



# **ANAHILT**

## **Primary School**

# **Attendance Policy**

**Policy Reviewed: March 2025**

**New Review Date: March 2027**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that as a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible in line with the procedures identified in this policy.

## **2.0 MISSION STATEMENT**

We will develop the intellectual, physical, aesthetic, spiritual and social characteristics of children in order to enhance the quality of their lives, both in the present and in the future.

## **3.0 VISION STATEMENT**

It is our vision that Anahilt Primary School is a place where we help children to think for themselves.

Our school promotes the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child. Articles 3 and 29 underline our school vision:

### Article 3

*'The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all our actions.'*

### Article 29

*'Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own cultures, and the environment.'*

## **4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY**

- To improve/maintain the overall attendance and punctuality of pupils at Anahilt Primary School.
- To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/carers and pupils in relation to attendance.
- To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school with recording and monitoring attendance and absenteeism.

## **5.0 WHAT IS THE LAW ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE?**

Parents/carers and the education authority have clear duties and responsibilities.

### **Parental Duty**

The duty of a parent/carer, in relation to the education of their children, is found in the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 which states:

*“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”*

### **Duty of the Education Authority**

The Education Authority through their Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents/carers meet their own responsibility towards their children’s education. If they do not, the Education Authority is duty bound to use the legal processes of court action, to uphold a parent's/carer’s duty to make sure that the young people in their care receive an education.

## **6.0 WHY IS SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT?**

- It is required by law.
- Children need to attend school regularly to allow them to fulfil their potential and promote social development.
- A good education will give your child the best possible start in life and enable him or her to make the best of the opportunities available.
- Children need to develop good habits in readiness for later life.

## **7.0 ROLE OF THE SCHOOL**

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance; the teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

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 regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded on a daily basis.

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

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Circular%202024-13%20-%20Attendance%20Guidance%20and%20Absence%20Recording%20By%20Schools.pdf>

The school shares the attendance percentage with parents/carers at the end of each school year in the Annual Report.

## **8.0 ROLE OF THE PARENT/CARER**

If a child is registered in Anahilt Primary School, their parent/carer has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend this school.

Parents/carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school and it is their responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. (*See 12.0 for the procedure to follow*). 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 by 9:00 am for registration and the beginning of classes. (Pupils may arrive from 8.45 am). It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness (defined as being after 9.10am) is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.

If a child appears reluctant to attend school the parent/carer should discuss this with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both the child and parent/carer receive maximum support.

Parents should try (as far as is possible) to make medical/dental appointments outside of school hours.

If a parent/carer wants their child to miss school, for example for a religious festival or some other special circumstances, they should seek the school's agreement well in advance and provide full details.

## **9.0 FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

The Department of Education for Northern Ireland and Anahilt 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" and will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer. These unauthorised absences will also be reported to the post primary school during the P7 transition process.

If a parent/carer takes his/her child out of school during term time for a family holiday, it is the policy of the school that the teachers will not prepare work for the child prior to the holiday for them to take away. Work that has been missed will be kept by the teacher and sent home when the child returns to school. It is the parents responsibility to ensure the work is explained, completed and marked before returning it to school.

## **10.0 ROLE OF PUPILS**

Each pupil at Anahilt Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If they have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/carer must be

provided to their teacher when they return.

## **11.0 PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING NON-ATTENDANCE**

At Anahilt Primary School, we promote a culture and ethos in which children enjoy coming to school, and do not want to miss out. We aim to provide sensitive and appropriate guidance to parents/carers concerning pupil attendance, taking into account guidance from the Department of Education.

- We will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.
- We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued.
- We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, he/she will be missed.
- Registration begins at 9.00 am and the register closes at 9.10 am. A child who arrives at school after registration closes will be registered as late.
- We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance.
- All staff mark their class register using the same system of appropriate categorisation of absence.
- Any concerns about individual pupils are reported directly to the Principal who decides appropriate action and monitors the results.
- We recognise the importance of early intervention and ask parents/carers for explanations of pupil absence. Parents/carers are contacted by the Principal and interviews arranged if necessary, as a result of attendance concerns and to discuss reasons for a pupil's poor attendance or school absence letters may be issued when levels of absence becomes a 'cause for concern'.
- A regular newsletter keeps parents/carers in touch with school events and helps to foster the sense of community.

