



## **DUNCLUG COLLEGE**

### **Attendance Policy**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision Author</b>	<b>Summary of Changes</b>
1.0	Dec 2018	Mr McNeilly Mr McKillop	

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Dunclug College believes that good attendance and punctuality are central to the learning process. For a child to succeed in the school environment it is essential that a high level of attendance is maintained. It has been proved that there is a strong correlation between success and attendance. Dunclug College aims to maintain and build upon its present and past successes. Therefore a target of **96%** is what the school will aim to attain over the next two years. This means that a clear, workable policy to monitor, improve and maintain attendance needs to be in place. This policy shall involve a partnership with the school, parents and the school's Educational Welfare Officer. Clear guidelines for this are essential and must be supported by all.

Initially parents will be made aware of the school's target and its general approach to the maintenance of good attendance. In an annual letter to all Parents/Carers the school shall emphasise the need for good attendance by all and set out clearly the steps it intends to take to ensure this is maintained. The Induction Programme for

Year Groups shall also play an important part in the promotion of good attendance. The school shall ask Parents/Carers to work closely with it to question casual sickness, to make medical and dental appointments after school and generally to encourage a positive approach.

The School Leadership shall make the Board of Governors aware of its policy and work closely with the School Council and PTA to ensure Parental/Carer support. The key to good attendance does lie with Parents and Carers. If they know the school will note every single absence and require a contact, written or via telephone, for such then this might spur everyone to achieving high targets. Parents/Carers will want close contact with the school when their child is absent because in a few cases it is the contact from the school that alerts them to truancy.

The school shall have a clear workable procedure that will identify casual, long term or patterns of absence and have mechanisms to deal with each. The school will be proactive in involving Parents/Carers in an attempt to reduce absence and ensure they are kept informed about any changes in policy.

The Form Teacher will play an important role in the promotion of good attendance. Often he or she will be the first to notice a pattern of absence within a class. The Form Teacher shall encourage good attendance and highlight its importance. Minor absences will be dealt with by the Form Teacher confirming reasons and checking that notes have been received. The Form Teacher shall also initiate a letter to Parents/Carers on a pupil's third day of absence. This letter will simply ask the Parents or Carers to contact the school and let it know the reason. This will begin the formal process of Parental/Carer contact, the steps of which are outlined below.

**1) *Continuous Absence:***

- 1.1) Any absence is recorded on the SIMS Lesson Monitor Module.
- 1.2) On the third day of absence a letter is sent from the school asking the Parents/Carers for explanation (The Form Teacher/ Assistant Head of Year prepares this).
- 1.3) If an unexplained absence continues into the next week the Form Teacher or Assistant Head of Year will telephone the home.
- 1.4) After eight days of unexplained absence the E.W.O. will be informed and a referral made via the Pastoral Director requesting to make a home visit.
- 1.5) An end of term letter will be sent home to pupils whose overall attendance has been giving cause for concern.

**2) *Periodical Absence:***

- 2.1) If in the month the number of unexplained periodical absences gives concern then a SIMS generated letter shall be sent to the home.
- 2.2) If in the month the number of unexplained periodical absences continue to give concern then the E.W.O. will be informed and a referral made via the Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School requesting to make a home visit.
- 2.3) If the absences are covered by a Parental/Carer note then initially the Assistant Head of Year or Form Teacher should contact the home and voice the school's concern about the number of absences. This call to Parents/Carers should be of a supportive nature.
- 2.4) If there is a pattern of absence, e.g. every Friday, then the parents shall be contacted by the Assistant Head of Year/ Head of Year and asked to give an explanation.
- 2.5) If periodic absence becomes chronic e.g. three days a fortnight then the E.W.O. will be informed and a referral made via the Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School requesting to make a home visit.

**3) *Latecoming:***

- 3.1) Latecoming shall be noted in the latebook and in extreme cases of lateness via the period Class Teacher using Lesson Monitor.
- 3.2) If a pupil is very late e.g. thirty minutes plus then he/she must produce a note written by the Parent/Carer either on the same day or the following day. This should be presented to their Form Teacher.
- 3.3) If a pupil is late more than three times in the month then he/she shall be expected to 'catch up' the time at the end of the school day after the Parents/Carers have been informed by letter (issued by the Head of Year or Assistant).
- 3.4) If the latecoming becomes regular then the Parents/Carers shall be contacted by the Form Teacher or Assistant Head of Year.
- 3.5) Pupils who have a bus pass but are left off by their Parents/Carers will not be deemed to be late until after 8.55 am
- 3.6) If the latecoming continues and becomes chronic then the Assistant Head of Year will contact the Parents/Carers.

