

FRIENDS' SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY

School promotes good attendance in the context of the following factors:

- a) an ethos in School which encourages respect for learning, fosters a sense of personal responsibility and promotes high standards
- b) a curriculum that is relevant to pupils and is effectively delivered
- c) parents' awareness of school procedures; especially the need to provide advance notification of foreseen absence and a written explanation after an absence or period of absence
- d) pupils' awareness of, and compliance with, registration procedures
- e) the implementation of appropriate registration, monitoring and follow-up procedures by pastoral staff
- f) the involvement of other agencies when appropriate e.g. Education Welfare Service and medical professionals

Aims:

The Attendance Policy seeks to:

1. promote regular and punctual pupil attendance at School
2. promote and value high standards
3. promote self responsibility in pupils
4. outline the responsibilities of pupils, staff and parents with regard to attendance, absence and lateness.
5. outline the procedures in place to promote good attendance and punctuality
6. recognise and reward good attendance by pupils.

Rationale:

Friends' School is committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their full academic potential and are prepared for the world of work beyond School. We therefore acknowledge the correlation between good attendance and high academic achievement, progress and involvement in school life, leading to pupils taking responsibility for their learning, feeling part of the school community and gaining in confidence and self-esteem. The school therefore places great importance on attendance and punctuality and acknowledges that good attendance and punctuality is an outcome of the partnership between School, parents and pupils.

However, we recognise that full attendance is not always possible and that absence may be the result of circumstances beyond the control of the pupil such as illness, bereavement or other family circumstances. It is also recognised that underachievement may be the result of a number of inter-related factors of which poor attendance is only one.

We offer support to all pupils with particular medical or pastoral circumstances which prevent attendance at School and promote regular communication with parents and other involved external agencies, working to ensure a return to School that is appropriate for the pupil concerned.

It is however expected that pupils and their parents/guardians will attempt to keep non attendance to a minimum.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of all pupils:

Pupils are encouraged to:

1. Take personal responsibility for maximum attendance at school during term time and for punctuality in the mornings for Registration and for classes throughout the day.
2. Follow the school procedures (outlined below) when late for School, requesting an Exeat during the school day, planning an absence or returning to School following a period of absence.
3. Communicate with their Collect Teacher and Year Teacher to explain unforeseen absence.

The responsibilities of all staff:

All members of staff are encouraged to promote good attendance at School and in classes, both in pastoral and teaching roles:

1. Ensure that all pupils are clear about the procedures regarding absence and punctuality.
2. Apply the school procedures outlined below in a fair and consistent manner.
3. Monitor pupil attendance and punctuality regularly according to agreed procedures

A Senior Teacher has responsibility for pupil attendance, liaising with the Vice Principal with overall responsibility for pastoral care.

The Year Teachers monitor absence and lateness on a weekly basis, in conjunction with the Collect Teacher

Subject teachers are aware of the importance of careful record-keeping regarding attendance using Lesson Monitor for each lesson throughout the school day.

The responsibilities of parents/guardians:

We expect parents to:

- i. Make every effort, where possible, to ensure that their child attends school and is punctual.
- ii. Familiarise themselves with the school procedures regarding absence and punctuality.
- iii. Communicate with the school re: pastoral issues which may impact on their child's attendance or punctuality.
- iv. Support the school when sanctions are to be imposed due to truancy, persistent lateness or failure to bring absence notes on a repeated basis.

Procedures

Pupils

Collect and Registration

- Pupils should be in Collect and seated by 8 50 am with a bell rung at 8.45am to remind pupils to move to Collect. A late mark will be recorded for any pupil who arrives in Collect after 8 50 am without an Absence slip.
- Pupils late on more than one morning a week will be referred to their Year Teacher and placed in Lunch-time Detention as a sanction. Weekly late information will be collated by Year Teachers each Friday for review of past week's punctuality (Monday for Year 13).
- Pupils arriving in School between 8 50 am and 9 00 am should report to their Collect Room as usual where a Late mark will be recorded by the Collect Teacher.
- Pupils arriving in School on Monday-Thursday between 9 00 am and 9 15 am should report to the Late Room/Year 13 Common Room where a late mark will be recorded by the Prefect on duty. Pupils should remain there until the bell at 9 15 am and proceed directly to their first class. On Friday mornings pupils, other than those in Year 13, should go straight to Collect Room as there will be extended collect. Year 13 pupils have Extended Collect on Monday and Year Assembly on Friday.
- Pupils arriving in School after 9 15 am should report to General Office on arrival in School to be marked Present for that day, even if prior notice of the late arrival has been given. Likewise, pupils leaving School during the day for an appointment must sign in and out at the General Office.

