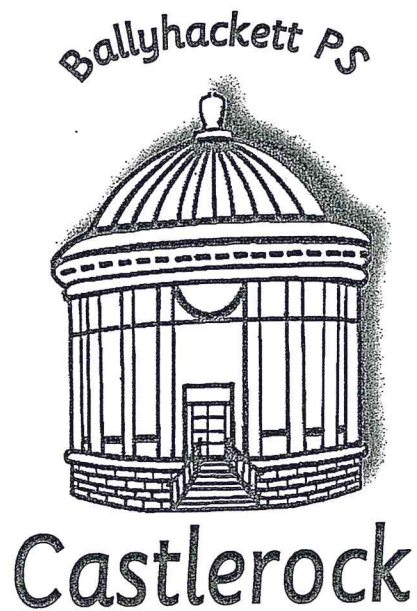


Together Everyone Achieves More

# Ballyhackett Primary School



## Attendance Policy

October 2018

## 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.

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

### **A. Ethos and Values**

At Ballyhackett Primary School we have the highest expectation for the achievement of every child, and we aim to:

- Ensure that every member of the school community will be treated with equal value and respect.
- Provide a challenging learning environment that promotes children's independent learning, enjoyment and confidence.
- Involve parents and the wider community for the benefit of pupil's learning.
- Promote a health and safety culture for the benefit of all.
- Promote high standards of behaviour, towards property and each other.
- Ensure that school improvement and effectiveness are collective responsibilities.
- Ensure that pupils have the skills, knowledge and understanding to prepare them for the next stage of their education and life.

### **B. Pupil Welfare / Pastoral Care**

#### Mission Statement

Ballyhackett Primary School seeks to provide a caring, secure and challenging environment in which all our pupils have an equal opportunity to reach their full potential - spiritually, socially, academically, physically, emotionally, morally and culturally and in which teaching and learning of academic excellence can occur with the co-operation and support of parents

#### Aims

1. To improve / maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Ballyhackett Primary 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 Education Welfare Service.

## Role of the School

Mrs McIlvar, as Principal of Ballyhackett Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance. Good attendance is a COLLECTIVE responsibility and therefore it is expected that teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to the Principal's attention...or to the attention of: -

Mrs K Mc Ginley (Designated Teacher for Child Protection)

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets presented to them for their Annual Report and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings as necessary.

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

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.

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

## Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

*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/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed by a telephone call on the first day of absence and with the school absence 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.

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

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.



## Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Ballyhackett Primary School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly.

In most cases, our children come to school on time every day. By making sure they do, you are helping to establish a good practice for the future. Patterns of lateness and absence that start in Primary School can end up in truancy in the secondary school and 'hard to break habits' for the work place, so please make sure you HELP your child by:-

- being firm about bedtimes.
- encouraging them to prepare the night before, those items will need for school the next day.
- making sure they are up in time to have breakfast and to leave the house promptly.

**REMEMBER: SCHOOL COMMENCES AT 8.45 AM**

If you have been absent from school or very late, an absent note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

## ABSENCE PROCEDURES

- Attendance / absence of pupils are recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To assist Parents/Guardians in reporting absences, pupils are provided with absent notes
- There are over 30 codes for marking absences; therefore it is important that specific reasons for the absence or part attendance are given.

### Example

#### Code

'B'	Bereavement	- authorised absence
P	Approved Sporting activity	- approved educational activity
D	No reason provided for absence	- unauthorised absence

## FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Ballyhackett 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.

## PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING NON-ATTENDANCE

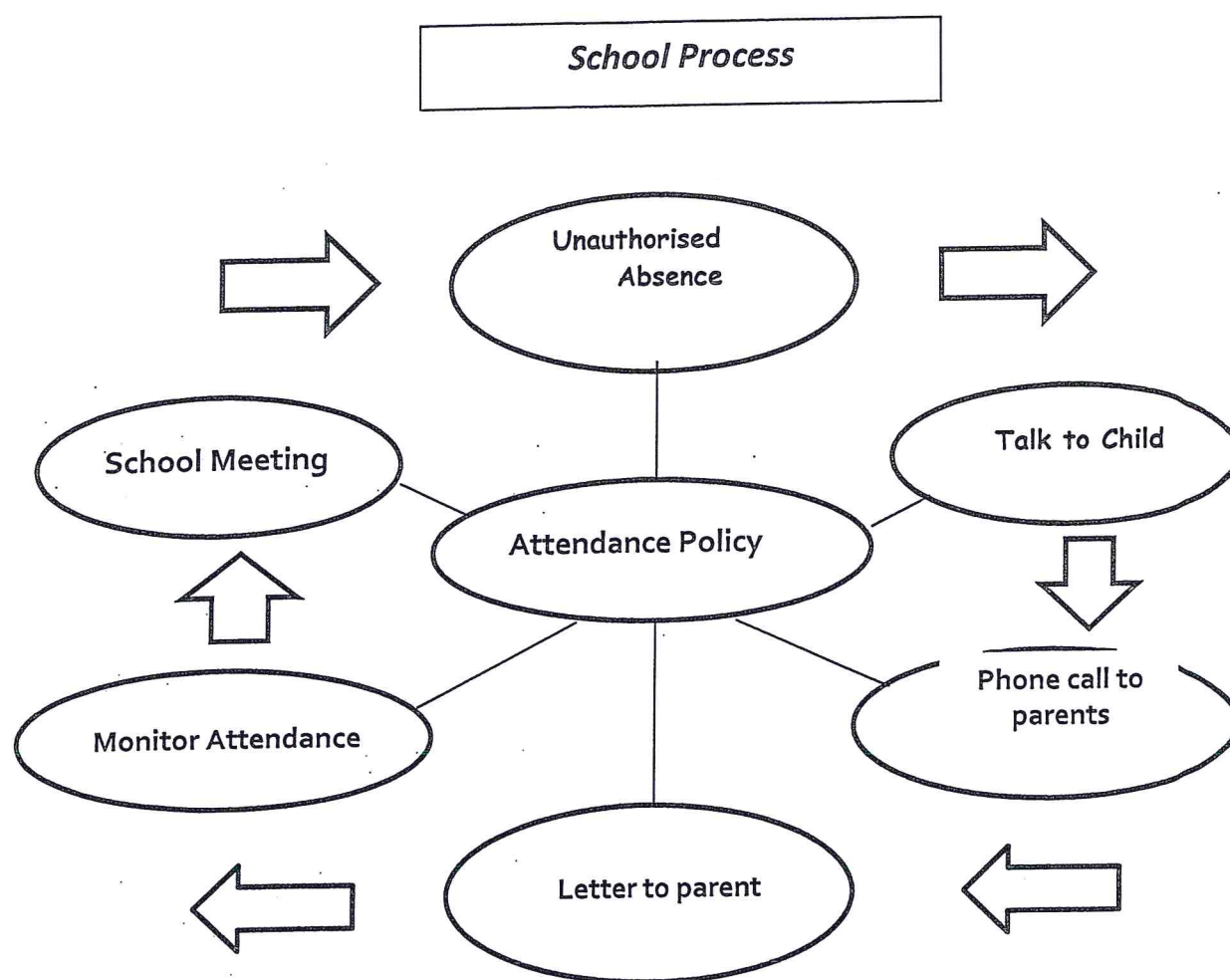
At the end of each month the school will run:

- each child's attendance report.
- each class's attendance report.
- whole school attendance report.

Each teacher will be asked to clearly highlight any child where there is a concern - normally where attendance falls below 85% or a regular pattern of poor attendance e.g. Mondays or Fridays.

- The teacher will talk to the child or parent at this stage. Attendance may improve and no further action will follow. However, where there is persistent low attendance or regular pattern, parents will be written to or invited to a meeting.

If the situation remains unresolved, the school will report the case to the E.W.S.



## EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

Education and Library Boards 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%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

This policy was agreed by staff and ratified by Board of Governors on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2018

Principal Grainne McIlvar

Chair of Board of Governors R. Simpson 10.10.18