



Culmore Primary 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 their potential.

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

Culmore Primary School is a school where:

- **Children of all backgrounds and abilities are valued; each being encouraged to reach their full potential in a safe, happy, secure, lively and stimulating environment. This will be achieved by offering the highest quality teaching and learning in order to raise standards.**
- **Change is accepted as a natural and necessary part of the improvement process but will involve prioritising targets as part of the School Development Plan. This will involve preparing children for life in a world which will change beyond our current perception.**
- **A positive outlook is promoted in everyone involved in school life ie. pupils, teachers, parents, members of the Board of Governors, community and other stakeholders involved.**

Culmore Primary School aims:

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at our 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 at Culmore Primary School has the overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.

The Board of Governors provides support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed on the agenda for 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 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>

Culmore Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. School will inform parents of any new initiatives (eg. Miss School Miss out).

Role of Parent

Parents have a legal duty * 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 attend that school regularly.

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. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with work which may be completed at home or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.55am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on a child's attendance record. If a child appears reluctant to attend school their parents should discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both parent and child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Culmore Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If a child has been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to his/her teacher when he/she returns.

Absence Procedures

All parents/guardians are required to inform school on the morning of an absence and then send a written note to their child's class teacher which provides a clear reason for any absence on their return to school.

Family holidays during Term Time

Culmore 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 unauthorised absences. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

1. On the first day of a child's absence, school will phone his/her parents/guardians (9.00-9.30am) to ascertain where the child is and why he/she is not at school if we have not been given a reason.
2. If there is a problem with which school is able to assist, we will do our best to help the child (and his/her parents) to return to school.
3. If a child is absent, without good reason, and measures have been taken to support the family, school will follow Educational Welfare Service procedures ie. contact the parent(s) in writing; meet with the parent(s) formally; refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority (EA), through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) has 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 their attendance falls below 85%, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

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