



LIMAVADY HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

“The school has a caring ethos and shows a strong commitment to the welfare of the pupils and the staff.”

“The pastoral care supports the pupils’ learning.”

Together Towards Improvement

Rationale

We very much value, acknowledge and reward the commitment shown in the achievement of a good attendance record. In keeping with our school vision, Limavady High School is committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their academic potential and are prepared for the world of work. We acknowledge the correlation between good attendance, pupil self-esteem and high academic achievement. Limavady High School thus places great importance on attendance and punctuality and strives to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil feels valued and secure.

Aims of this Policy

- To ensure the health and safety of all pupils.
- To monitor and evaluate attendance and punctuality on a regular basis.
- To provide a framework that outlines the roles and responsibilities of staff, parents/carers and pupils in relation to attendance.
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/carers and pupils.
- To maintain a high attendance figure by all students in Limavady High School.

Role of the School

Limavady High School is committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to encourage good attendance and punctuality.

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance whilst the Board of Governors provide support by regularly reviewing school attendance figures and targets. Form Tutors monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils daily by ensuring pupil attendance is recorded during first and second registration and subject teachers use SIMS to record individual subject attendance. Heads of Year deal with any attendance or punctuality concerns within their Year by following school procedures. On-going concerns regarding pupil attendance are brought to the attention of the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) for referral to the Education Welfare Officer. Limavady High School's approach to monitoring attendance has been summarised in the document 'Attendance Matters' (Appendix One)

Limavady High School appreciates those pupils who strive to attend throughout the year and has sought to reward this in proactive measures undertaken in the school. All pupils attaining 100% full attendance in each year are awarded Whole School Attendance Awards at the annual Prize Day Ceremony. Full attendance during one school term is acknowledged in special assemblies. High attendance is also a criterion used to identify pupils eligible for consideration for pupil leadership positions. Attendance also figures prominently in UCAS reports and all references from the School.

Likewise Limavady High School acknowledges its statutory responsibility to ensure that students are in attendance during term time and adheres to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2013/13.

Role of Form Tutors

All pupils must be in their registration rooms at 9.00am where Form Tutors complete the online register and submit it before 9.10am. All pupils absent are marked "N".

If a pupil arrives after registration has been submitted, he/she must immediately go to reception in order to be marked present. Arrival after 9.10am will be denoted as “L” on the register – this does not affect the percentage attendance. Patterns of lateness will be monitored.

Morning registration closes at 10.55am. Any pupil who has not registered by this time will be officially absent for the morning session and this will be denoted as “N” on the register and will affect a pupils’ percentage attendance for the year.

Form Tutors monitor closely the attendance of all pupils in their form class by informing the pupils of their attendance percentage at the start of every month. This is done using a report provided by the Head of Year. Form Tutors will record onto this report any reasons that they are aware of which explain attendance less than 90%. This report is then returned to the Head of Year.

After a pupil has been absent, the Form Tutor will ask for an absence note to be handed in no more than two times. If after two reminders a pupil has not provided an absence note, they will be referred to their Head of Year.

Afternoon registration is marked by the Form Tutor during second registration. All pupils absent are marked “N”. If a pupil arrives after second registration has been submitted, he/she must immediately go to reception in order to be marked present.

Every Friday, Form Tutors should send absence notes down to the School Office. These notes will be used to ensure that the register is accurate. Notes will be filed centrally in the School Office.

Role of Subject Teachers

Subject teachers should use SIMS to mark the class roll. If a pupil has been marked present during registration but is not in class, the subject teacher will make reasonable efforts to ascertain where the pupil is. The relevant Head of Year should be informed if a pupil’s whereabouts is unknown. All pupils absent without explanation should be marked “N”.

Role of Head of Year

Correspondence with parents / carers will be undertaken by the respective Head of Year. Heads of Year will provide Form Tutors with a SIMS Unexplained Absence report once a week. After a Form Tutor has requested an absence note two times, the Head of Year will intervene. A further request/contact home/sanction will be used at the Head of Year’s discretion.

Once a month, the Head of Year will provide Form Tutors with a SIMS Percentage Attendance report. After the Form Tutor has recorded possible reasons for attendance less than 90%, the Head of Year will complete the Monitoring Attendance Report (Appendix Two). At this point, individual pupils may be interviewed, a letter sent home or parents interviewed. Heads of Year will use their knowledge of individual pupils and their professional judgement when dealing with attendance less than 90%. These reports should be passed on to the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) who will monitor the actions taken by the Head of Year and will make referrals to the EWO when necessary.

