

Ferryhill Primary School

Kindness, Respect, Ready to Learn, Safe

Our Attendance Policy

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights.

Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

ARTICLE 28 – The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Our School Vision & Aims

OUR SCHOOL VISION:

OUR SCHOOL AIMS:

Our Policy in context.

This policy does not stand alone and is written in conjunction with the following key guidance and policy documents from both a local and national perspective:

Attendance & Absence Procedures – City of Edinburgh Council (2020)

Included, Engaged and Involved Part 1: Promoting and Managing School Attendance – The Scottish Government (2019)

School Attendance: A Guide for Parents – The Scottish Government (2009)

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) – The Scottish Government (2013)

The Education (Scotland) Act – The Scottish Government (2016)

Inter - Agency Child Protection Procedures – Edinburgh & The Lothians (2012)

The Children and Young Person (Scotland) Act – The Scottish Government (2014)

Overview

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the continuous education of all our pupils. Staff at Ferryhill Primary School seek to inspire every child with a passion for learning which will demonstrate to them that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. School will take appropriate and proportionate action, when necessary, in order to promote school attendance.

At Ferryhill Primary School, we know that every day counts in a child's education and we all strive to support our children to, where possible, attend our school on time, every day. All adults in our school have a role to play in promoting, managing and supporting school attendance. Here is how we all have a role to play:

Our Role(s)	Our Responsibility
All Our Staff	Reinforce importance of coming to school and being on time. Noticing if pupils are absent, missing activities or late. Praising good attendance, particularly of those who we know do not always attend or may often be late in. Never ask a child publicly why they have not been in school or why they are late. There may be a reason for this that the child would feel embarrassed or singled out in saying. Never make any comment to the child that attendance and late-coming is 'their fault'.
Our School Admin / Our Office Staff	Warmly welcoming our pupils when arriving late, sympathetically asking for a reason, if appropriate to see if any support is needed. Inform school management, where appropriate. Communicating with families to confirm the whereabouts of pupils as part of completion of the daily registration processes. Updating SEEMIS with TBC / Medical / Absence information Produce monthly reports for attendance meetings with EWO. Follow up phone calls or emails to identified parents and update registers as required. This will be done by 9.30am each school day. Inform class-based staff.
Our Facilities Manager	Inform School Senior Managers about any children they may see in the local area during school time or children who are regularly seen 'hanging around' in the school playground.
Our Teachers & Our Class Based Staff (Including Breakfast Club)	Accurately recording pupil absence and late-coming on registers by 9.00am each morning and after lunch by 1.00pm. Having learner voice centre of learning and ensure pupils have the opportunity to talk privately if they wish to. Discussing attendance with parents and carers, where appropriate, in relation to progress in learning. Inform school Senior Management of any patterns of attendance or late-coming, especially if this is new or out of character.
Our Place 2 Be Service	Offer support and 1-1 counselling for pupils and families who may be struggling with issues in and out of school that would or could contribute to a pattern of sporadic attendance or late-coming. Work closely with School Senior Management and engage as part of any supports that need to be put in place.
Our Head Teacher / School Senior Management	Sharing the importance of good attendance regularly with parents in school newsletters, school website, social media and parental events. Meet with our EWO monthly to discuss below 85% and actions and supports that may be required. Constructively inform, communicate and discuss with families about the reasons for absence or late-coming and how the school and partner

	agencies may be able to help them. Send 'trigger' letters to families below 90% attendance.
Our Local Active Schools Coordinator	Ensure learner voice is at the heart of activities, particularly to support those with poorer attendance. Celebrate the successes and the ability to overcome challenges in activities. Offer free out of school activities to pupils to encourage peer relationships and confidence in being in a school setting.

We Aim:

- ✓ To maximise the attendance of all our children
- ✓ To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone.
- ✓ To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties.
- ✓ To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- ✓ To work closely with and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and multi-agency teams within the GIRFEC procedures. The school understands that there can be additional reasons for a child's non-attendance at school, as set out in *Attendance & Absence Procedures – City of Edinburgh Council (2020) – Section 9 'Identifying and addressing barriers to attendance'*.

What is reasonably expected of our parents and carers?

