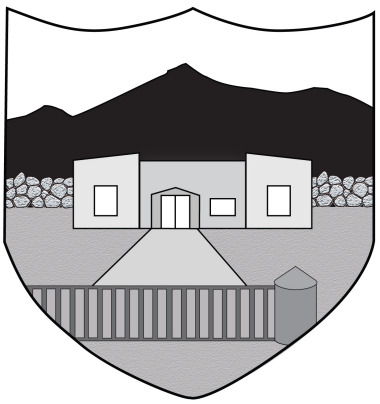
Brackenagh West Primary School

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 their potential. Brackenagh West Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Brackenagh West Primary School - Ethos and Vision

Brackenagh West Primary School will always be concerned with creating a caring, Christian learning community in which every member feels valued, supported and happy. All staff will strive to provide an ethos in which fairness, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness permeate all relationships within the school community.

High standards of respect, self- discipline, commitment and sensitivity will be sought and everyone will be encouraged to set and achieve the highest personal, academic and social goals. The safety, welfare and development of everyone in our school community will be of paramount importance to all staff.

Aims of the Attendance Policy

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Brackenagh West PS.
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 Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal at Brackenagh West Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; all teaching staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention. The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.

Attendance Register

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents/ carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a very good reason, such as illness, or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:
• parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
• truancy before or during the school day
• absences which have never been properly explained
• children who arrive at school too late to get a registration mark
• holidays during term-time

To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2013/13. The principal will monitor individual pupil, class and whole school attendance on a monthly basis.

Schools have a legal responsibility to report any pupil whose absence falls below 85% or where there has been an absence of more than 10 days and where it is proved impossible to make contact with a parent or carer.

Contacting Parents
Letters will be sent to parents/carers when a pupil's attendance falls below 85% for the academic year (without appropriate reasons being given) and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will also be contacted when appropriate reasons for absences have not been given.

The EWO may then contact the parents, or visit them at home, to discuss the reasons for absence, and to help promote and encourage better attendance in the future.

It is hoped that parents/carers, school staff and statutory authorities can work closely to overcome any problems which may affect a pupil's attendance. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This will only give the impression that attendance does not matter, and may make matters worse.

Class prizes will be awarded on a monthly basis, based on the monthly attendance figures per class. A yearly target for attendance will be set for the whole school.

Home/School Links

Brackenagh West Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Carer
Parents have a legal duty to ensure that every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. (Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

It is a parent/carer'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 by using the Parent Mail app. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9.00am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and also on each child's attendance record.

If a child appears reluctant to attend school, parents should discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher, or the Principal, to ensure that both parents and the child receive suitable support.

Every pupil at Brackenagh West Primary School should attend school punctually and regularly. If a child has been absent from school a written note from a parent/ guardian must be provided to the class teacher when when returning to school.

Absence Procedures

Pupil attendance/ absenteeism is monitored daily by all class teachers. In the event of an absence a note of explanation must be sent into school. These notes will be kept on file by each teacher.

Coming to School Late

The school day starts at 9:00am, and we expect children to be in school by this time, ready to start lessons. If a pupil comes in between 9:00am and 9:10am they will be given a late mark. If they come in after 9:10am they will already have received an absent mark for the morning session as registration closes at 9:10am.

Family holidays during Term Time

Brackenagh West Primary 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, and the school will not provide work for absent children during these periods of family vacation

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

If a pupil is absent from school for a prolonged period of time, the class teacher will supply the parents with work (provided the absence is not due to holidays).

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education. Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.