



BALLYORAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pupil Attendance Policy

Reviewed February 2024

Statement of Principle

All members of the school community of Ballyoran Primary School are fully committed to the principle that good attendance is an important part of school life. It is further acknowledged that it is the duty of the school to promote an environment in which attendance is nurtured and in which positive steps are taken to promote the emotional and physical well-being of every pupil in its care. Furthermore, it is widely accepted that there is a strong link between attendance and attainment and progress in school.

Aims and Objectives

Ballyoran Primary School aims to ensure that every child will want to attend school. This will be achieved by creating a warm, welcoming and secure atmosphere where the pupils feel valued, and a stimulating and accessible curriculum is delivered in a physically clean, bright and attractive environment.

Mission Statement

Excellence – Creativity - Integrity

Ballyoran Primary School aims to provide a high quality education in a happy and caring working environment, where the potential of each individual can be realised.

We wish to promote life-long learning by:

- providing opportunities for personal development;
- promoting such values as will make each individual a caring and responsible citizen;
and
- encouraging individuals to develop to their full potential, while promoting moral values and respect for one another.

All members of staff will work towards promoting these values and ensuring a child-centred approach in which caring is a shared responsibility of all staff.

Management of Attendance

Responsibilities of Parents

'To ensure that children have an efficient education suited to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs.'

Education and Libraries Order 1986

Parents are asked to phone or email the school on the first day of absence and inform the school of the reason for absence and expected length of absence. However, it is essential that they confirm this with another call, email or written note when their child returns to school. Blank templates are distributed to all parents at the beginning of each academic year and are also available on the school website or from the office on request.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has the ultimate responsibility for school attendance, but this is delegated to the Principal on a day-to-day basis. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's Attendance Policy and practice.

- The Board of Governors is fully aware of the school's Attendance Policy and has approved and adopted it
- The Principal reports to the Board of Governors on pupil attendance at every meeting

Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal

Overall responsibility for attendance on a day-to-day basis lies with the Principal. The Principal has the role, along with the Board of Governors for determining resources and staffing to deal with attendance issues, ensuring the Board of Governors are informed about attendance issues, and ensuring statistical information is provided as required by Government.

- Carry out Monthly Attendance Audits
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Service about individual pupils
- Ensuring parents of pupils who are absent from school without explanation are phoned
- Talking to parents about their child's attendance, if necessary
- Organise training for staff about attendance issues
- Collate and report attendance information to relevant agencies
- Issue attendance letters to parents
- Make referrals to the EA Education Welfare Service

Roles and Responsibilities of Class Teacher

Effective practice in relation to managing individual pupil attendance depends on the class teacher. In Ballyoran Primary School the class teacher is responsible for:

- Developing trusting relationships with all pupils
- Marking the roll on SIMs daily
- Monitoring attendance, e.g. collecting absence notes and identifying pupils with irregular attendance patterns
- Promoting good attendance through the curriculum
- Talking to pupils with irregular attendance
- Discussing attendance at the formal Parent/Teacher Meetings

Roles and Responsibilities of Office Staff

Office staff have an important role to play in monitoring attendance in our school. To achieve this they will undertake the following roles:

- Operating the SIMS Attendance system
- Taking and logging phone messages/emails from parents when pupils are absent from school
- Collating registration data
- Marking in pupils who arrive late after Registration closes
- Printing Attendance Reports for monthly Audits
- Following up pupil absence note if not produced
- Contacting parents when they fail to contact school or send absence notes or a result of Attendance Audits

Roles and Responsibilities of Education Welfare Service

The school works closely with the Education Welfare Service and has been assigned an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

- To visit the school regularly and carry out Attendance Audits with the Principal
- To advise on action necessary when attendance falls below an acceptable level
- To receive referrals of pupils where attendance is a problem and follow these up
- To keep the Principal informed of all progress with regard to referrals

The Recording of Attendance

The Department of Education has issued guidelines about categorising absence as authorised or unauthorised. As a result, the codes will be used to record absence:

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ∧ Present | L Late (before reg. closed) | Y Exceptional Closure |
| A Artistic Endeavour | M Medical/Dental Appointments | # Holiday for all |
| B Bereavement | N No reason yet provided for absence | ! No attendance required |
| C Suspended | O Other Exceptional Circumstances | 2 Home/Hospital Tuition (ELB) |
| D No reason provided for absence | P Approved Sporting Activity | 3 Elective Home Education |
| F Family Holiday (agreed) | R Religious Observance | 4 Pupil Referral Unit |
| G Family Holiday (Not agreed) | U Late (after reg. closed) | 5 Another mainstream School |
| H Other Absence | V Educational visit | 8 Intensive support learning unit |
| I Illness (not medical/dental etc. appointments) | W Work Experience | 9 CAMHS |
| J Extended Leave with consent | X Only staff should attend | |

To ensure the school's Attendance Policy operates in an appropriate manner, the Board of Governors has delegated authority to Principal, who has the authority to decide whether an absence should be classified as authorised/unauthorised.

