

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

FOR

Carrickfergus Academy



Version	Date	Revision Authors	Summary of Changes
1	September 2019	K Rodgers & M Irwin	
2	May 2020	K Rodgers & M Irwin	Addition of punctuality seminars and three letter system for form tutors to record attendance
3	September 2021	P Downing	DE Covid Related codes March 2021 – addendum and updated DE circular
4	December	P Downing	Open for consultation to Parents and BoG December 2021. Ratified by BoG 16 Dec 2021

Introduction

Rationale

Carrickfergus Academy recognises that punctual and regular attendance, alongside high standards of behaviour, is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. It is therefore committed to maintaining high levels of attendance, punctuality and positive behaviour. To this end Carrickfergus Academy actively promotes a learning and teaching ethos which encourages all pupils to attend, whatever their level of ability or need.

Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children at school. This responsibility is set out in the following three pieces of legislation:

1. Article 45 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 states that: ‘the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’.
2. Schedule 13 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 states that if any child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly then the parent of the child shall be guilty of an offence.
3. The Children (NI) Order 1995 allows the Education Authority to make application to the Family Proceedings Court in cases where a child is “not being properly educated”, for an Education Supervision Order.

Aims

1. To maintain/improve the overall attendance and punctuality of pupils at Carrickfergus Academy.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance and punctuality.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/carers.
4. To ensure parents/carers and pupils are aware of whole school and individual attendance targets.
5. To use a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
6. To maintain positive and consistent communication between home and school.
7. To implement a system of rewards and consequences pertaining to attendance and punctuality.
8. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service and other supportive agencies.

Role of School

School is required to take an attendance register twice each day. This shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents/carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings and/or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, or a cause that can be defined as unavoidable.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

1. Parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily.
2. Truancy before or during the school day.
3. Absences which have not been properly explained.

The **Principal** (Dr Downing) at Carrickfergus Academy has overall responsibility for school attendance.

The **Vice-Principal (Pastoral)** is the designated member of the Senior Leadership team with responsibility for attendance. She is supported in monitoring and reviewing pupil attendance by the Deputy Pastoral Leader KS3 and the Deputy Pastoral Leader KS4.

The **Board of Governors** provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets.

All Staff regularly monitor attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded through Lesson Monitor:

Form Tutors' Roles and Responsibilities (See Appendix 2)

Year Mentors' Roles and Responsibilities (See Appendix 3)

Deputy Pastoral Leaders' Roles & Responsibilities (KS3 & KS4) (See Appendix 3)

In order to record accurately and monitor attendance in a consistent way the school adheres to the guidance provided in the [Department of Education Circular 2021/16](#) which can be found at the following link:

[DE Circular 2021 16 - Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording by Schools - 2021 22.pdf](#)
([education-ni.gov.uk](#))

Carrickfergus Academy is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Carer

If a child is registered in school, their parent/carers has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent/carers 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 and/or by responding to the absence text alert. 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 at 9.05 am for registration. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on their child's attendance record.

If a pupil appears reluctant to attend school, the matter should be discussed promptly with the Form Tutor or Year Mentor.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Carrickfergus Academy must attend school regularly and punctually, and must be punctual for each class they attend in the course of the school day. If a pupil has been absent

from school, a written note from a parent/carer must be provided to the Form Tutor on the first day of their return to school, if the absence text alert has not been responded to.

Parents/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the Year Group Pastoral staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school or parent/carer may refer the young person to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) who will try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, which includes linking with an Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Registration Procedures

A warning bell rings at 9.00 am and Morning Registration is between 9.05am - 9.20am.

Pupils' attendance is recorded using Lesson Monitor in SIMS.net by the Form Tutor.

Pupils arriving in school late, that is after 9.05 am, must sign the Late Sign-In Sheet in the office and proceed straight to Registration or Assembly.

Absence Procedures

Parents are asked to assist the school in a number of ways:

1. On the first day of a pupil's absence the parents should contact the school office with a brief explanation.
2. Requests for pupils to be absent should be sent as far ahead of the event as possible and should be addressed to the Form Tutor. Parents/carers are asked to arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours if they possibly can. Notes requesting permission to be absent should state the time at which the pupil will have to leave school and, where appropriate, the time at which he/she will return.
3. Family holidays during term-time – Carrickfergus Academy discourages holidays during term-time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Parents/carers are asked not to take their children on holiday during term-time. It is difficult for children to catch up

what they miss, even after a few days' absence. It is also difficult for the school to do its best for the pupils if they miss more classes than they need to.