## **12.0 ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

All parents/carers are required to notify the school of absence. In the first instance this can be through email to [jbrush617@c2kni.net](mailto:jbrush617@c2kni.net) or by phoning the school on 02892638557 and leaving a voicemail on the absence line (Press 1). If the teacher reports an absence which has no explanation, then the school office will ring the parents to confirm the absence. An 'Absence Notification' form can be downloaded from the school website which can be found under the 'Parents' tab.

If a parent/carer knows in advance of the absence, you should ask permission from the school giving as much notice as possible and provide full details.

Work will not be sent home for child who is sick. However, each case will be dealt with on an individual basis and in consultation with the Principal and parents. The school will keep the work missed and will either send home, when suitable, or ensure that help is provided on the child's return.

### **13.0 THE ROLE OF THE EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER**

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

We work closely with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) to regularly monitor and review absences and punctuality. The EWO pays particular attention to children whose attendance falls below **85%** and it may be necessary after monitoring a child's attendance percentage or pattern of attendance e.g. an unusually high number of Fridays off school, for a referral to be made to the Education Welfare Service.

The EWS will support staff and parents/carers in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance. The EWO can put parents/carers in touch with other agencies that may be able to offer further advice and help.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

A child with 90% attendance will have missed 19 school days in one academic year.

A child with 85% attendance will have missed 28.5 school days in one academic year.

## 14.0 SUMMARY OF ATTENDANCE CODES

Please see chart below for summary of attendance codes. Note: GREEN is authorised, RED is unauthorised.

Summary of Attendance Codes on current C2K system (Updated August 2024)			
CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION
/ \	Present: / = (AM); \ =(PM)	X	Only staff should attend
A*	Artistic Endeavour	Y*	Exceptional Closure
B*	Bereavement	#	Holiday for all
C	Suspended	!	No attendance required
D	No reason provided for absence	1	Community Providers / EOTAS (organised by the EA)
F*	Family Holiday (agreed) – Do not use	2	Exceptional Teaching Arrangement / hospital
G*	Family Holiday (not agreed)	3	Elective Home Education
H*	Other Absence	4	Pupil Referral Unit
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	5	Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework – EF)
J*	Extended Leave	6	Training Organisation (under EF)
L*	Late (before registration closed)	7	FE College (under EF)
M*	Medical / Dental Appointments	8	Intensive Support Learning Unit
N	No reason yet provided for absence (temporary code only)	9	CAMHS / Mental Health Support
O*	Other Exceptional Circumstances		COVID-19 SPECIFIC CODES – SHOULD NO LONGER BE USED
P*	Approved Activity	(	COVID-19 Illness Confirmed – must be used in situations where a pupil has tested positive for Covid-19.
R*	Religious Observance	)	COVID-19 Illness Suspected / Unconfirmed – to be used in situations where a pupil may be Covid-19 positive but this is unconfirmed.
S*	Study Leave	{	COVID-19 Self-isolating – Vulnerable Pupil or Household member Pupil chooses not to attend school due to own underlying health conditions or due to health conditions of other family members". If a pupil is sick, they should be recorded as such.
U*	Late (after registration closed)	}	COVID-19 Self-isolating - No evidence of learning from home Pupil required to self-isolate but not learning from home / evidence not provided.
V*	Educational Visit / Examination	[	COVID-19 Self-isolating & Learning from Home Pupil required to self-isolate and learning from home" – does not discount from attendance record.
W*	Work Experience	]	COVID-19 Learning from Home - Social Distancing Pupils are not required to attend physically at school due to social distancing rules, imposed by DE or school. E.g. pupils required to attend on certain days or for a certain number of hours per day. This decision must be informed by health professional advice.
Absence Category Colour Code			
Present / Approved Educational Activity	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Attendance not required

## 15.0 CONCLUSION

This Attendance Policy will be reviewed by the Board of Governors of Anahilt Primary School every two years or as appropriate as a result of new guidance or changes in legislation by the Department of Education N.I.

Policy to be reviewed: March 2027