

HAMILTONSBAWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



Pupil Attendance Policy

Policy ratified by *Governors* - Feb 2017

Mission Statement

We in Hamiltonsbawn Primary School aim to provide a calm, welcoming, safe and stimulating environment which supports pupils' learning and celebrates and nurtures their academic and non-academic achievements. We strive to provide a Christian ethos in which fairness, tolerance, compassion and forgiveness permeates all relationships.

We recognise the need to give all stake holders a voice and to develop and encourage strong links with other diversities and the wider community.

Statement of Principal

All members of the school community of Hamiltonsbawn Primary School are fully committed to the principle that good attendance is an important part of school life. It is further acknowledged that it is the duty of the school to promote an environment in which attendance is nurtured and in which positive steps are taken to promote the emotional and physical well-being of every pupil in its care.

Aims and Objectives

Hamiltonsbawn Primary School aims to ensure that every child will want to attend school. This will be achieved by creating a warm, welcoming and secure atmosphere where the pupils feel valued, and a stimulating and accessible curriculum is delivered in a physically clean, bright and attractive environment.

The Management of Attendance

Responsibilities of Parents

"To ensure that children have an efficient education suited to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs"

Education and Libraries Order 1986

Parents are asked to contact the school through phone, or email on the first day of absence and inform the school why the child is absent and expected length of absence. Please confirm this with a written note when your child returns to school.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has the ultimate responsibility for school attendance but this is delegated on a day-to-day basis to the Principal. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's attendance policy and practice.

- The Board of Governors is fully aware of the school's Attendance Policy
- A member of the Board of Governors has been appointed to help monitor attendance, health and well being
- Attendance is placed as an agenda item at least once per term at Board of Governor meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Principal

Overall responsibility for attendance on a day-to-day basis lies with the Principal. The Principal has the role, along with the Board of Governors for determining resources and staffing to deal with attendance issues, ensuring the Board of Governors are informed

about attendance issues and ensuring statistical information is provided as required by EA and DE.

The Principal has overall responsibility for attendance. The Principal will meet with the Education Welfare Officer regularly to discuss pupil attendance issues.

The Principal will:

- Liaise with the Education Welfare Service about individual pupils
- Talk to pupils with irregular attendance
- Send a letter to parents of pupils who are absent from school on a regular basis without explanation
- Make a referral to the Education Welfare Service if improvement in attendance is not made
- Collate and report attendance information
- Take responsibility for overall monitoring of attendance

Roles and Responsibilities of Class Teacher

Effective practice in relation to managing individual pupil attendance depends on the class teacher. In Hamiltonsbawn Primary School the class teacher is responsible for:

- Developing trusting relationships with all pupils

- Monitoring attendance, e.g. marking register, collecting absence notes
- Talking to individual pupils about their attendance
- Promoting class attendance through the curriculum
- Informing the Principal if a pupil is not in attendance
- Providing support to pupils after a long absence from school

Roles and Responsibilities of Parents

It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for your child's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school. 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.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.40am for registration. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. If a pupil arrives after registration has closed (between 8.40am and 9.00am) the teacher will mark him/her 'Late', unless a valid reason is provided. If a child is late on a regular basis, the Principal will contact the parents to discuss the matter.

Roles and Responsibilities of Pupils

Each pupil must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

Roles and Responsibilities of School Secretary

The School Secretary has an important role to play in monitoring attendance in school. The following are some of the roles they may undertake:

- Operating SIMS
- Taking phone messages from parents when pupils are absent
- Make phone calls when pupils are absent and no contact has been made with the school
- Maintaining the register
- Collating registration data
- Identifying pupils with irregular attendance patterns
- Liaising with the Education Welfare Officer if needed
- Following up if absence notes have not been provided

The Recording of Attendance

The Department of Education has issued guidelines about categorising absence as authorised or unauthorised. As a result the following codes will be used to record absence:

code	reason	code	reason
/ \	present	O	Exceptional circumstances
I	illness	D	No reason provided
M	Medical/dental appointment	U	Late (after registration closed)
A	Artistic Endeavour	F	Family Holiday (agreed)
B	Bereavement	G	Family Holiday (not agreed)
N	No reason yet recorded	H	Other Absence (reason not acceptable)
C	Suspended		

To ensure the school's Attendance Policy operates in an appropriate manner, the Board of Governors has delegated authority to the Principal who has the authority to decide whether an absence should be classified as authorised/ unauthorised.