Controlled Assessment/coursework and practical assessment, for example, must fit into a tight schedule, and changes in our arrangements cannot be made to accommodate additional holidays. Family holidays taken during term-time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

4. Please note that if the school organises for pupils to be absent during the course of the day on an approved educational visit, then the pupil will be marked present using the appropriate code on their registration certificate. However, if parents remove children from school, then the pupil will be marked absent.
5. No pupil is permitted to leave the school building or grounds during the course of the school day unless he or she has formal permission to do so.

The school reserves the right to use disciplinary sanctions when responding to poor attendance and/or poor punctuality. Poor attendance/punctuality may preclude holding positions of responsibility within the school (such as prefectship) and may lead to loss of privileges (such as attending the school formal). The school reserves the right to withdraw a pupil with poor attendance (below 90%) from school enrichment trips or other activities. Attendance and punctuality concerns may also be mentioned on references from the school.

Monitoring Attendance

A record of each pupil's attendance is kept. The attendance record for each academic year is included on a pupil's Progress Report.

The Department of Education considers attendance below 90% as poor (see Appendix 1).

When issues over attendance become evident the Year Mentor and/or Deputy Pastoral Leader KS3/4 will contact home.

Attendance letters (for those with very poor attendance below 85%) are sent every half-term. Depending on the level of absence, an appointment may be requested to meet with a parent/carer in person.

When attendance drops below 85%, the school is obliged to discuss attendance with the Education Welfare Service, and may need to make a formal referral.

Monitoring Punctuality

A record of each pupil's punctuality is kept. A punctuality record is included on a pupil's Progress Report.

When a pattern of lateness presents, the Year Mentor will be in contact with home and may request a meeting with the parents/carers to discuss.

Those who are persistently late for registration [i.e. more than 4 times in a 2-week cycle] will be issued with a Lateness Detention. Persistent lateness to school in the morning may result in the pupil being placed on a Punctuality Card with their Form Tutor and/or Year Mentor.

If a pupil has been issued with a Lateness Detention on 3 occasions in one school half-term he/she will automatically be registered to attend Punctuality Seminar, after school, lasting 50 minutes in duration. This seminar will be led by the Deputy Pastoral Leader KS3/4 and will aim to raise awareness amongst the pupils of the impact of poor punctuality, with a view to equipping the pupils with strategies to facilitate improvement.

Signing In and Out of School During The Day

Junior Campus:

If pupil arrives to school after 9.20 am, the close of registration, they are to report to the school office who will record their reason for lateness in Lesson Monitor and register them as late (L) in the SIMS register. The pupil should also sign the Lateness Sign-In Sheet providing a reason for their lateness to school. He/she should then make their way promptly to class.

If a pupil needs to leave school during the day they must show their note at registration to their Form Tutor who will sign it and issue a Pass Out. When they need to leave school they must report to the school office, show their Pass Out and sign out of school. Pupils in Years 8 - 10 must be collected from reception by a parent/carer, unless prior authorisation has been given to school to allow them to walk home and/or be collected by a taxi. If a pupil returns during the school day they must sign in at reception before proceeding to class.

Senior Campus:

If a pupil arrives to school after 9.05 am they are to report to the school office who will record their reason for lateness in Lesson Monitor and register them as late (L) in the SIMS register. The pupil should also sign the Late Sign-In Sheet providing a reason for their lateness to school. He/she should then make their way promptly to class.

If a pupil needs to leave school during the day they must show their note at registration to their Form Tutor who will sign it and issue a Pass Out. When they need to leave school they must report to the school office, show their Pass Out and sign out of school. Pupils in Years 11 – 12 must be collected from reception by a parent/carer, unless prior authorisation has been given to school to allow them to walk home and/or be collected by a taxi. Pupils in Years 13 – 14, after signing out, can leave from reception unaccompanied. If a pupil returns during the school day they must sign in at reception before proceeding to class.

Absence Text Message Alert

Carrickfergus Academy send an absence text alert to parents/carers of pupils who are recorded absent at the close of AM registration each day.