**4) *Truancy:***

- 4.1) If any pupil absents themselves from the school without permission then the parents shall be contacted by phone or letter and the pupil detained after appropriate notification.
- 4.2) If truancy happens more than once, then the Parents/Carers shall be invited to the school by the Assistant Head of Year to discuss the problem.
- 4.3) If the truancy becomes chronic then the E.W.O. will be informed and a referral made via the Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School requesting to make a home visit.
- 4.4) If a pupil has been involved in truancy on a regular basis then each time there is a subsequent absence the Parents/Carers shall be contacted. If the pupil has been kept at home for legitimate reason then an agreement shall be reached whereby the Parent/Carer shall contact the school to let it know.
- 4.5) The school shall commit itself to monitoring the attendance of a pupil who has been involved in regular truancy by placing him/her on period report.
- 4.6) Period truancy shall be dealt with by the Assistant Head of Year who shall detain any pupil who absents themselves from classes. Truancy is a serious problem and will result in additional catch up time with the Head of Year or Assistant. A continuing problem shall be referred through the Pastoral System and the school will endeavour to put supports in place through their Head of Year, the School Nurse or EWO.

The school relies greatly on the service of the E.W.O. and will work hard to develop a real and effective partnership, a partnership that has functioned well in the past. It is recommended that the E.W.O. shall meet the Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School on a fortnightly basis at a time agreed by both.

As part of its attendance policy the school shall also develop and use a reward system whereby good attendance shall be rewarded. It is important to reinforce positive aspects of attendance therefore the school shall take steps to do this.

**5) Reward System:**

- 5.1) Each month an attendance trophy shall be presented to the class with the best attendance. There shall be an attendance trophy for both the junior and middle school.
- 5.2) If a class wins the attendance trophy on two consecutive months it shall be given a class certificate.

- 5.3) If a pupil has achieved 1 months full attendance they will receive an individual certificate and will be awarded additional merits.
- 5.4) If a pupil has a full year's attendance he/she shall be given a reward e.g. a book token. The pupil must present at the annual Prize Giving to receive this.
- 5.5) Parents/Carers of pupils who have full attendance or perhaps have missed one or two days shall be written to by the principal congratulating the pupils on their achievement.
- 5.6) A pupil who has moved from poor attendance to good attendance shall also be given praise and reward by the school. This is to be monitored by the Form Teacher and Assistant Head of Year.

The monitoring of attendance shall be a major role of the Form Teacher and the Assistant Head of Year. The Form Teacher has a unique knowledge of the form class and after a period of time can identify those pupils whose attendance record is suspect. Pupils who are potentially poor attenders can be targeted by Form Teachers and through counselling, Pathways and support be encouraged to attend school. This means that the Form Teacher shall have access to relevant information on SIMS about the patterns of absences in their class.

#### **6) *Form Teacher and SIMS Lesson Monitor:***

Lesson Monitor as an e-tool is very useful when monitoring and analysing pupil attendance. It provides opportunity to focus on lateness to class or any other situations which arise throughout the school day or individual lessons via the 'add comment' feature.

- 6.1) The Form Teacher is responsible for taking a role call each morning during roll call. This takes place between 8.50am and 9.10am. Pupils will be marked absent or present in the AM session of the period timeline.
- 6.2) If a pupil is absent the Form Teacher will enter that pupil as absent for the AM session. The class teacher will follow on this pattern for each period throughout the school day. Should the pupil arrive late the class teacher will mark the individual present and record, via the 'add number of minutes late' feature.
- 6.3) The Office Staff will mark any pupil late into school for the AM session of that day if they have missed their roll call.
- 6.4) A pupil returning to school following a period of absence will furnish the Form Teacher with a note. The Form Teacher will then edit the

absent mark for that period according to the explanation for e.g., illness, holiday, bereavement etc. (see appendix 1)

- 6.5) On the Monday of each week the Form Teacher will use SIMs to view the previous weeks attendance. Should any aspects require investigation the Form Teacher should liaise with the Assistant Head of Year and make the necessary contacts and amendments.
- 6.6) Following the routine ensures sound management and accurate attendance data for parents/carers, pupils and external agencies.