Returning after Absence

- In the case of an unplanned absence (normally due to illness), parents/guardians should notify School if a pupil is likely to be absent for **3 days or longer** by contacting the General office.
- On the first day back after absence, pupils should submit to their Collect Teacher a Reason for Absence Note, signed by their parent/guardian, detailing the reason why they have been absent from School. Failure to do so will result in a sanction being applied by the Year Teacher.

Pupil exeat during the school day

- If an appointment is known in advance pupils should present a letter, signed by their parent/guardian, before Assembly, to the Principal's Secretary in the box outside her Office, asking for absence from School.
- No pupil is permitted to leave School during the school day without informing a Vice Principal or School Nurse. If pupils become ill during the day, they should report to the Surgery where contact with home if the pupil is too unwell to remain in School.

Absence from school for one day or longer

- In the case of a planned absence of one day or longer, pupils should present a letter, for the attention of the Principal and signed by their parent/guardian, at least one week in advance, to the Principal's Secretary requesting approval for absence from school.
- The nature of the absence will determine whether or not the absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. A list of what constitutes authorised/unauthorised absences can be obtained from the school.

Truancy from school will merit a sanction. The level of sanction will be determined by the seriousness and extent of the absence from school. In the case where there is an underlying pastoral issue the school will make every effort to support the pupil. All cases of truancy are reported to the Education Authority (South Eastern Region) Education and Welfare Office based in Lisburn.

Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

The Year Teachers will monitor absence and lateness on a weekly basis. This will be done in conjunction with the Collect Teacher.

- i. If a pattern of absence is detected or if the attendance rate falls below 90%, except where the absence is clearly the result of illness, a member of the Year Teacher will interview the student to establish the reason(s) for the absences.
- ii. If a pattern of absence continues or the attendance rate falls below 85%, a letter will be sent home informing the parent/guardian of the situation regarding attendance. If attendance does not improve, the Year Teacher may conduct an interview with the parent/guardian to discuss attendance issues.
- iii. In the highly unlikely situation where (i) or (ii) above do not properly address the situation a parental interview with the Vice Principal or Principal may take place.

Educational Welfare

School works with the Education Authority (South Eastern Region) Education and Welfare Officer based in Lisburn, and all pupil attendance that falls below 85% is reported.

Educational Maintenance Allowance

Those Sixth Form students entitled to receive Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) should be aware that high levels of attendance and punctuality are essential if they are to qualify for the full payments. A separate policy regarding EMA has been drawn up.

Appendix 1

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Pupil Responsibilities

ONLY ILLNESS OR AN EMERGENCY CONSTITUTE AN ACCEPTABLE REASON FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

School supports pupils who are absent from School for genuine reasons and asks that you make contact with us in advance or in particular circumstances.

School's attendance for last year averaged at 97%.

- Your parent should notify School if you are absent for 3 days or longer
- On FIRST DAY BACK AFTER ABSENCE you should submit to your Collect Teacher a Reason for Absence Note, signed by your parent, detailing why you have been absent from School. Failure to do so will result in a sanction being applied
- If an appointment is known IN ADVANCE you should present a letter, signed by your parent, before Assembly, to Mr Moore's Secretary in the Box outside her Office, asking for absence from School
- You should be in Collect and seated by 8 50 am. The bell at 8 45 am will allow you to walk to your Collect Room. A LATE mark will be recorded for any pupil who arrives in Collect AFTER 8 50 am without an Absence slip
- On your SECOND morning Late you will be referred to your Year Teacher and placed in Lunch-time Detention as a sanction – WEEKLY late information will be sent to your Year and Collect Teachers each Monday morning for review of past week's punctuality
- If you arrive in School between 8 45 am and 9 00 am you should report to your Collect Room as usual where a Late mark will be recorded by your Collect Teacher
- If you arrive in School on Monday-Thursday between 9 00 am and 9 15 am you should report to the Late Room/Year 13 Common Room where a Late mark will be recorded by Prefect on Duty. You should remain there until the bell at 9 15 am and proceed directly to your first class. On Friday mornings you should go straight to Collect Room
- If you arrive in School AFTER 9 15 am you must report to Front Office on arrival in School to be marked Present for that day. This applies even if you have been given prior authorization to attend a morning medical appointment. YOU MUST LET OFFICE STAFF KNOW THAT YOU ARE BACK IN SCHOOL!
- If you have a MORNING medical appointment you must sign in at the General Office on your return – otherwise you will be marked Absent
- No pupil is permitted to leave School during the school day without informing a Vice Principal or School Nurse. If you are ill during the day, you should report to the Surgery where contact with home will be made in the event of you needing to leave School
- School works with the South Eastern Board's Education and Welfare Officer based in Lisburn and all attendance that falls below 90% is reported. All cases of truancy are also reported.

