

CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Carrickfergus Grammar School policy on:	Attendance
Date implemented:	September 2016
Review date / led by:	September 2017/Principal
Consulted:	Board of Governors Pastoral Team
Allied School Policies: Pastoral Care, Promoting Positive Behaviour, Safeguarding.	

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.

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

In a caring environment we aim to: -

- Equip our pupils and staff to meet the challenges of a changing society;
- Increase academic, physical and social potential;
- Develop moral and emotional maturity;
- Nurture a sense of community.

And, in so doing, it is our common goal to: - *educate, nurture and prepare each of our pupils for the future that awaits them*

Aims

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

Overview of roles

Agent	Role
Board of Governors	Endorse Policy and Practice by following statutory guidance.
Principal	Ensure Policy and Practice in line with statutory guidance and principles of good practice.
Head of Pastoral Care	Oversee Policy and Practice
Head of Year	Monitor and address attendance in Year Group through Class Tutors
Class Tutor	Daily Registration Procedures and Absence Recording
Subject Teacher	Recording and monitoring of lesson attendance
Clerical Officer	Maintenance of attendance records
Pupil	Conformity with school's attendance procedures
Parents	Support for school's attendance procedures
Educational Welfare Officer	Support the school in instances of persistent absence.

Role of the School

The Principal at Carrickfergus Grammar School has overall responsibility for school attendance; the Head of Pastoral Care should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/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 meetings on a regular basis.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circulars 2013/13 and 2015/2.

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

Carrickfergus Grammar School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. (Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. If 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 **08.45am for registration** and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on your child's attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the Class Tutor or Head of Year to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Carrickfergus Grammar School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school an explanation of your absence from a parent/guardian must be provided within two weeks of you returning to school. Pupils must attend morning registration punctually.

Absence Procedures

- Daily attendance, absence and punctuality are monitored by Class Tutor during morning registration;
- Attendance at every teaching period is recorded on Lesson Monitor;
- Parents are contacted by text on the first day of absence through the 'Truancy Calls' system to inform them that their child's absence from school has been registered and to ask for a reason for absence;
- The text is sent at Break Time to allow for morning medical appointments and the return of pupils from our partner schools in the Carrickfergus Learning Community (CLC);
- Parents can reply by text, this message is stored and serves as an absence note, or they can send in a written reason for absence. A phone call from parents will also serve as an absence note;
- Clerical Officer notes the absence codes onto the Schools Information management System (SIMS) on return of text messages;
- Absence notes for unexplained absences are requested by Class Tutors at morning registration as a matter of routine, and must be submitted within 7 calendar days;
- Class Tutors will note reason for absence onto SIMS on the day an absence note is received;
- Pupils who do not submit a parental absence note within this time are referred to Head of Year and clerical officer in the first instance;
- Clerical Officer generates a letter to parents from SIMS which is given to the pupil to bring home for parents' information;
- If a note is not received from parents within three days a reminder letter generated by SIMS is posted to parents;
- If a note is not received within three days the parent is contacted directly by Head of Year;
- Clerical officer carries out random checks on absentees by impromptu telephone calls to parents;

- On a monthly basis Heads of Year review the attendance and punctuality of their Year Group and report to Vice Principal for Pastoral Care;
- Where a pupil's attendance is giving cause for concern, either through genuine illness or otherwise, parent is invited to the school for interview with Head of Year and/or Head of Pastoral Care to address the issue and formalise support;
- Those pupils whose attendance is less than 85% are reviewed by Head of Pastoral Care and Head of Year and are referred to Educational Welfare except in the case of exceptional circumstances.
- Pupils who are late during registration 3 times in one month are sanctioned with a lunchtime detention;
- Pupils who are late after registration 3 times in one month are sanctioned with a formal detention;
- If the above is repeated the pupil will be interviewed by Head of Year and/or Head of Pastoral Care and parents will be contacted by telephone;
- Pupils are rewarded for strong attendance through the school Merits system as per the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Class attendance is displayed on the Class Noticeboard. Those pupils with persistently poor attendance are removed from these statistics in the interests of fairness;
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are reported to parents biannually through the Winter and Summer reports;
- Expected standards of attendance are communicated to parents through Induction materials, mail-shots and on reports as above. This takes the form of the *School Attendance Matters* brochure issued annually by the Department of Education. They are communicated to pupils through morning registration and assemblies on a regular basis.

Family holidays during Term Time

Carrickfergus Grammar School 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. This is communicated to parents through Induction materials, mail-shots and school reports, as well as directly by Heads of Year.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance: See Procedures above

Education Welfare Service

Education and Library Boards through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education

Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Signature – Mr K Mulvenna: Principal

Signature – Mr M Smith: Chair of Board of Governors