**7) *Class Teacher and SIMS Lesson Monitor:***

- 7.1) Class Teachers are responsible for taking a roll call for each period throughout the school day. Child Protection is an important link with this aspect of Lesson Monitor, should a pupil go missing the Assistant Head of Year can observe very quickly at a glance where and when this occurred and appropriate procedures can then be put into action.
- 7.2) Throughout the school day Class Teachers will mark pupils **present or absent**. For example, if a pupil is attending a talk in the Assembly Hall they are not absent from school nor are they educated elsewhere – they still achieve a present mark. If they are on a field trip/day trip that can be coded an Educational Visit or a pupil Suspended is coded CC. Should a pupil be on work experience, they are coded WW, or as part of a course out of school for part of the day they should be marked present until you know otherwise and then the mark can be adjusted for example in this case code 5. (see appendix 1)
- 7.3) **Period 7 staff** are responsible for the afternoon session. This mark is vital and contributes to achieving a full day's attendance.
- 7.4) Class teachers, at a glance, see very clearly pupil attendance under the 'edit mark' feature for purposeful subject tracking.

**8) *Assistant Head of Year and SIMS Lesson Monitor:***

- 8.1) The Assistant Head of Year, although in a more management/leadership role, has a "whole year" view and can compare the patterns of attendance between classes. It is the Assistant Head of Year's role to implement the policy that has been laid down. It is often the Assistant Head of Year who will have first contact with Parents/Carers. It is also a role of the Assistant Head of Year to set targets for form classes and for the whole year. Those attainable, realistic targets will be necessary to reach the overall school attendance target. Therefore the Assistant Head of Year can be mutually supportive through the Pastoral Committee when setting

targets. It is often one class that can bring down the set target for a whole year. The Assistant Head of Year, through the SIMS Lesson Monitor records of the previous year, can identify months when attendance has been poor and use strategies to focus in on those periods. It may be possible to set tests during these months or set specific key activities since these can affect attendance in a positive way.

- 8.2) Strategies should be discussed in the year team meetings. It is a role of the year team to discuss attendance and share ideas. These ideas can be transformed into good practice and this good practice must be shared between year groups. It will be the year team who will decide on suitable rewards for good attendance.
- 8.3) The Assistant Head of Year will support their Form Teachers in the use and management of Lesson Monitor. They will regularly review attendance maintenance for each form class under their remit and follow through with support, where necessary, should the need arise.

**9) Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School and SIMS Lesson Monitor:**

- 9.1) The Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School will liaise with all Assistant Heads of Year and provide adequate training and support on the use of Lesson Monitor. This will take place on School Development Days, during Year Team meetings or Pastoral Key Stage meetings.
- 9.2) The Pastoral Director for Junior / Senior School will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly with the Head of Year and discuss strategies which could be implemented to improve attendance for year groups as a 'whole' and report as an when required to the SLT, the Deputy Principal or Principal.

**Electronic Communication**

- 9.3) **SIMs In Touch** will be used to inform Parents, by either email or text if their child is not in school by 9.30am on any given day. This will prompt a Parent/Carer to contact the school on the day of absence. They should explain why their child is not present and give an indication of the duration of absence (if due to illness).
- 9.4) **SIMs Parent App** – provides a parent who has registered with the App the opportunity to view a range of information pertaining to their child or children. This includes a live attendance daily overview and % attendance statistic for each child.

The Attendance Policy must relate to the whole school and this includes the senior school - years thirteen and fourteen. Even though the return to school is a matter of

choice, once they have enrolled senior pupils will have committed themselves to the rules and regulations of the school. All senior pupils will be expected to attend every day, in fact their regular attendance is essential for success as the level of work undertaken is much higher. Senior pupils will also be expected to set an example to the rest of the school.

When a pupil demonstrates an interest in returning and comes to the school to be interviewed he/she will have their attendance record over the past five years scrutinised. Particular attention shall be paid to the attendance record of the previous year. A prospective pupil who had below average attendance shall be asked to commit themselves to a higher level of attendance if they are permitted to return. To confirm this a senior school contract will be drawn up. During the induction programme for returning to senior school the importance of good attendance will be emphasised. The same process for monitoring attendance in the rest of the school will also apply to the senior pupils. See the Year 13/14 Hand Book.

It is the responsibility of everyone to promote good attendance and staff, pupils, parents/carers and outside agencies must share the same focus and move forward towards the common goal which is the good education of all.



# QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

## Codes for Recording Pupil Absence on C2k

CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION
/ \	<b>Present: / = (AM): \ = (PM)</b> Present at registration.	<b>O*</b>	<b>Other Exceptional Circumstances</b> Special occasions at the discretion of the school or an exceptional event outside control of pupil.	<b>1</b>	<b>Community providers / EOTAS (organised by the EA) - Post Primary</b> Pupil who is attending a Community Provider and/or an EOTAS setting by approval of the EA.
<b>A*</b>	<b>Artistic Endeavour</b> Artistic events which have no direct correlation to the pupil's educational achievement.	<b>P*</b>	<b>Approved Activity</b> An activity which the school deem to have a direct correlation to the pupil's educational achievement or playing sport at a national or county level.	<b>2</b>	<b>Educational Teaching Arrangement (ETA) / hospital tuition (organised by the EA)</b> Pupil who is currently being educated off-site by an ETA or in hospital under arrangements approved by the EA.
<b>B*</b>	<b>Bereavement*</b> Death of a close relative such as parent/carer, sibling, grandparent, aunt or uncle.	<b>R*</b>	<b>Religious Observance</b> A day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent/carer belongs, including religious festivals.	<b>3</b>	<b>Elective Home Education</b> Parents/carers have decided to educate their child at home and have advised the school and EA. (SA1 still to be completed.)
<b>C</b>	<b>Suspended</b> School have suspended pupil for fixed period.	<b>S*</b>	<b>Study Leave</b> Study leave should be applied only to year 11 to 14 pupils sitting public examinations during the examination timetable.	<b>4</b>	<b>Pupil Referral Unit - Primary</b> Pupil is being temporarily educated at a Pupil Referral Unit, arranged and approved through the EA.
<b>D</b>	<b>No reason provided for absence</b> It has not been possible to establish a reason within five days following pupil's return.	<b>U*</b>	<b>Late (after registration closed)</b> No relevant reason for lateness to code it otherwise.	<b>5</b>	<b>Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework (EF))</b> Pupil attending days or sessions at other post primary schools.
<b>F*</b>	<b>Family Holiday (agreed)</b> Agreed in exceptional circumstances when holiday is judged important for family cohesion, child well-being etc. e.g. following a bereavement or serious illness.	<b>V*</b>	<b>Educational Visit / Examination</b> School-organised trips and visits, or supervised educational trips arranged by other organisations. Recognised/public examinations and academic interviews.	<b>6</b>	<b>Training Organisation (under EF)</b> Pupil attending days or sessions at a training organisation.
<b>G*</b>	<b>Family Holiday (not agreed)*</b> Holidays taken during term time where there are no exceptional circumstances, e.g. cheaper deal or no suitable reason.	<b>W*</b>	<b>Work Experience</b> Work experience should be arranged by or in conjunction with the school and supervised. Can also be used for a job interview.	<b>7</b>	<b>FE College (under EF)</b> Pupil attending days or sessions at a FE College.
<b>H*</b>	<b>Other Absence</b> Reason provided is not acceptable e.g. birthday or haircut.	<b>X</b>	<b>Only staff should attend</b> Days on which teachers are in school and pupils are not required to attend, e.g. staff training/INSET/development days.	<b>8</b>	<b>Intensive Support Learning Unit (ISLU)</b> Pupil being educated off-site at an ISLU.
<b>I</b>	<b>Illness (not medical or dental appointments)</b> Parents must be encouraged to notify the school and provide reasons when pupil is absent due to illness.	<b>Y*</b>	<b>Exceptional Closure</b> Whole school is closed & permission granted by the Department e.g. severe weather, death of a pupil/ teacher or polling station.	<b>9</b>	<b>Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)/Mental Health support</b> Pupil attending sessions at CAMHS or other support organised by the EA.
<b>J*</b>	<b>Extended Leave (Approved)</b> Family to temporarily travel outside the UK for work purposes or for urgent specific complex family need.	<b>#</b>	<b>Holiday for all</b> School vacations such as half term.		
<b>L*</b>	<b>Late (before registration closed)</b> Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open and may keep registers open longer in circumstances such as bad weather or public transport difficulties.	<b>!</b>	<b>No attendance required</b> Unable to attend due to reasons outside their control such as adverse weather or failure of EA transport.		
<b>M</b>	<b>Medical/Dental Appointments</b> Absent from registration for a medical or dental appointment.				
<b>N</b>	<b>No Reason Yet Provided (temporary code)</b> To be used for first 5 days.				

**Present / Approved Educational Activity codes**  
**Attendance not required codes**  
**Authorised Absence codes**  
**Unauthorised Absence codes**

\*The use of this code is at the discretion of the school  
 More details can be found in DE Circular 2018/12 and for further queries contact 02891279543 or [attendance@education-ni.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@education-ni.gov.uk).



## REGISTRATION CODE: / \

Brief Description	<b>Present</b> / = (AM) \ = (PM)
Statistical Meaning 1	<b>Present</b>
Physical Meaning	In for whole session
DE Definition	Present at registration.

### Additional useful information:

If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration he/she would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

For health and safety reasons, schools need to be aware of the whereabouts of all pupils, particularly those leaving or arriving on the premises during a session.