



Attendance Policy

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.”

Further guidance on the use of absence codes can be found at:

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

Further guidance on “Miss School, Miss out” can be found at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Miss%20School%20%3D%20Miss%20Out%20A%20Strategy%20for%20Improving%20Pupil%20Attendance%20%282%29.pdf>

AIMS:

- To achieve and maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality by all learners at City of Armagh High School (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
	80%	38	190
	75%	46	230

The government has provided guidelines and the expectation is that pupils in a secondary school achieve a minimum of **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 first day of absence through the school COMMS system
- Where patterns of non-attendance is emerging:
 - The CoAHS Attendance Officer will investigate
 - A letter or phone call home outlining concerns
 - Where intervention is unsuccessful, a second letter will be prepared and pupils may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer for further investigation.

Promoting Good Attendance at 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.

Per half term, pupils with:

100% attendance receive a Gold certificate which is awarded by Year Heads in year assembly, a reward and 20 Merits given.

98% attendance receive a Silver Certificate which is awarded by Form Teachers in registration and 10 Merits given.

95% attendance receive a Bronze Certificate which is awarded by Form Teachers in registration and 5 Merits given.

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. Emergency Evacuation

Any pupil arriving after 9.10am **MUST** sign into the late book in the office, immediately upon arrival. 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:

If a pupil is not present in school by **9.45** a text message will be sent home enabling parents to let school know why their child is absent. Parents will be able to reply to the text which will then be treated as an absence note and saved to the pupils SIMS record.

If a parent has not replied to the standard text message, pupils must return a completed absence 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, he/she MUST sign in at the office.

Any pupil not in attendance at 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 CoAHS Attendance Officer. The CoAHS Attendance Officer will also speak to the pupil. 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 second, standard letter of concern to parents may be issued and a meeting will be arranged with the CoAHS Attendance Officer and parents.
- 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 CoAHS Attendance Officer
- The CoAHS Attendance Officer will continue to monitor attendance with Year Heads and meet with the Education Welfare Officer on a monthly basis.

Key People

Principal – Mr C Douglas

Vice Principal– Mrs K Mulholland

Pastoral Care Coordinator – Mrs K Mulholland

SENCO – Miss E Freeburn and Mrs C Tomlinson

Child Protection Officer – Mrs K Mulholland

Attendance Officer – Mrs A Smiton

Education Welfare Officer – Mr O Houlahan

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.