



Attendance Policy 2016-2017

At City of Armagh High School, we believe that excellent attendance and punctuality are vital in helping pupils achieve the best that they can be. We are keen to foster a positive attitude amongst pupils which leads to improving attendance figures. The aim of the attendance policy is to provide a consistent approach that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils.

Research has shown that pupils who attend well, achieve well.

- ***6 out of 10 pupils with over 95% attendance (missing no more than 10 days a year) gain 5 GCSE A*-C grades***
- ***Only 1 in 10 pupils with poor attendance gain 5 A*-C grades***

Current Context

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
 - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
 - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
 - Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their **legal duty** by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.”

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/518586/Advice_on_school_attendance.pdf

AIMS:

- To achieve and maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality by all learners at COAHS
- To continually monitor and analyse attendance and punctuality.
- To develop and maintain a partnership between pupils, teachers, parents, carers and external agencies to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- To celebrate high levels of and improvement in attendance and punctuality.
- To reduce the number of persistent absentees at COAHS.

Descriptor	Attendance	Equals absent number of days	Learning hours lost
Excellent	100%	0	0
	99%	2	10
Good	98%	4	20
	97%	6	30
	96%	7.5	37.5
Satisfactory	95%	9.5	47.5
Cause for concern	90%	19	95
	89%	21	105
	88%	23	115
Unsatisfactory	86%	27	135
Serious cause for concern	85%	28.5	142
	84%	30.5	152
	83%	32	160

The government had laid down guidelines which they expect pupils in a secondary school to achieve **95%** attendance

We encourage full attendance by:

- Consistent, clear communication with parents and pupils about the importance of excellent attendance
- The accurate completion of registers at the start of each day and also at the beginning of each teaching lesson.
- Contacting the parent/carer on the second day of absence
- Where patterns of non-attendance is emerging:
 - The attendance officer will investigate
 - A letter or phone call home outlining concerns
 - Where intervention is unsuccessful, a second letter will be written and pupils may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer for further investigation.

Promoting Good Attendance in City of Armagh High School

In order to promote improved attendance at school, a number of incentives have been introduced with the aim of rewarding efforts made by our pupils to strive to improve patterns in their attendance.

In support of this and to promote teamwork a target (93% or above) is set for class attendance each term. If the class reaches this target then 5 merit stamps are awarded to each member of the class. These stamps are recorded in the students’ diaries.

Each stamp is worth a number of points and the accumulation of these leads to an opportunity to “trade” stamps for prizes. As they are carried forward from week to week, students can “cash in” merit stamps on designated days, in exchange for small items or they can “bank” them to earn a higher ranking award.

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
 - (b) to any special educational needs he may have,
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age—

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year—

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

Daily Procedures

Signing in:

Pupils should arrive at school by 8.45am. Registration takes place from 8.45am and 9am. Pupils either remain in form class or attend Assembly between 9am and 9.10am. Any pupils arriving late during this time must register with the form teacher. **It is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day.** Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill

Any pupil arriving after 9.10am **MUST** sign into the late book in the office, immediately on arrival. A late slip must be collected and brought home to be signed by parents and brought in to the Attendance Officer. While it is recognised that in exceptional circumstances pupils can be late, persistent lateness will result in the application of sanctions. Lateness due to medical/dental appointments must be covered by a note from parents

Absence:

Parents are asked to phone the school on the first day of absence to indicate the reason for non – attendance. Where contact is not made by parents, school will make contact on the second day. Upon return to school after absence, pupils must return a completed absent note to their form teacher in order to authorise the absence.

Signing Out:

Pupils are not permitted to leave school during the day except for medical/dental or emergency appointments. We do appreciate that it is often difficult for parents /guardians to obtain written confirmation of medical appointments. A written request authorised and signed by their Year Head during registration, must be brought to the school office.

Pupils **MUST** sign out when leaving and be collected by a parent/guardian/designated adult. Where pupils return to school after the appointment, they **MUST** sign in at the office.

Any pupil out of school during the day without permission will result in appropriate sanctions.

Monitoring attendance

Any pupil whose attendance falls below 90% is monitored by Form Teacher, Year Head and Attendance Officer. Where it is considered appropriate, a letter is sent to parents/guardian highlighting concerns.

If a pupils attendance rate continues to fall, without a valid medical or other reason, the following action is taken:

- A standard letter of concern to parents is issued
- Where the attendance rate continues to depreciate and fall below 85%, without any valid explanation, the pupil will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer by the Attendance Officer
- The Attendance Officer will continue to monitor attendance and meet with the Education Welfare Officer on a fortnightly basis.

Key People

Principal – Mr D Livingstone

Vice Principal & Pastoral Care Coordinator – Mrs K Mulholland

SENCO – Mrs D Woolsey and Ms J Hughes

Designated Teacher for Child Protection – Ms J Hughes

Attendance Officer – Mrs A Smiton

Education Welfare Officer – TBC

Receptionist – Mrs C Darragh and Mrs R Marshall

The school has a legal responsibility to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school regularly. Our staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Your continued support in this matter is essential.