SIMS Parent App

Carrickfergus Academy use SIMS Parent App to support attendance, punctuality, academic achievement and student wellbeing. All parents/carers, with children attending the Academy, must register for SIMS Parent App. All written communication from school will be through this electronic portal, including information pertaining to the attendance and punctuality of your child/children.

DENI Guidance on Absence Figures

The Department of Education has provided guidance to parents and schools regarding attendance statistics in a leaflet entitled:

‘School Attendance Matters – A Parent’s Guide’

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



EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS –

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Attendance percentages can be misleading.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that’s nearly 4 school weeks.



Give your child the best start in life – every school day counts.

WHY ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL IS SO IMPORTANT

If a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school it is essential that they attend their school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential.

Key Point

Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in examinations and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- To learn.
- To make new friends.
- To experience new things in life.
- To gain qualifications.
- To develop new skills.
- To build confidence and self-esteem.
- To have the best possible start in life.

CAN ATTENDANCE MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO EXAM RESULTS?

Greater than
95% Attendance



77% of pupils achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths when they attended more than 95%

77%

Less than
90% Attendance



43% of pupils achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths when they attended less than 90%

43%

Less than
80% Attendance



32% of pupils achieved at least 5 GCSEs including English and Maths when they attended less than 80%

32%

Source: School Leavers 2014/15

Carrickfergus Academy Roles & Responsibilities



Form Tutors

Morning Registration

(9.05 am – 9.20 am)

Punctuality

Roll marked by Form Tutors.

Pupils should be in Form Class **at 9.05 am**. If late, the Form Tutor will use the Blue Cell on Lesson Monitor for minutes late to Form Class but this will not be recorded as an 'L' Code for official attendance at this stage. **Only the office staff will use the 'L' code.**

Form Tutor addresses the issue of morning lateness with pupil in the first instance.

Use 'Ready 1' on Punctuality to set extra work for morning lateness.

Form Tutor addresses the issue of lateness with parents via telephone and/or a note in the Homework Diary.

If no improvement in 5 days Form Tutor refers pupil to Year Mentor, who issues Punctuality Card.

Attendance

Form Tutors will be given an **Attendance Folder** in which there will be attendance information for their Form Class:

Monday Form Tutor ***Attendance Record Sheet***

Record of contact with Parents/Carers

Update Pupil Attendance Record in Homework Diary

Return to Year Mentor each half-term

Tuesday – Friday ***Absence Note Tracking Sheet***

Form Tutor Distribute absence letters

Record returns on the tracking sheet

Stickers 100% & 95% which should be placed in Homework Diaries each month

Absence

Form Tutors will remind pupils of absence and collect in absence notes from home. Absence notes should be sent to the office in the registration folder provided.

An 'N' Code Report will be produced by the office weekly – available to Form Tutors on a Tuesday. Letters must be given out to pupils on this day and the date of issue recorded on the Absence Note Tracking Sheet. If absence notes are not being returned to school, Form Tutors must follow this up with a telephone call home. Support from the Year Mentor can also be sought.

Pass Out

Form Tutors will be responsible for writing Pass Outs for their Form Class. It is extremely important that we verify parents' permission. If you are in any doubt contact home.

Attendance Noticeboard

Form Tutors will be expected to keep an attendance section on their Form Class noticeboard, with up to date attendance information for their class.

Carrickfergus Academy Roles & Responsibilities



Year Mentors

Morning Registration
(9.05 am – 9.20 am)

Punctuality

To liaise with Form Tutors to monitor morning punctuality.

To issue detentions based on 'Lates' figures. A Lateness Report will be issued by the office on a fortnightly basis. Any pupil who has 4 or more lates across the 2-week period should be set a main school detention.

To issue a Punctuality Card to pupils who are persistently late to school in the morning. Monitor morning punctuality across a 5-day cycle.

To refer to Deputy Pastoral Leader if no improvement in the pupil's morning punctuality. A referral form should be completed if a pupil is being recommended to attend the Punctuality Seminar.

Attendance & Absence

To liaise with Form Tutors and to keep up to date on attendance priorities within the Year Group.

To ensure that the Attendance Record Sheet and the Absence Tracking Sheet is being completed by Form Tutors and returned to Year Mentors each half-term.

