

GILNAHIRK PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction/Policy Rationale

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.

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

Mission Statement.

At Gilnahirk Primary School, we seek to provide a happy and caring learning environment for each child. We hope that by helping them realise their potential, celebrating their achievements, respecting their differences and encouraging mutual respect, we will foster self-esteem and provide a solid foundation for their futures.

Aims of this policy

1. To improve and/or maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Gilnahirk Primary 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 the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

- The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance. Teachers and other staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.
- The Board of Governors provides support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.
- Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link:

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools

- Gilnahirk Primary School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Guardian

- Parents/guardians have a legal duty¹ to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.
1 Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986
- If a child is registered in school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.
- It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note 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 between 8.40am and 8.50am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.
- If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Gilnahirk Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If a child has been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the teacher when you return.

Family holidays during Term Time

Gilnahirk Primary 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. **Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.**

Absence procedures and procedures for managing Non-attendance

Our school operates the SIMS attendance register with OMR sheets completed on a daily basis by teaching or support staff. These records are submitted on a weekly basis for electronic scanning to provide easy access for the monitoring of all pupils.

When a pupil is absent the relevant code is recorded on the register. If no communication or note is received ***within 3 days*** the teacher will record code D indicating no reason was provided for the absence.

If a pupil is late for school, then code U will be applied indicating registration had closed.

Staff will monitor attendance in their class on a weekly basis and report concerns to the Principal or member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The School Secretary will ensure that regular printouts of school attendance figures for pupils with 85% or below are available for the Principal to identify any concerns.

If concerns are verified by the relevant class teacher the following actions will be taken:

1. Reminder to pupil re: attendance concerns ***if no improvement***
2. Contact with parents to discuss reasons – teacher or SMT ***if no improvement***
3. Letter to parents advising of pupil's current level of attendance ***if no improvement***
4. Meeting arranged to discuss attendance – Principal ***if no improvement***
5. Referral to Education Welfare Office – usually when attendance drops below 85%.

The Education Welfare Officer will work with the family to improve attendance and punctuality.

Throughout this process the school will closely monitor attendance and punctuality. If there is an immediate improvement, then the case will not be progressed but attendance will continue to be checked.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.