

CREAVERY PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance Policy

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. Creavery Primary School recognises that punctual and regular attendance alongside high standards of behaviour is an essential pre-requisite to effective learning and is, therefore, committed to maintaining high levels of attendance, punctuality and positive behaviour. To this end, we in Creavery P.S. actively promote a teaching and learning ethos which encourages all pupils to attend and attend punctually whatever their level of ability or need.

Creavery P.S. will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Creavery P.S.
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 and will bring any concerns regarding school attendance to the attention of parents. The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

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

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Circular 2024/13 - which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202413-attendance-guidance-absence-recording-by-schools>

Our school is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent

Parents have a legal duty 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.

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'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 08:45 - 09:00 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 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 Creavery Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If a pupil has been absent from school, **a written note (Absence/Exeat Note) from their parent/guardian must be provided to their teacher when they return.**

High levels of attendance will be recognised through the presentation of certificates to pupils. In accordance with other school policies, all members of the school community should be able to thrive, feel respected, safe and secure.

Education Welfare Service

Schools have a legal responsibility to report any pupil whose absence falls below 85% or where there has been an absence of more than 10 days and where it is proved impossible to make contact with a parent or carer.

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education. If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85%, 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.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved activity off site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, every half-day absence must be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents/ carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- parents keeping pupils off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a registration mark.

It is hoped that parents, school staff and statutory authorities can work closely to overcome any problems which may affect a pupil's attendance. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This will only give the impression that attendance does not matter and may make matters worse.

Registration

Morning registration begins from 8.45 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and will be taken by the Class Teachers and school Clerical Officer. Only pupils who have a late taxi/bus pass may arrive after this time. Pupils who are late will be recorded as such in the register. Any pupil who is late on more than three occasions in a half term will be referred to the Principal/Associate Principal.

Absence

Pupils must bring a written explanation of the absence from his/her parent/carer to the first registration on returning to school. This note should include:

- the pupil's full name and registration class
- the date(s) of the absence
- as full an explanation as possible for the absence
- the name of the parent / carer in block capitals along with their signature

To assist in this matter a proforma "Absence Note" has been devised (see Appendix 1) which should be used (additional copies available from Office).

If a pupil fails to bring a note within two days of returning to school, they will be reminded about the importance of bringing it in and an **email/note reminder** will be sent to the parental contact. Pupils, who persistently fail to bring absence notes, will be brought to the attention of the Principal/Associate Principal who will contact the home.

Absence for Medical reasons

Parents are asked, whenever possible, to make appointments outside school hours. If an appointment must be made during school hours a written explanation must be provided clearly stating the time of the appointment. If there are frequent absences for medical reasons, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence in the form of a doctor's certificate. An "Exeat Slip" pro forma has also been devised (see Appendix 1) for such a circumstance and must be used (additional copies available from Office).

Notes should be signed by the class teacher at morning registration and presented at the Office when the pupil is signing out of school for their appointment. Pupils are expected to return to school following their appointment whenever possible.

If a pupil has a medical condition that may affect attendance and punctuality parents/carers are asked to contact the school to discuss possible arrangements with their child's class teacher.

Family Holidays during Term Time


Creavery Primary School strongly discourages holidays during term time due to the impact that 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.

Parents/carers must contact the school, prior to booking any holiday to explain the need to remove a pupil from school during term time. The contact should be in the form of a letter addressed to the Principal. Currently there is no legislation in Northern Ireland regarding holidays in term time (as there is in the rest of the United Kingdom). However, if a pupil's attendance falls below 85% in a school year, the school concerned is obliged to contact the Educational Welfare Officer.

Appendix 1

Sample Copies:



EXEAT SLIP

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

The above pupil has an appointment to attend:

(Please indicate: doctor/dentist/hospital/. Or other - Please state)


(Date)/...../..... at (Time).....

He/She will/will not return to school. *(Please mark as appropriate).*

Parent/Guardian (Print): _____

Signed: _____

Signature of Teacher: _____



ABSENCE NOTE

To be given to your child's teacher on the day your child returns to school following any absence.

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

Date of Absence
From _____ to _____

Reason

Parent/Guardian (Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: / /