Authorised Absences

In normal circumstances, the following types of absence will be classified as authorised:

- Illness
- Hospital/dental appointments (when prior notice is given)
- Family bereavement
- Representing the school/county/country at an approved event
- Taking music/ballet/drama examinations
- Religious holidays (when prior notification of absence is given)

In special circumstances, parents may apply for a leave of absence for their child. The authorisation of the absence is at the Principal's discretion and must be requested in writing, prior to the absence. In exceptional circumstances, when a written request is impractical, parents should contact the Principal, in person, to discuss the matter in confidence.

Unauthorised Absence

In normal circumstances the following types of absence will be classified as unauthorised:

- Birthday
- On a shopping trip with parents
- Staying at home with ill parent or sibling
- Term time holiday

Lateness

In Ballyoran Primary School lateness is strongly discouraged as it causes disruption and negatively impacts on both the education of the pupil who is late and the rest of the class. Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.55am. The teacher will mark the class register promptly. If a pupil arrives after the 9am bell they are marked as Late. If they arrive after registration has closed, the pupil must go directly to the office, where the secretary will mark him/her 'L' on the register, unless a valid reason is provided. (e.g. SEN Taxi)

When pupils are late on a regular basis a letter is sent out by teachers informing parents of this and asking for improvement. If lateness continues after this, the Principal will contact parents. Punctuality will also be discussed at formal Parent/Teacher Meetings.

Attendance Audits (See Appendix 3)

The Principal carries out an Attendance Audit monthly and liaises with the Education Welfare Service regularly regarding these audits. During this Audit, a Report showing all pupils whose attendance falls below 85% is examined. Where there are not genuine explained reasons for absence, the following action is taken.

- 1) Phone Call to parent from School Secretary
- 2) Attendance Letter of Concern 1 signed by Principal issued (Appendix 1)
- 3) Attendance Letter of Concern 2 signed by Principal issues (Appendix 2)
- 4) Call/Meeting between Parent and Principal
- 5) Referral to Education Welfare Service (EWS)

Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

Ballyoran Primary School believes that good attendance and punctuality are to be encouraged at every opportunity. Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend regularly and are punctual. However, the school currently has a whole school reward/award system to encourage regular attendance and punctuality.

- Monthly Class Attendance Competition
- Attendance display Board in Assembly Hall Celebrating Good Attendance
- Full attendance awards are presented on a monthly basis
- Full attendance for the full year is also recognised at the School's Annual Prize Day
- Full attendance for a pupil's entire primary education is recognised at the School's Annual Prize Day with a monetary reward of £100

Monitoring and Review

The school works in partnership with the school's Education Welfare Officer to audit current practices and develop a policy which ensures consistency. The policy will be reviewed when necessary to determine the success or otherwise of the attendance strategies employed within the school.

Letter 1

Dear Parent/ Guardian

Attendance Letter of Concern 1

We have recently analysed the Register and have noted that your child's attendance has dropped to _____% which means that he/she has missed ____ days of school.

While 100% attendance is clearly the ideal, in many cases legitimate illnesses or other factors can prevent it, but it is vitally important that you inform us of the reason for absence and then your child's Attendance Record can be amended.

In the case of your child, a significant number of absences are recorded as 'No Reason' so if there was a legitimate reason for the absences, please let the secretary know as soon as possible so that this can be recorded.

When attendance falls below a certain level, we become concerned, as our aim is to help your child reach his/her full potential. This is difficult to achieve if a lot of days are missed from school.

If you feel that you wish to discuss the situation, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Richard Woolsey
Principal

Letter 2

Dear Parent/Guardian

Attendance Letter of Concern 2

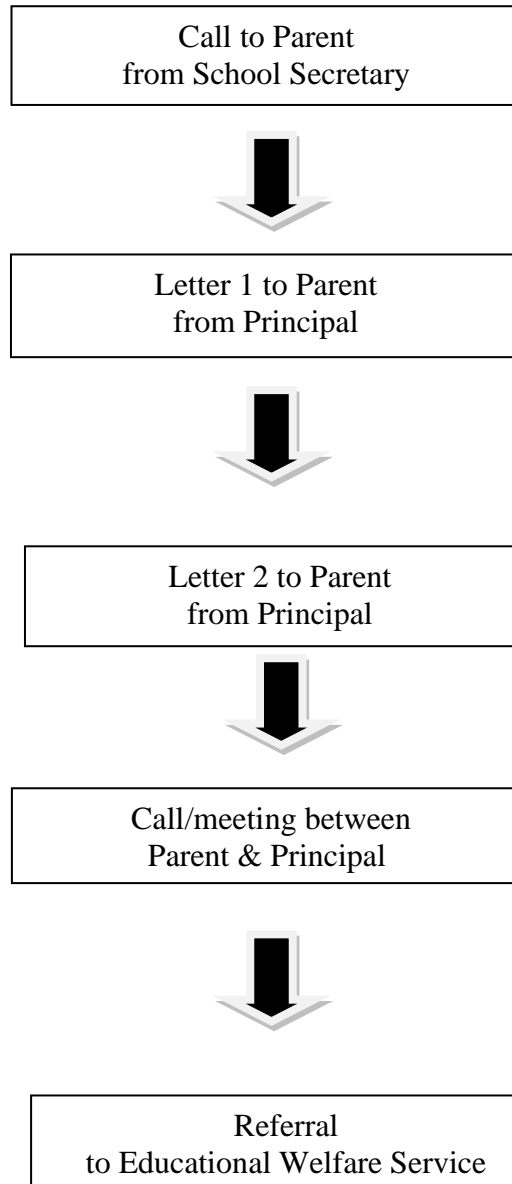
Despite having written to you on _____, _____ 's attendance has continued to deteriorate.

