



Building a Legacy

Andrews Memorial Primary School

Policy on Attendance

Our school ethos

Andrews Memorial believes in the potential of every child: to create; to achieve; to celebrate; to make a difference. We believe in blending and balancing the traditional elements of literacy and numeracy with a stimulating, up-to-date and challenging curriculum. We recognise the potential for ICT to enhance learning across the curriculum.

We aim to ensure that we provide a welcoming, caring and happy learning environment, in and beyond the classroom; also that we deliver learning that is valued by the whole school community and which develops an understanding and an appreciation of the world around us.

Ultimately, we hope to nurture well-rounded young people, who can engage with each other and with adults; who respect everyone and who have a sense of moral responsibility.

We believe it is our duty to:

- ✓ *Enthuse and enable pupils to reach their full potential by developing independence, self-discipline, self-confidence and self-esteem*
- ✓ *Create a positive atmosphere of encouragement and high expectations*
- ✓ *Build and nurture relationships between home, school and the community*
- ✓ *Provide a well-balanced, exciting and meaningful curriculum in a safe, caring and happy environment*
- ✓ *Promote an ethos of engagement and achievement built on effort*
- ✓ *Instil a sense of purpose in making a contribution to life in and beyond school*

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Policy on Attendance

1. Introduction

Andrews Memorial is committed to ensuring that all pupils attend school regularly. Regular and punctual attendance is a key factor in learning and fulfilling potential. The children's engagement and general wellbeing are also enhanced by being at school and sharing in school events in and beyond the classroom. Critically, home support for regular attendance supports any school policy, and this policy is linked to others of a pastoral or safeguarding nature.

Andrews Memorial provides a fully inclusive curriculum, with equal access for all pupils. Regular attendance supports this and all other themes of our school ethos.

2. Aims & Objectives

- To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils
- To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians, pupils and staff
- To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service
- **Andrews Memorial aims to have every pupil attaining a yearly minimum of 95% attendance**
- **Andrews Memorial aims to have a yearly mean whole school attendance of 97%**

3. Accountability

All schools have a duty to report attendance figures, both to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and to Boards of Governors. The data is not simply for internal school use and, in the case of the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), can be accessed remotely, normally on a monthly basis. Where a pupil's attendance falls below 85% for a given period (normally per month), the school reports this and embarks on a programme of monitoring, involving the class teachers, pupils and parents.

The Department of Education (NI) also monitors school attendance and schools record it in their School Development Plans. In recent years, the Department has embarked on a campaign of awareness for parents; its parents' leaflet is included here as Appendix 1.

In September 2022, the Department of Education issued guidance for schools on attendance issues, recognising previous publications and adding revised

terminology related to levels of absence and possible interventions. These are summarised in Appendix 1

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive a full-time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude, and suitable to any special educational needs.

4. Registration

Registration for all classes opens at 9.00am and closes at 9.10am; the corresponding times for the afternoon session are 12.45pm and 12.55pm (P1-3 classes), and 1.00pm and 1.10pm (P4-7 classes).

The class teacher records daily attendance for each pupil on two occasions - morning and afternoon. Absence codes must be recorded once the reason for absence has been confirmed by parents (Appendix 2 lists the codes used). Authorised absences are those relating to illness, medical appointments, and certain specified and approved activities (by the Department of Education). Weekly attendance records are issued and retained by the office; attendance records must be retained by the school for 10 years post registration date.

Attendance reports are produced on a monthly basis for each class, with an additional report listing those pupils whose attendance falls below 85%.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

School

- The school is committed to working with parents/carers, pupils and staff to ensure as full attendance as possible for all pupils
- The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers/designated staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/her attention
- The Principal will contact parents and, where relevant, the EWS - including making referrals to the EWO
- The Principal and staff will monitor attendance issues, eg trends of absence, individual poor attendance, individual/family circumstances, improved/consistently high attendance
- The pupils' attendance will be available to each teacher for consultations with parents in October and March of each academic year; teachers are advised to draw parents' attention to the data
- The school will record pupils' attendance on the Annual Report; the format will be kept under review, but will focus on either/some/all of the following:
 - Percentage attendance (as recorded to a predetermined date)
 - Number of days absent in the year
 - Number of unauthorised absences
 - Number of late attendances (after registration closed)

- The Board of Governors provides support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets, and ensuring it is placed as a regular item on its meeting agendas
- The teaching staff will regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions; teachers will also promote the benefits of regular and punctual attendance with their pupils

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>

Parents

- Ensuring their child 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 ¹
- Informing 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; parents can also use their child's Homework Notebook to record details of absence (P3-7)
- Making requests for authorised absences during term time; the school will determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised (only in very exceptional circumstances are holidays during term time recorded as authorised and the school strongly discourages these)
- Ensuring children are in school at 9.00am for registration and the beginning of classes. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record - late is defined as after 9.10am
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about a child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with