Collect Teacher Responsibilities

- Promote good attendance and punctuality among pupils in Collect
- Instruct pupils re their responsibilities re good attendance and punctuality
- Be in Collect room to take roll at 8 50 am.
- Ensure that ALL pupils are seated in Collect room when roll is being called.
- Ensure that all pupils are quiet in Collect room when roll is being called.
- Call the roll to ensure accurate marking of Register.

- ONLY mark pupils present who attend Collect in person.
- Mark any pupil **Late** who arrives in Collect room **after 8 50 am**
- Report pupil(s) to Front Office on third day of absence, using Pupil Absence sheet, to ensure that contact with parents is made.
- Collect, collate and retain pupil Absence Return notes in folder provided and stored in Collect room
- Complete weekly Pupil Absence sheets and return to Front Office – Absence sheets will be placed in folders on Friday mornings and will remain there until the next Thursday
- Refer pupils to their Year Teacher for Lunchtime Detention on third day after return if no Absence note has been produced
- Follow up Afternoon Registration issues and liaise with Year Teacher if necessary.
- Liaise regularly with Year Teacher(s) re: all attendance and punctuality concerns

Year Teacher Responsibilities

- Monitor regularly pupil attendance and punctuality
- Liaise regularly with Head of School/Vice Principal Pastoral re pupil attendance and punctuality
- Monitor procedures carried out re attendance and punctuality by Collect Teachers
- Review WEEKLY Absence Return notes with Collect Teachers
- Sanction pupils re failure to submit Absence Return notes after 3 days
- Review WEEKLY pupil Lates
- Sanction pupils on 2nd day Late
- Review WEEKLY 3 day absences/slips to FrontOffice/communication FROM parents and subsequent necessary communication TO parents
- Monitor pupil attendance figures MONTHLY/HALF-TERMLY/TERMLY to identify improvement/deterioration/patterns
- Liaise with parents re concerns in pupil attendance via telephone/letter
- Liaise with parents re concerns in pupil Attendance via interview
- Refer pupils to Head of School re continuing/acute concerns in pupil attendance
- Liaise in conjunction with Head of School/Vice Principal Pastoral with EWO re ongoing concerns re pupil attendance
- Report to parents in formal Reports re attendance and punctuality
- Keep records of all telephone calls/copies of letters sent to parents re attendance/punctuality issues
- Keep records of all truancy incidents
- Promote good attendance and punctuality in your year group
- Instruct pupils re their responsibilities re promoting good attendance
- In the event of prolonged absence maintain regular parental contact with School
- Monitor punctuality of Collect Teachers

Office Responsibilities

Daily

- i. Check Folder for emergency attendance sheets. Input manually if required.
- ii. Manually record lateness/Mentor duty/illness or other codes etc (from diary)
- iii. Check conflicting marks and amend if required.
- iv. Email staff if marks and collect folders are missing

- v. Print daily absence sheets and distribute (Office, Staffroom notice board & Fire Drill folders)
- vi. After PM registration, absences are noted and checked against the diary for pupils going out to appointments, those that have been sent home during the school day, and those pupils missing class for planned trips and sports events. The PM registration report is printed daily and those missing marks highlighted on report and placed in collect folders for checking by collect teacher next day.
- vii. Ensure folders have blank emergency attendance sheets/monitoring of absence sheets, if required.