- To keep their child's absences to a minimum.
- To offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- To ensure that their child arrives on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a positive mindset to learn.
- A reason should be offered for any lateness and appropriate and proportionate support accepted when this is an issue.
- To work closely with the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any issues that may impede a child's attendance
- To be aware of the curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to how sporadic attendance can affect a child's progress.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.
- To keep the school updated should contact numbers or address details change.
- Parents and carers are asked to contact the school office on the first morning by phone or, ideally in person if their child is absent from school. This needs to be done before school begins at 8.45am or the night before and a message left on the school's answering machine.

What is expected of us, as a school by our Local Authority:

- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- To develop procedures that enable our school to identify, follow up and record authorised and unauthorised absence, patterns of absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- To consistently record absence within the guidance of *The Education (Scotland Act (2016)* and City of Edinburgh Council procedures.
- To develop a range of strategies to follow up intermittent and long-term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- To encourage supportive and constructive communication between home and school.
- To develop procedures that could lead to a referral to the EWO for family support from The Area Attendance Advisory Group (AAAG) to help families ensure good attendance of their child at school.
- Support children in why they are experiencing difficulty in attending school, offer a tailored or bespoke curriculum that focuses on their interests and needs.

- Through the school's *Equality & Anti-Bullying Policy*, promote an ethos of inclusion and equality where diversity and equality is celebrated and embraced and children feel comfortable to attend school.

EXAMPLES AND DEFINATIONS OF ABSENCE

Full definitions of the main definitions of absence and their recording are included in the *Attendance & Absence Procedures – City of Edinburgh Council (2020)* – Pages 7 – 10.

These should be referred to if staff are unsure what code to use to register a child's absence as during registration. A full breakdown of these codes is contained within the same above policy.

LATENESS

School starts at 8.50 am

Doors are open from 7.30am with the Breakfast Club.

Lateness is classed as any child arriving after the playground doors are closed at 8.55 am

All children arriving after 8.55 am must report to the school office.

The school register closes and is recorded on SEEMIS from 9.00 am. Follow up attendance calls will be completed by the school office by 9.30am each school day.

Any child arriving after the school register is fully recorded on SEEMIS will receive an annotation of them being late for school.

Lateness is monitored on a termly basis and letters are sent home to the parents and carers informing them of the lost lesson time and disruption caused to the child and the class as a whole.

If the lateness is persistent, then the school will seek to meet or speak with parents and carers to discuss our concerns. Cases of persistent lateness may result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

The Role of The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) & Service

Ferryhill Primary School works together with the Education Welfare Service to improve the attendance of all our children. Our target attendance for each academic year is above 95% and whilst the majority of our children achieve this, there are a small minority who do not. The school can offer a wide range of supports for families to ensure children are in school and happy when they are. The school will offer a meeting to families to discuss these and solutions that can be put in place. There are also a range of different strategies that can be used by the Education Welfare Service to support families and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance. These range from written notifications to home visits or referrals to external support agencies.

Persistent Absentees

A child who has an attendance figure of 85% or below is classed as a persistent absentee and will be referred to the EWO.

A child who has an attendance percentage falling between 90% and 95% will be closely monitored and supported to prevent them falling into the persistent absentee category. Reminder letters to families can be considered if attendance starts to fall. They may be referred to the EWO and the school may also request medical evidence for further absences as this can be classed as a Child Protection issue.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The City of Edinburgh Absence & Attendance Procedure asks schools to consider the following:
How will the effectiveness of the strategies used be evaluated?

**When will the monitoring and evaluation take place?
Who will be involved and how will they contribute?**

The school deals with daily absences and SEEMIS absence recording using the flowchart in Appendix 3 of the above document. (See Appendix 1 below)

The school screens and monitors persistent attendance and late-coming using the guide in Appendix 5 of the above document. (See Appendix 2 below)

The school's Head Teacher meets with the EWO on a monthly basis and those children identified as below 95% are discussed. Agreements on monitoring, supports and interventions are put in place, where required.

The Local Authority publishes monthly attendance overviews for all its schools. This provides a guide to where a school is on a citywide basis and documents any improvements they have made.

From SEEMIS, the school draws a termly report, which is compiled to focus on Attendance below 85%, late-coming and Friday absences.

Template letters are then sent out to the families of those children who have been identified and a record of these and any parental responses are kept. These template letters are noted in Appendices 3,4 and 5 of this policy below.