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

Pupils

- Making every effort to get to school on time and into class promptly
- Following the school's procedures for registration, including 'self-registration'
- Supporting parents in notifying the teacher about reasons for absence
- Talking to teachers about concerns they may have about their own or other children's attendance, eg reluctance to come to school, truancy, issues that are worrying them

6. Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

The summary of procedures below sets out how the school manages non-attendance:

1. First day of absence: a telephone call to the school is appreciated, outlining the reason for absence and, if possible, the likely period of absence; a message to the class teacher via Seesaw is also acceptable
2. Return to school: a written explanation of the absence is expected; this can be recorded in the appropriate section of the Homework Diary or provided in a separate letter; school attendance records are retained by the school
3. Monthly attendance reports: the Principal monitors these; if a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, the parents and/or the EWO may be notified
4. Consistent poor attendance will be reported to the EWO and a letter will be sent to the parents
5. If attendance does not improve, the Principal will make an appointment to speak to parents
6. Further poor attendance will result in a referral being made to the EWO

NB - at all times, as with all school policies, the school remains open and willing to discuss any concerns with parents regarding attendance; Andrews Memorial prides itself on being a supportive environment for its whole school community.

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.

Appendix 1

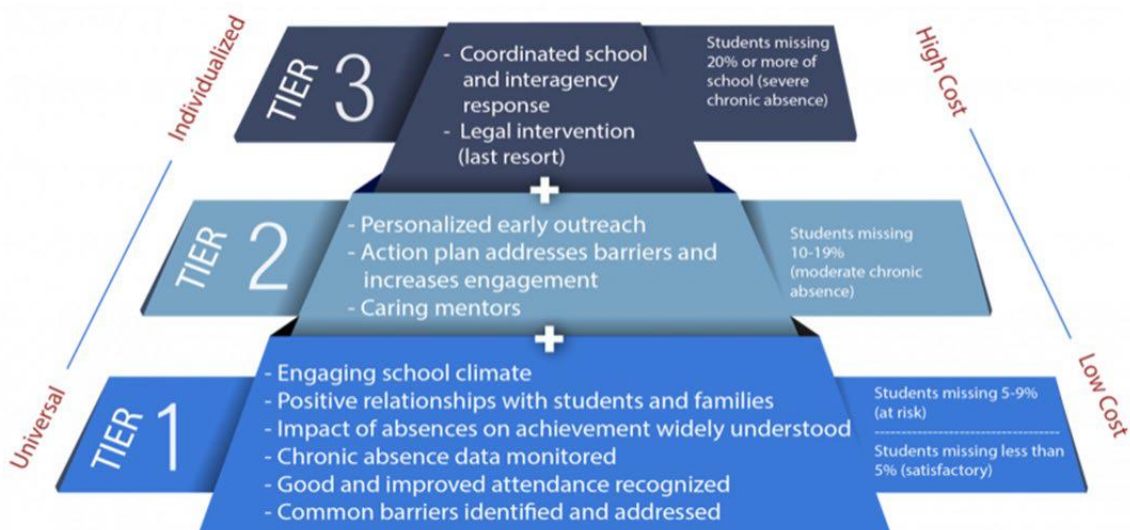
Summary of the Department of Education (NI)'s ratings for attendance:

attendance (%)	days missed	DENI rating
95	9 (1 week & 4 days)	satisfactory
90	19 (3 weeks & 4 days)	poor
85	28 (5 weeks & 3 days)	very poor
80	38 (7 weeks & 3 days)	unacceptable
75	46 (9 weeks & 1 day)	unacceptable

The following link accesses the full parents' leaflet:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/attendance-matters-a-parents-guide.pdf>

Summary of the Department of Education (NI)'s revised guidance, September 2022:



- Tier 1a: 'regular' attendance, missing 0-4,9% of school (< 1 day per month)
 Tier 1b: 'at risk' attendance, missing 5-9.9% of school (1+ day per month)
 Tier 2: 'chronic' attendance, missing 10-19.9% of school (2-3 days per month)
 Tier 3: 'severe chronic' attendance, missing 20% or more of school

Appendix 2

Attendance codes as used by the school:

Key to codes		
/ Present (AM)	N No reason yet provided for absence	* Not on roll
\ Present (PM)	O Other Exceptional Circumstances	- All should attend / No mark recorded
A Artistic Endeavour	P Approved Sporting Activity	1 AEP (ELB)
B Bereavement	R Religious Observance	2 Home/hospital tuition (ELB)
C Suspended	S Study Leave	3 Elective Home Education
D Did not provide a reason for absence	U Late (after registers closed)	4 Pupil Referral Unit
F Family holiday (agreed)	V Educational Visit	5 Another mainstream school (EF)
G Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	W Work Experience	6 Training Organisation (EF)
H Other Absence	X Only staff should attend	7 FE College (EF)
I Illness(not medical/dental etc. appointments)	Y Exceptional closure	8 Intensive Support Learning Unit
L Late (before registration closed)	! No Attendance Required	9 CAMHS
M Medical/Dental Appointments	# Holiday for all	