Weekly

- i. Read weekly absence sheets for Year 13/14 (Wednesday morning) for EMA report and return to folder until Thursday morning.
- ii. Print weekly EMA report (previous week) for R McKinley, after absence reports have been read and checked (Wednesday Morning).
- iii. Remove and read weekly absence sheets from Collect Folders (Thurs morning) and store in box below desk. Conflicting absence marks are checked.
- iv. Print Pupil Absence Sheets (by Registration Group) for collect folders on Thurs afternoon (ensure all PM missing marks have been updated beforehand and check marks are updated.)
- v. Print weekly late reports/rollover lates by Year Group and email to Year Teachers (each Fri after attendance has been processed). Year teachers can access and run reports using SIMs.

Monthly

- i. Read absence sheets and print unexplained absence lists for Year Teachers of pupils that have failed to supply a note for absence during that month.
- ii. Print absence report for all missing marks/unexplained absences for the end of the month.
- iii. Email monthly percentage attendance figures (by Year Group) and email each Year Teacher and also percentage attendance from Sept – present month.
- iv. Email monthly lates for Year Teachers.
- v. Print Monthly Return and keep copy in drawer (only when all missing marks/unexplained absences have been accounted for).
- vi. Print Official Registers by Reg (file in A4 folder) once all marks have been accounted for.

Appendix 2

EMA GUIDANCE ON ATTENDANCE

EMA Guidance for Schools and FE Colleges (2008/09) states;

- 1 – “Absences are **unauthorised** unless proven otherwise.”
- 2 – “As a general guideline if the absence is authorised for school / college reasons then it would be an unauthorised absence for the EMA scheme.”
- 3 – “EMA should correspond with your existing school / college rules for attendance / behaviour.”

Authorised Absences

- Medical appointments
- Bereavement
- Illness
- Participation in school trips
- Attendance at university interviews
- Other absences will be dealt with on their individual merits

The guidance offers advice on factors to be considered by School when deciding to authorise absences:

1. Was the absence reasonable?
2. Was it backed up with evidence?
3. Has the student had numerous absences prior to this one?
4. Has the student used the same excuse before?

Unauthorised Absences

The following WILL NOT be authorised for the purposes of EMA:

- Illness (of more than 3 days in one week)
- Visits to Universities (not arranged by school)
- Part – time employment
- Driving lessons, not organised by school
- Holidays taken in term time
- Unsanctioned study leave

Appendix 3

Lesson Monitor

Procedures for Recording Attendance and Lateness

All staff are required to register classes using Lesson Monitor for every timetabled class and classes that they have been assigned to for cover. Lesson Monitor provides essential information for Subject Teachers, Heads of Department and Heads of Year in monitoring attendance and punctuality. The School acknowledges the correlation between good attendance and academic achievement, as well as pupil self-esteem. Failure to complete Lesson Monitor leads to an incomplete picture of attendance and punctuality and results in unnecessary workload for office staff, Collect and Year Teachers.

Teachers should double click on the current class on their SIMs timeline (timetabled or cover class).

All pupils should be marked present or absent from class using the recognised codes. If the pupil is present the following mark is used: / for AM attendance and \ for PM attendance.

There are various reasons for pupil absence. Normally absence is marked with the letter **N**, however if the reason is known codes may be selected and recorded against the pupil's name. Codes can be displayed by right clicking on the box for the particular pupil and selecting display codes. (This will also allow you to enter minutes late for class or other additional comments - see notes below)

A list of codes will appear and the most suitable is recorded. A pupil who is e.g. ill or on an approved school visit may already have a code against their name if it has been recorded in the morning by office staff. This will appear on the register when you open it for that lesson.

If a pupil is late they should be registered with an **L** and the minutes late entered against their name. This is done by right clicking on the box for the particular pupil and selecting enter minutes late. You are prompted to give a number against the pupil name.

Once all pupils have been registered for class, the results must be saved. If however the teacher has to alter the register, they should use the overwrite facility and alter accordingly. This is done by left - clicking on the padlock in the tool bar and it will change to overwrite, this allows changes to be made. Once the changes are made you re - click on the overwrite padlock and this will preserve it.

Additional information may be recorded against a pupil's name for example failure to complete set home work, forgetting equipment for class or unacceptable behaviour. This is saved against the pupil's name for that lesson and can be used to give an overview for unacceptable behaviour for the subject teacher, Head of Department and Year Teacher.