We must advise you that unless _____ 's attendance improves; the matter will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service.

Yours sincerely

Richard Woolsey
Principal

**Flow Chart Showing Action by School as a result of
Monthly Attendance Audits**



Absence Forms Provided to Parents

✂-----

Teacher: _____

Pupil: _____

Date of Absence: _____

Reason for absence _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Date: _____

Registration Certificate

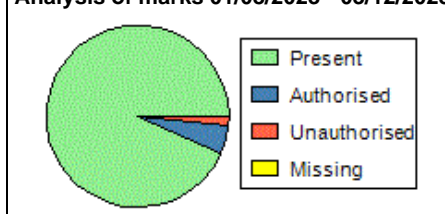
A record of each child's attendance is maintained on the school's computer system. The example below indicates how this record is maintained.

Attendance marks (Attendance Year 2023/2024)

View: Session Week View

| Week Beginning | Mon | | Tue | | Wed | | Thu | | Fri | |
|-------------------|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|
| | AM | PM | AM | PM | AM | PM | AM | PM | AM | PM |
| 01-08-2023 | | | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 07-08-2023 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 14-08-2023 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 21-08-2023 | # | # | # | # | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| 28-08-2023 | # | # | X | X | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 04-09-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | D | D |
| 11-09-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 18-09-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 25-09-2023 | X | X | X | X | I | I | / | \ | / | \ |
| 02-10-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 09-10-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 16-10-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 23-10-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 30-10-2023 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 06-11-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 13-11-2023 | I | I | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 20-11-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | M | M |
| 27-11-2023 | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ | / | \ |
| 04-12-2023 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11-12-2023 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 18-12-2023 | - | - | - | - | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 25-12-2023 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 01-01-2024 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 08-01-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 15-01-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 22-01-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 29-01-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 05-02-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 12-02-2024 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 19-02-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 26-02-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 04-03-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 11-03-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 18-03-2024 | # | # | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 25-03-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | # | # | # | # |
| 01-04-2024 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 08-04-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 15-04-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 22-04-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 29-04-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 06-05-2024 | # | # | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 13-05-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 20-05-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 27-05-2024 | # | # | X | X | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 03-06-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 10-06-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 17-06-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 24-06-2024 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| 01-07-2024 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 08-07-2024 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 15-07-2024 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 22-07-2024 | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # | # |
| 29-07-2024 | # | # | # | # | | | | | | |

Analysis of marks 01/08/2023 - 03/12/2023



| Description | Sessions | % |
|-------------------------------|----------|------|
| Present | 114 | 93.4 |
| Authorised Absence | 6 | 4.9 |
| Unauthorised Absence | 2 | 1.6 |
| Possible Attendances | 122 | 0.0 |
| Including | 0 | 0.0 |
| Approved Educational Activity | 0 | 0.0 |
| Late before reg closed | 0 | 0.0 |
| Late after reg closed | 0 | 0.0 |
| Unexplained Absence | 0 | 0.0 |

Code totals 01/08/2023 - 03/12/2023

| Code | Description | Sessions | % |
|------|---|----------|------|
| / | Present (AM) | 57 | 46.7 |
| \ | Present (PM) | 57 | 46.7 |
| D | Did not provide a reason for absence | 2 | 1.6 |
| I | Illness(not medical/dental etc. appointments) | 4 | 3.3 |
| M | Medical/Dental Appointments | 2 | 1.6 |

Attendance by session 01/08/2023 - 03/12/2023

| | AM % | PM % |
|-----------|-------|-------|
| All | 93.4 | 93.4 |
| Monday | 90.9 | 90.9 |
| Tuesday | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Wednesday | 92.3 | 92.3 |
| Thursday | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Friday | 84.6 | 84.6 |
| Saturday | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Sunday | 0.0 | 0.0 |