



Attendance Policy

Policy adopted by Board of Governors: August 2018

Policy review date: August 2020

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 full potential. It also helps to prepare children for the reality of adult working life.

Desertmartin Primary School strives to promote an ethos and culture which encourages excellent attendance and where each pupil will feel valued, secure and happy.

Aims

The Aims of this policy are to:

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

Role of the School

The principal of Desertmartin Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers/designated staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to 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, through liaison with the school secretary who maintains an "Absence Book" to track issuing & return of absence forms.

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 Circular 2015/02 which can be found at: <http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm> (This does provide for specific recording of things like doctors/ hospital appointments. However, unless the situation is an emergency, such appointments should take place **outside** school hours.) The absence form pro-forma is included at the end of this document.

Desertmartin Primary 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).

If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

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**, whether by phone, messaging or email. This should be confirmed by completion of an absence form when the pupil returns to school. If the 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 no later than 9am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children are punctual. Lateness is recorded and pupils **do** miss vital activities, right from the beginning of the school day.

Should something unexpected prevent children's punctual arrival at school, please contact the school as soon as possible to let us know your child is on their way (dinners need to be ordered by **9.15am** at the latest)

If a child appears reluctant to attend school, parents are asked to discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both the parent and child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Desertmartin School is aware they have a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a completed absence form signed by your parent/guardian must be provided when you return.

Absence Procedures

If a child is late to school (after 9am), this may be noted as a 'Late' on that morning's register. If a child will be absent from school for any period of the school day parents must provide a written note to the principal explaining the reason for the absence.

If a child is off school for any period of time, for any reason, an absence form must be completed and returned to school without delay. These forms are usually issued on the child's first day back at school after absence. On the first day of absence a phone call/message/email to notify us that a child will be absent would also be appreciated.

Absence due to illness

Desertmartin Primary School follows the guidance set out by the Public Health Agency on infection control in schools and other childcare settings. Parents are expected to follow the guidance below which states the period of time a child should be absent from school for when suffering from certain illnesses. Parents are also asked to contact school if his / her child is suffering from any of the illnesses below.

Illness Period of time child should be kept off school

Chickenpox: 5 days from onset of rash

German Measles: 6 days from onset of rash

Measles: 4 days from onset of rash

Impetigo: Until lesions are crusted and healed or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment

Scarlet Fever: 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment

Diarrhoea and / or vomiting: 48 hours after last episode of diarrhoea and / or vomiting

Flu: Until recovered

Mumps: 5 days from onset of swelling

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Desertmartin Primary School firmly believes in the importance of regular school attendance for learning and contentment at school, therefore attendance is closely monitored by the school secretary and principal.

Non-Attendance is managed in the following ways:

If an absence form has not been provided following a child's return, the school secretary will send home a letter requesting such.

The secretary and / or class teacher(s) will notify the principal if there are any concerns with regards to attendance during the school year.

The principal will check attendance on a termly basis and write to the parents of any child whose attendance has fallen below 90% to remind them of the importance of regular attendance and to inform them of her duty to report attendance of under 85% to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer). If the child's attendance has improved by the end of the following term the principal will write to the parents and child to recognise and praise the improvement in attendance.

The principal will report all incidents of attendance below 85% to the EWO and work in conjunction with him/her, the child and the child's parents to en-sure the child's attendance improves.

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.

Rewarding good attendance

Desertmartin Primary School firmly believes in recognising and rewarding all achievements, and attendance is no exception. All children who achieve a year's full attendance receive a school certificate in a celebration assembly at the end of the year.

