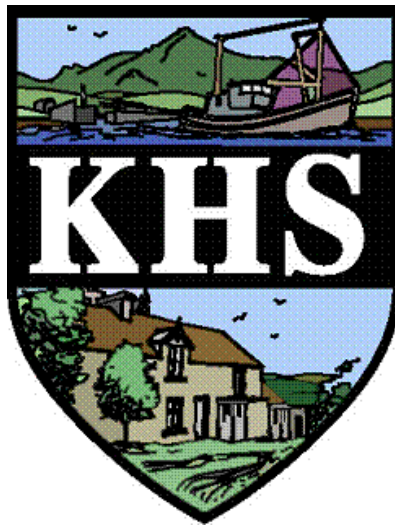


KILKEEL HIGH SCHOOL



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

September 2020

Kilkeel High School

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach his/her potential.

Kilkeel High School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil is valued and feels secure.

AIMS:

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Kilkeel High 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.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Subject Teacher

Subject teachers regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded accurately on SIMS during each teaching period. Where there is a suspicious absence, this is reported to the General Office who will investigate. Subject teachers have a responsibility to mark 'minutes late to class' on SIMS.

Form Tutor

Form Tutors have a critical role to play in the encouragement of good attendance at school in their form classes but also in monitoring and reporting absence. Form Tutors are responsible for marking students' attendance in registration. They are also responsible for following up unexplained absences by encouraging pupils to return an absence note to school. Where attendance falls below 90% Form Tutors will liaise with Year Heads to intervene and encourage more positive attendance patterns. Where attendance falls below 85%, Form Tutors will refer the matter to Year Heads for consultation with the Education Welfare Service. Form Tutors also monitor lateness to class and when 15 minutes late are accumulated, refer the matter to the Year Head.

Year Heads

Year Heads exercise a broad supportive role for Form Tutors in relation to attendance. In addition, they monitor attendance within their year groups and when attendance falls below 90% will seek improvement by speaking with pupils and liaising with parents. When attendance falls below 85%, the Year Head is responsible for referring the student to the Education Welfare Service

and for working alongside the EWO to bring about improvement. The Year Head will also make contact with parents/guardians to discuss concerns around attendance.

In addition, the Year Head has responsibility for issuing breaktime detention to students who have accumulated 15 minutes late to class.

Year Heads should monitor lateness to school of students in their year group, applying consequences, when necessary, according to school rules.

Vice Principal

The Vice Principal i/c pastoral care will provide monthly absence reports to Year Heads and will discuss concerns about attendance with Year Heads/Form Tutors. She will also liaise with the Education Welfare Service/Social Services as and when necessary.

Principal

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance; staff should bring any concerns about attendance to his attention.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensure it is placed as an agenda item at meetings.

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 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

Kilkeel High School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent

Parents have a legal duty¹ to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school or parents may respond via text or voice message when they receive a GROUPCALL absence notification. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

¹ Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.50 for registration unless they arrive to school on the late bus. Late bus pupils must sign in at the school office upon their arrival to school. Students are also expected to arrive punctually to the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and at each class. This information will appear on your child's attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the relevant Form Tutor in the first instance who will liaise with the Year Head, if necessary. This will ensure that both you and your child will receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Kilkeel High School is expected to attend school punctually and regularly. If your parent/guardian has not notified school via GROUPCALL as to the reason for your absence, a written note from your parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return to school. It is also your responsibility to make every effort possible to catch up on work which has been missed through absence.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Attendance monitoring is a vital component of discipline. The following attendance procedures are used in school:

- Form class registration using SIMS Lesson Monitor
- Period by period attendance and punctuality is recorded via SIMS
- Daily absence list published for staffroom/general office/Vice Principal (CLASS output)
- Weekly absence reporting using SIMS/OMR forms
- Monthly absence reports to Year Heads and EWO
- Suspicious absence query to General Office/Vice Principal
- Parents notified regarding student absence and lateness via GROUPCALL
- Parents may respond via text or voice message eliminating the need for an absence note.

Where a child is marked present on SIMS but is not in class, the teacher will send a message to the General Office to find out if that pupil has signed out of school. If the child has not signed out, the General Office will notify parents that the child is absent from school without permission. Serious cases of unauthorised absence should be referred to the Vice Principal i/c discipline.

Signing Out

Students who need to leave school between 8.50am and 3.10pm (other than those who have permission to go home for lunch) must "sign out" at the general office between 8.50am and 9.15am on that morning.

Permission from a member of the Senior Leadership team is needed.

Students signing out should use the Kilkeel High School signing out form or provide a medical appointment letter/card, along with a note from a parent. A parent/nominated contact must then call to collect the student.

No student will be signed out on the strength of a phone call to the school.

Illness in school

A student who is ill in school must report to the General Office. If it is in his/her best interests to go home, the general office will telephone home to make arrangements. When these are completed the student must sign out before leaving school.

Students must not ring home to report they are ill.

Students may, in an emergency, get special permission to “sign out” from Mr Coert, Mrs McAtee or Ms Reilly.

Family Holidays during Term Time

Kilkeel High 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. Upon return to school, it is the responsibility of the pupil to catch up on all work missed.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Where a child is marked absent from school at registration, the school will make contact via GROUPCALL to the mobile number supplied by the parent/guardian to notify him/her that the child is absent from school. Parents/guardians are invited to text/leave a voice message explaining the reason for the absence.

Where attendance falls within the range 90%-85%, Form Tutors/Year Heads will seek improvement in attendance in a variety of ways including:

- An interview with the pupil
- Telephone conversations with the parent/guardian
- Letter home
- Liaison with the Vice Principal/Principal
- Interview with the Education Welfare Officer

Where attendance falls below 85%, the Year Head has an obligation to formally refer the pupil to the Education Welfare Officer.

Education Welfare Service

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

If a pupil’s absence causes concern, or if his/her attendance falls below 85%, he/she will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address and improve school attendance.

Signed: _____ Principal

Signed: _____ Chair, Board of Governors

Date: _____