



Coagh Primary School

Pupil Attendance Policy

Policy Updated- November 2025  
Review of Policy- November 2028

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## **Introduction**

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils. We encourage children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- Attainment in school
- Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- Confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

The Governors and Principal, in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

## **Aims**

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Coagh Primary School.
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; (teachers/designated staff) should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/her 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 at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link:

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-andabsence-recording-by-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-andabsence-recording-by-schools)

Coagh Primary School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance

## **Parental Responsibility**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. The duty of a parent, 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 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.”***

Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk. The school share the attendance percentage with parents at the end of each school year and more frequently where there are concerns.

**Parents should:**

- Ensure that their child/children attend school regularly.
- Ensure that their child arrives in school punctually. Our school opens its doors at 8.30am and children can proceed to their classrooms.
- Contact the school on the first day of their child’s absence giving reasons for absence and expected duration of the absence.
- Provide the school, on the first day of return after an absence, with a signed note giving reasons for the absence.
- Contact the school in confidence if there is a problem which is affecting attendance or punctuality.
- Communicate with the school if their child is a reluctant attender. The school will work with and support the parents. Parents should not cover up a child’s reluctance or give in to pressure from their child to excuse them from attending school.
- Not book holidays during term time
- Arrange medical/ dental appointments outside school hours.

**Arrival at School**

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.30am and 9.00am, when they go to their classrooms. On mornings when the weather is ‘dry’ pupils may be invited to go outdoors at the discretion of school staff. Supervision begins at 8:30am; this is clearly communicated to parents in a range of ways.

**The school does not accept legal responsibility for pupils until 8:30am**

All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office where they are registered, their meal requirements noted and the reason for lateness is recorded.

**Illness and Medical Appointments**

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office may contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) An appointment card or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital may be required.
- c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- d) In the case of absence the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- e) Medical certificates may be required and should be provided if requested.

### **The Role of the School Staff**

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement.

Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. Pupil attendance is monitored to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the school to ensure attendance and lateness records are up to date. If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted at the soonest opportunity and a reason obtained.

Where it is not possible to make contact, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence. If none is provided, then the absence will be recorded as such.

The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register in accordance with DE Circular guidelines updated annually.

### **Action for Low Attendance**

Pupil attendance is monitored intermittently throughout the year. In cases where lateness or absence is causing concern parents will be contacted formally by written letter and requested to take appropriate steps.

In most cases where a written reminder is required we will normally give parents/carers a courtesy call in advance.

### **85% Cut-Off**

In cases when a child's attendance falls below 85% the school is legally obliged to report this to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). In many cases an explanation can be provided by the school (such as long-term medical condition etc.) however if this is not possible then the EWO may choose to investigate.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

### **Lateness**

The class register is taken between 9:00am – 9:05am. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to their class teacher where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as 'Late before registration has closed'.

The register will close at 9.20am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as 'Late after registration'. This code counts as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at open evenings and may be referred to the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and/or the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution.

### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer.

Examples may include a family bereavement, hospital internment or a relevant sporting/musical activity.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Principal. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

This may include (but not exhaustively):

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Term-time holidays not agreed.

### **Authorising Absence**

Only the Principal can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable or be clearly in the pastoral interests of the child/family. The Principal is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified. Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school. The following reasons are examples (but not an exhaustive list) of the kinds of absence that **will not be authorised**:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Parental illness [alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school – emergencies excepted]
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday

- Shopping trip
- Family holiday during term-time

### **Leave of Absence/Holiday Absence**

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. Schools have the discretion, in exceptional circumstances to authorise leave absence:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time **if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education;**
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

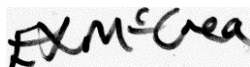
Applications for Leave of Absence where dates can be known ahead, MUST be made in advance of the requested date. Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached on behalf of the Board of Governors.

Each case will be judged on its merits in line with the criteria outlined above. The decision is final and once the decision to not authorise the leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed according to the schedule for Safeguarding Policies review.

Signed:



(Chairman of Board of Governors)

Signed:



(Principal)

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025

### **Consultation Arrangements**

All teaching staff were involved in the creation of this policy during staff meetings and their concerns/views were responded to throughout the process.

The Board of Governors discussed this Policy at a Meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and it was signed by the Chairperson.

Appendix 1

Department of Education ‘Quick Reference Guide’ July 2025

Summary of Attendance Codes on current C2K system (Updated July 2025)			
CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION
/ \	Present: / = (AM); \ =(PM)	S	Study Leave
A	Artistic Endeavour	U	Late (after registration closed)
B	Bereavement	V	Educational Visit / Examination
C	Suspended	W	Work Experience
D	No reason provided for absence	X	Only staff should attend
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Y	Exceptional Closure
H	Other Absence	#	Holiday for all
I1	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	!	No attendance required
I4	Illness – Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)	1	Community Providers / EOTAS (organised by the EA)
J	Extended Leave	2	Exceptional Teaching Arrangement / hospital
L	Late (before registration closed)	3	Elective Home Education
M	Medical / Dental Appointments	4	Pupil Referral Unit
N	No reason yet provided for absence (temporary code only)	5	Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework – EF)
O1	Other Exceptional Circumstances	6	Training Organisation (under EF)
O2	Temporary Exceptions to the Curriculum	7	FE College (under EF)
P	Approved Activity	8	Intensive Support Learning Unit
R	Religious Observance	9	CAMHS / Mental Health Support
Absence Category Colour Code			
	Present / Approved Educational Activity		Authorised Absence
			Unauthorised Absence
			Attendance not required



Appendix 2

Absence Note for Coagh Primary School



Coagh Primary School

31 Urbal Road, Coagh, Cookstown, BT80 0DW

[www.coaghprimaryschool.com](http://www.coaghprimaryschool.com)

Telephone: 028 867 37676

Principal: Mr I Bayne B.Ed. (Hons)

E-mail: [ibayne452@c2kni.net](mailto:ibayne452@c2kni.net)

Absence Note

Child's Name- \_\_\_\_\_

Class- \_\_\_\_\_

Absence Date (s)- \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Absence - \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed - \_\_\_\_\_

Received by teacher  
(Date) \_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_