendance by providing 100% Attendance Certificate which can be included in a child's Record of Achievement.

## Registration

Attendance information will be recorded daily by teachers using the Attendance Module. A child who is late before registration closes at 9.15am will receive an L mark which, while officially recording the child as late, does not record them as being absent for the morning session, however children recorded late after registration closes at 9.15am will receive a U mark which officially records the child as late and records them as being absent for the first session.

Authorised Absence-where the school has been consulted and can approve the absence.

Examples include:

- Illness (incl. Hospital confinement)
- Bereavement
- Attendance at a very close relative's wedding

Unauthorised Absence- where the school can not approve the absence.

Examples include:

- Family holiday
- When a pupil is unnecessarily kept off school
- When no written reason is provided upon return to school
- Pupils who arrive for school after registration closes at 9.15am.

## Lateness

If a child regularly enters a class after 9.00am there is a threefold effect:

- The child becomes the centre of attention and is often embarrassed. This can create a self fulfilling prophecy and cause the child to resent coming to school and in turn lead to the child becoming a reluctant attender.
- If a child enters the classroom after 9.00am the teacher will often have started a lesson and this has to be interrupted so that the late child can be registered and have dinner ordered. This can cause great interruption to the teacher and add extra workload.
- The teaching and learning of all the children in the class can be adversely affected by a latecomer.

## Monitoring Attendance (Procedures for Managing Non –Attendance)

- At the end of each ½ term, all children with **85%** or below attendance will be reviewed by the Principal and long term attendance patterns analysed. (Poor attendance on a particular day of the week will be scrutinised)
- After consultation with the child's teacher, a letter will be sent to the parents advising them of our concern, if it is felt necessary
- If attendance remains a concern, a second letter will be sent, in which the particular concerns will be highlighted again and parents will be asked to contact the school to arrange a meeting at which the issue can be discussed.
- If attendance does not improve and concerns remain, then a Referral Form may be sent to the Education and Welfare Officer.
- Our target for attendance will be 95%+

## Monitoring Lateness

As with attendance, lateness is also analysed by the Principal at the end of each ½ term. After consultation with the child's teacher, a letter will be sent to the parents, if the child receives 5 or more L or U marks in one month.

As with Monitoring Attendance, a similar process is followed if there are concerns regarding punctuality.

## Holidays during Term Time

Newtownards Model Primary School strongly discourages holidays arranged during term time. Schoolwork/homework will not be provided for unauthorised holidays.