Authorised absences

In normal circumstances the following types of absences will be classified as authorised (pupil will still be marked absent):

- Illness (when note is provided by parent)
- Hospital / dental appointments (when prior notice is given)
- Family bereavement
- Taking music / dance / drama examinations

In special circumstances parents may apply for a leave of absence for their child. The authorisation of the absence is at the Principal's discretion and must be requested in writing, prior to the absence. In exceptional circumstances, when a written request is impractical, parents should contact the Principal, in person, to discuss the matter in confidence.

Unauthorised absences

In normal circumstances the following types of absence will be classified as unauthorised:

- Birthday
- On a shopping trip with parents
- Staying at home with ill parent or sibling

- Term time holiday - we discourage holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Teachers will only provide homework for pupils going on holiday.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

- Parents contact the school re. pupil's absence
- Non-attendance is noted on the weekly class attendance sheet
- Secretary/principal makes a telephone call to all parents who have not informed school of pupil absence
- Percentage attendance for each pupil is checked on a monthly basis by secretary
- Principal will be informed of any concerns
- Teacher will raise any concerns regarding attendance with parent at Parent/Teacher consultations
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% a letter will be sent to the parents to highlight the school's concerns (**Appendix A**)
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 85% a further letter will be sent to the parents (**Appendix B**)
- If a pupil's attendance continues to cause concern, they will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service (**Appendix C**)

Rewarding Good Attendance and Punctuality

Hamiltonsbawn Primary School believes that good attendance and punctuality are to be encouraged at every opportunity. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend regularly and are punctual. The school currently rewards regular attendance termly

and at end of year prize day with certificates and prizes for full and good attendance

Monitoring and Review

The Principal has worked in partnership with staff, parents, Governors and the school's Education Welfare Officer to develop a policy which ensures consistency. The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine the success or otherwise of the attendance strategies employed within the school.

Appendix A

HAMILTONSBAWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



NOTIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE

Dear Parent / Guardian

This is a letter informing you of your child's attendance. To date _____ has an attendance of ____%. The government has set targets for primary school attendance at 95% and your child falls well below that target. If your child's attendance is 85% or less a referral must be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

I cannot stress enough how important regular attendance is to the social and academic well-being of each and every one of our pupils. I hope that through our combined efforts we can improve your child's attendance and effectively nurture your child's development.

In addition, it is very important that you inform the school if your child is off due to illness so that we can record him/her as ill. Otherwise it may be recorded as "No reason" provided for absence.

Over the next number of weeks I will be monitoring your child's attendance and hope to see an improvement.

If you feel that you wish to discuss the situation, please contact the school office to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

D. Hutchinson (Principal)

Appendix B

HAMILTONSBAWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



NOTIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE

Dear Parent / Guardian

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance has fallen below 85%. To date _____ has an attendance of ____%. The Education Welfare Officer has been informed of the school's attendance figures.

Over the next number of weeks I will be monitoring your child's attendance and hope to see an improvement. If there is no improvement, a referral must be considered to the Education Welfare Officer.

If you feel that you wish to discuss the situation, please contact the school office to make an appointment.

Yours sincerely

D. Hutchinson
(Principal)

Appendix C

HAMILTONSBAWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



NOTIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE

Dear Parent / Guardian

As you are aware, your child's attendance has fallen below 85%. To date _____ has missed ____ days of school this academic year. A referral has been made to the Education Welfare Officer. Education Welfare Services will be in touch with you in due course.

Yours sincerely

D. Hutchinson
(Principal)

Appendix D

HAMILTONSBAWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



(Name) was absent from Hamiltonsbawn P.S.

on (date/s)

because he/she (reason)

.....

Signed:..... Parent/Guardian

HAMILTONSBAWN PRIMARY SCHOOL



(Name) was absent from Hamiltonsbawn P.S.

on (date/s)

because he/she (reason)

.....

Signed: Parent/Guardian