If a pupil has a planned absence during the school day (e.g. appointments) he/she must inform the Head of Year during first registration. The Head of Year will provide a sign out slip. The Head of Year will also provide a sign out slip if a pupil is considered to be too unwell to remain in school.

Role of Vice Principal (Pastoral Care)

The Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) has responsibility for overseeing all procedures in relation to attendance. This includes policy formation and review. The Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) will meet with the school's designated EWO once a fortnight to discuss open cases and new concerns. Once a month the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) will analyse the Monitoring Attendance Report provided by Heads of Year. If a pupil's attendance percentage falls below 85% despite a letter being sent home and a meeting taking place with parents/carers, the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) will make a referral to the EWO. The Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) will keep the Principal updated on matters relating to attendance.

Role of Pupils

Pupils must attend school regularly and punctually. However, following any period of unavoidable absence, pupils must present an absence note or slip from the pupil journal to his/her Form Tutor outlining the reason for absence signed by his/her parent/carer. This note is then sent to reception where it will be noted on the pupil attendance record.

It is the pupil's responsibility to catch up on work missed immediately on his/her return. However, where a pupil has been unavoidably absent for a prolonged period of time, he/she should seek assistance from the Form Teacher and/or Head of Year to assist with catching up work or further support as required.

Where a pupil has a planned medical or dental appointment parents/carers must record details of this in writing which the pupil must present to his/her Head of Year during first registration and obtain a sign out slip. Pupils show the slip to the subject teacher when they leave/arrive and must also continue to sign in/out at Reception when arriving from or leaving to go to an appointment. Pupils are expected to return to school after their appointment if it finishes before the end of the school day.

Absence from class to participate in sporting or other activities is regarded by Limavady High School as a privilege and not a right. All pupils are expected to catch up with any work missed/hand in assignments on time. Participation in such activities is in addition to and not instead of the scheduled work in class.

Role of Parents/Carers

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.

Parents/Carers should ensure good attendance habits are formed by insisting that their child attends school every day. As pupils in Limavady High School are being prepared for life and work, parents/carers must ensure that pupils arrive for school on time. Where lateness becomes an issue, parents/carers should support the sanctions which are issued by Heads of Year and Senior Leaders.

If a child is absent from school, parents/carers may contact the school reception. This message will be recorded and pass on to the Form Teacher and relevant personnel in the School Office. If a telephone call has been made, an absence note is not required. If notification by telephone is not given, parents must provide a written explanation for the absence on the first day that the child returns from school. Absence notes written by the parent/carer continue to be required when a child turns 18. EMA may not be paid to eligible pupils in Sixth Form if absence notes are not provided.

If a child is absent for more than three consecutive days, the parent/carer is expected to contact the school to explain this prolonged absence.

Limavady High School does not condone family holidays during term time. If a parent/carer does decide to book a holiday during term time, a letter should be written to the Principal. Work will not be provided by the School and a referral to the EWO will be made if attendance falls below 85%.

Whilst we encourage parents to arrange medical and dental appointments outside the school day, we appreciate this is sometimes unavoidable. Therefore, if a pupil has a planned medical or dental appointment parents/carers must record details of this in writing. Pupils must show this note to his/her Head of Year during first registration. Pupils must also continue to sign in/out at Reception when arriving from or leaving to go to an appointment.

Where a child appears reluctant to attend school parents are encouraged to discuss the matter promptly with the Form Teacher or Head of Year.

Role of Education Welfare Service

Where a student's attendance falls below 85% or attendance difficulties exist, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address and/or improve school attendance.

Incentives

While there is no Departmental requirement to reward school attendance, Limavady High School is proactive in encouraging good attendance:

- Extra-curricular programmes
- School Youth Club
- Pastoral Care systems and policies
- A curriculum tailored to the needs of individual pupil ability
- School trips and educational visits/outings
- Whole School Attendance Awards for 100% attendance
- Special Assemblies to acknowledge 100% attendance within a term
- Pupil leadership opportunities
- Pupil voice surveys and School Council
- Pupils are informed of their attendance percentage once a month
- Parent information evenings

Consultation

Key stakeholders have been consulted on this policy:

- pupils;
- parents and carers;
- all staff; and
- Board of Governors.

Date policy agreed by Board of Governors and staff

Signed Chair of Governors

Date for review of policy:

October 2017

This policy document takes on board the best practice set out in the circular 2015/02 - Attendance guidance and absence recording by schools. It will be reviewed by the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) in the light of any additional DENI requirements. The policy is one of the school's overall pastoral policies and should not be read in isolation.

Appendix One

Appendix Two