To provide support to Form Tutors in following up on absence notes.

To issue 'Less than 90%' attendance letters to parents and record date of issue in diary.

An Attendance Audit is carried out by the EWS and the DPL each half-term. Year Mentors should assist in this process by providing the DPL with detailed information regarding a pupil's absence from school.

Pass Out

Year Mentors may also be asked to write a Pass Out for a pupil in their Year Group. Year Mentors should liaise with Form Tutors to monitor patterns of requests to leave school early and/or the reasons for this.

Year Group Noticeboard & Assemblies

Year Mentors should use their Year Group noticeboard to help create a group identity. A section of this noticeboard should be used to praise good attendance in the Year Group.

Year Group assemblies should also be used to reward and praise good attendance.

Deputy Pastoral Leader

To issue the 'Less than 85%' attendance letter.

To liaise with the Year Mentors regarding EWS referrals.

To carry out pastoral interviews with pupils and parents/carers regarding attendance.

To keep SLT and VP Pastoral up to date with attendance issues and statistics.

To complete referrals for Home Tuition, EOTAS, SAMs for pupils.

To meet with the EWS on a fortnightly basis.

To hold a Punctuality seminar each half-term for pupils who have had a cycle of 3 detentions for lateness to school.

To take an Attendance Awareness assembly, with each Year Group, each term to promote good attendance.

To assist with the delivery of rewards strategies linked to good attendance.

To maintain a Key Stage Attendance noticeboard.

Linked Document

An Attendance Strategy has been developed to support the Attendance & Punctuality Policy of Carrickfergus.

This strategy is based on “The Three Letter System”, and incorporates a Spreadsheet System which will allow “ONE STOP” Monitoring. This spreadsheet links to SIMS and records fortnightly attendance, when letters have been sent, and up to date accumulative figures at a glance. It can be used for referrals to external agencies, BOG Meetings and ETI Inspections.

In addition, the system provides a clear record of the school’s own efforts to improve attendance.

Addendum (COVID absence DE absence coding March 2021)

Red – unauthorised absence

Amber - authorised absence

Green – present / approved educational activity

Blue - attendance not required

CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION
/ \	Present: / = (AM); \ =(PM)	X	Only staff should attend
A*	Artistic Endeavour	Y*	Exceptional Closure
B*	Bereavement	#	Holiday for all
C	Suspended	!	No attendance required
D	No reason provided for absence	1	Community Providers / EOTAS (organised by the EA)
F*	Family Holiday (agreed)	2	Exceptional Teaching Arrangement / hospital
G*	Family Holiday (not agreed)	3	Elective Home Education
H*	Other Absence	4	Pupil Referral Unit
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	5	Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework – EF)
J*	Extended Leave	6	Training Organisation (under EF)
L*	Late (before registration closed)	7	FE College (under EF)
M*	Medical / Dental Appointments	8	Intensive Support Learning Unit
N	No reason yet provided for absence (temporary code only)	9	CAMHS / Mental Health Support
O*	Other Exceptional Circumstances		
COVID 19 SPECIFIC CODES			
P*	Approved Activity	(Covid-19 Illness Confirmed – to be used when child is sick and Covid-19 is confirmed
R*	Religious Observance)	Covid-19 Illness Suspected / Unconfirmed – to be used when child is sick and Covid-19 is suspected but unconfirmed
S*	Study Leave	{	Covid-19 Self-Isolating – Vulnerable Pupil or Household member Pupil chooses not to attend school due to own underlying health conditions or due to health conditions of other family members*. If a pupil is sick, they should be recorded as such.
U*	Late (after registration closed)	}	Covid-19 Self-Isolating - No evidence of learning from home Pupil required to self-isolate but not learning from home / evidence not provided
V*	Educational Visit / Examination	[Covid-19 Self-Isolating & Learning from Home (Formerly Code 8) Pupil required to self-isolate and learning from home* – does not discount from attendance record – maximum of 2 weeks
W*	Work Experience]	Covid-19 Learning from Home - Social Distancing (Formerly Code P) Pupils are not required to attend physically at school due to social distancing rules, imposed by DE or school. E.g. pupils required to attend on certain days or for a certain number of hours per day. This decision must be informed by health professional advice.