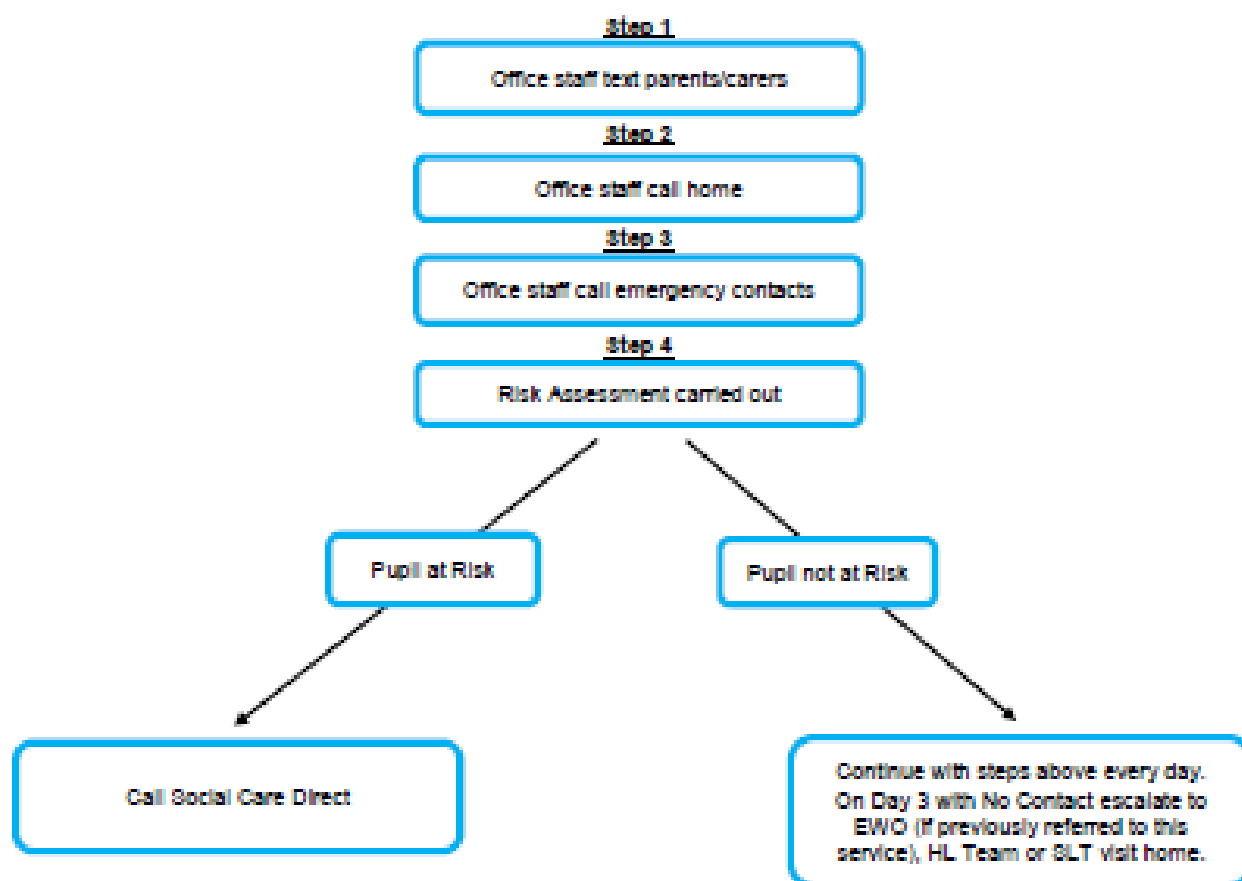
As a school, we realise that there are other patterns and modes of school attendance that may need to be put in place or requested by families that are acceptable by law. These can be discussed between school and families using the *GIRFEC* structures and suitable arrangements made. The school or external agencies can advise families on their rights in these areas and support them accordingly. The school can also seek advice from our own Local Authority and external agencies, where required to.

APPENDIX 1



Appendix 3

Unexplained Pupil Absence in Primary School



Definition: Procedure – An agreed method or approach to comply with Policy, Legislation and Departmental Decisions.

This document may be out of date if printed, the latest version is available on the Council Intranet.

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 5 Staged Support to Promote Attendance and Manage Absence



Identifying and responding to concerns about attendance	
Pathways to Support	Action to be taken/ Who and How
Stage 5 Complex/ Intensive/ Acute	Direct Referral to Reporter/ Attendance Order (served on parent through AAAG only)
Stage 4	Area Attendance Advisory Group (AAAG only in consultation with EWO after appropriate work being carried out)
Stage 3 Unexplained absence persists	Multi-agency assessment, planning and review <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information gathering - use of GIRFEC tools and profile of attendance difficulties • Solution-focused planning meeting involving pupil and parents • Identify and implement appropriate intervention • Review progress and update action plan
Stage 2 Unexplained absence <85% attendance rate Persistent lates without parental support	Referral to EWO/ On-going involvement of Pupil Support Staff Individualised planning
Stage 1 Lates and occasional unexplained absence	Action taken by Head Teacher/Pupil Support Staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor attendance data regularly • Discuss concerns with pupil and parent at earliest opportunity • Unexplained absence should result in absence enquiry letter to parents with contact details of member of staff who can offer support. NB Standard letters are available on SEEMIS which can be adapted by schools.
Promoting School Attendance for all pupils to ensure they are included, engaged and involved Promoting positive parental involvement Pastoral support health and well-being Positive behaviour approaches – restorative practice, solution-orientated schools Reward systems Learner engagement curricular flexibility links with FE and voluntary organisations Playground supervision Buddying and mentoring systems	

APPENDIX 3

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Dear N,

The register print out shows that your child, N has a pattern of broken weeks of attendance.

Since the start of the start of term, N has a percentage attendance of N% **This is well below the accepted level by law.**

All absence from school should be explained by phone call or through our Attendance Management Service (Option 1 on the school phone number).

Poor attendance has been linked to lower levels of attainment; peer relationships and emotional and behaviour difficulties. Low levels of attendance can also be linked to how connected children and young people feel to their school community.

Missing just 10% of school is the equivalent of 4 weeks out of a school year.

A copy of this letter will be added to the school file of your child for future reference and support, if required.

A print out on your child's attendance is also enclosed for you to check.

Yours Faithfully,

Paul A. Hunter
Head Teacher
St. Catherine's R.C. Primary School
Add Date

APPENDIX 4

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD
PERSISTENT LATE COMING

Pupil(s):

Class:

Dear N,

The register print out shows that your child, N has a continued and persistent pattern of arriving late at school.

Since the start of the school year, N has been late N times.

All absence from school or lateness should be explained by phone call or through our Attendance Management Service (Option 1 on the school phone number).

Late-coming can have an impact on how children are emotionally prepared for a school day. It can also be very unsettling for a child when they enter school late.

If the school can help in any way to support you in getting your child to school, then please contact us.

A copy of this correspondence has been added to the file of your child for future support and reference if, necessary.

A print out on your child's attendance is also enclosed for you to check.

Yours Faithfully,

Paul A. Hunter
Head Teacher
Add Date

APPENDIX 5

SCHOOL LETTERHEAD

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Dear N,

The register print shows that your child N has a pattern of broken weeks attendance at school and that Friday attendance is a particular issue.

Since starting the new session, your child has missed N Fridays as absent from school.

All absence from school should be explained by phone call or through our Attendance Management Service (Option 1 on the school phone number).

Poor attendance has been linked to lower levels of attainment; peer relationships and emotional and behaviour difficulties. Low levels of attendance can also be linked to how connected children and young people feel to their school community.

Missing just 10% of school is the equivalent of 4 weeks out of a school year.

A copy of this letter will be added to the school file of your child for future support and reference, if required.

A print out on your child's attendance is also enclosed for you to check.

Yours Faithfully,

Paul A. Hunter
Head Teacher
St. Catherine's R.C. Primary School
Add Date

PUPIL ATTENDANCE – CONCERN REFERRAL SLIP – ALL STAFF



I : CLASS:

**getting
it right**
for every child

REASON FOR ATTENDANCE CONCERN:

ACTION TAKEN & FOLLOW UP BY SCHOOL AS A RESULT OF THE CONCERN

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FURTHER ACTION / REFERRALS REQUIRED (IF APPROPRIATE)

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On completion, this form should be placed in pupil's file for possible future reference.