

TOWERVIEW PRIMARY SCHOOL



Managing Pupil Attendance & Punctuality Policy

October 2024

www.towerviewps.co.uk



Rationale

In Towerview Primary School we are committed to maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality. Regular school attendance and good punctuality are vital components in helping pupils to have full access to the Northern Ireland Curriculum and fulfil their potential. Towerview PS will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and punctuality and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. We have created an environment that is sympathetic and responsive to the needs of all of our pupils. We hope that our children and their parents recognise this and are confident about sharing any concerns with the relevant members of staff.

Aims

- To improve the overall attendance and punctuality of pupils at Towerview Primary School.
- To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers to establish good patterns of punctuality and attendance.
- To encourage parents/carers to ensure their children are at school on time every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.
- To keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance and punctuality.
- To encourage children to be independent and come to school every day, on time and with the correct resources.
- To liaise closely with the Educational Welfare Officer with regard to attendance.

The Importance of Good Attendance and Punctuality www.towerviewps.co.uk

School Attendance Matters – A Parent's Guide: As presented on the school website.

A good pattern of attendance and punctuality is important because it helps children:

- To learn.
- To have fun.
- To make new friends.
- To experience new things in life.
- To develop awareness of other cultures, religion, ethnicity and gender differences.
- To achieve.
- To develop new skills.

- To build confidence and self-esteem.
- To develop the confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others.
- To develop good habits in readiness that will last throughout their lives.
- To have the best possible start in life.

- Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in their education and

are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and becoming victims of crime or abuse.

Roles and Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- Under Article 45 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (“the 1986 Order”), it is the duty of parents/carers who have a child of compulsory school age to ensure their child receives efficient, full time education suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and to any special educational needs they may have.
- *Source: School Attendance Matters – A Parent’s Guide.*
- Paragraph 3 of Schedule 13 to the 1986 Order states that it is the duty of a parent of a registered pupil of a school to secure their regular attendance at school. This applies to all children of compulsory school age who are on the register of a school. As a parent you are legally responsible for making this happen.
- *Source: School Attendance Matters – A Parent’s Guide.*
- 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 homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.
- Pupils are expected to be in school at 9:00am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure punctuality. Lateness is recorded at registration and on each child’s attendance record.
- If a child appears reluctant to attend school, it is the responsibility of the parent to inform the class teacher and/or Designated Teacher to ensure that support can be offered.
- If a child needs to miss school, eg religious festival, sporting event or some other special occasion, the parent should seek the school’s agreement well in advance and give full details.
- Parents/carers are requested to make routine medical or dental appointments outside of school hours.

Family Holidays During Term Time

- Towerview 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. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised. Staff will not be obliged to prepare school work to take on unauthorised holidays.

Roles and Responsibilities of Pupils

It is the responsibility of pupils to:

- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive at school on time.



- Be organised and ready for work.
- Inform the teacher/DT about any problem that may prevent them from attending school regularly and on time.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff for recording attendance

- To enable Towerview Primary School to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circulars, the most recent being **2019/14 'Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording'**. This document will be retained with the Managing Pupil Attendance & Punctuality Policy in school and can be obtained upon request at the office.
- To report any concerning patterns of absence to the Designated Teacher.
- Each month an audit is printed out from SIMS which identifies pupils whose attendance is showing signs of concern (under 90%). This equates to missing 4 weeks of school during the year.
- These names are circulated to their class teachers by the Designated Teacher and the teacher records reasons for pupil absence and if the parents/carers should be sent a letter.
- Where a teacher believes there is a concern regarding a pupil's attendance and there is not a sufficient reason to explain this, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer advising of the schools concern.
- If attendance remains a concern a second letter, will be sent to the parent/carer and the parent/carer will be asked to contact the school to arrange a meeting with the Principal / and or Designated Teacher.
- If attendance does not improve and falls below 85% then a referral form may be sent to the EWS. Parent/Carers will be informed of this decision.



Punctuality

See Appendix A "Morning Routine"

Categorising Absence

Authorised Absence

Examples include:

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical appointments
- Taking part in a religious event
- Exceptional family circumstance (Eg: wedding or funeral)
- Representing their club/school/county/country in a particular event Eg sport, music etc.

Unauthorised Absence

- Birthdays.
- Visiting relatives.
- Looking after other members of the family.
- A pupil is unnecessarily kept off school.
- Shopping.
- Family holiday/ long weekend break.
- No written reason is provided on return to school after absence.

Educational Welfare Service

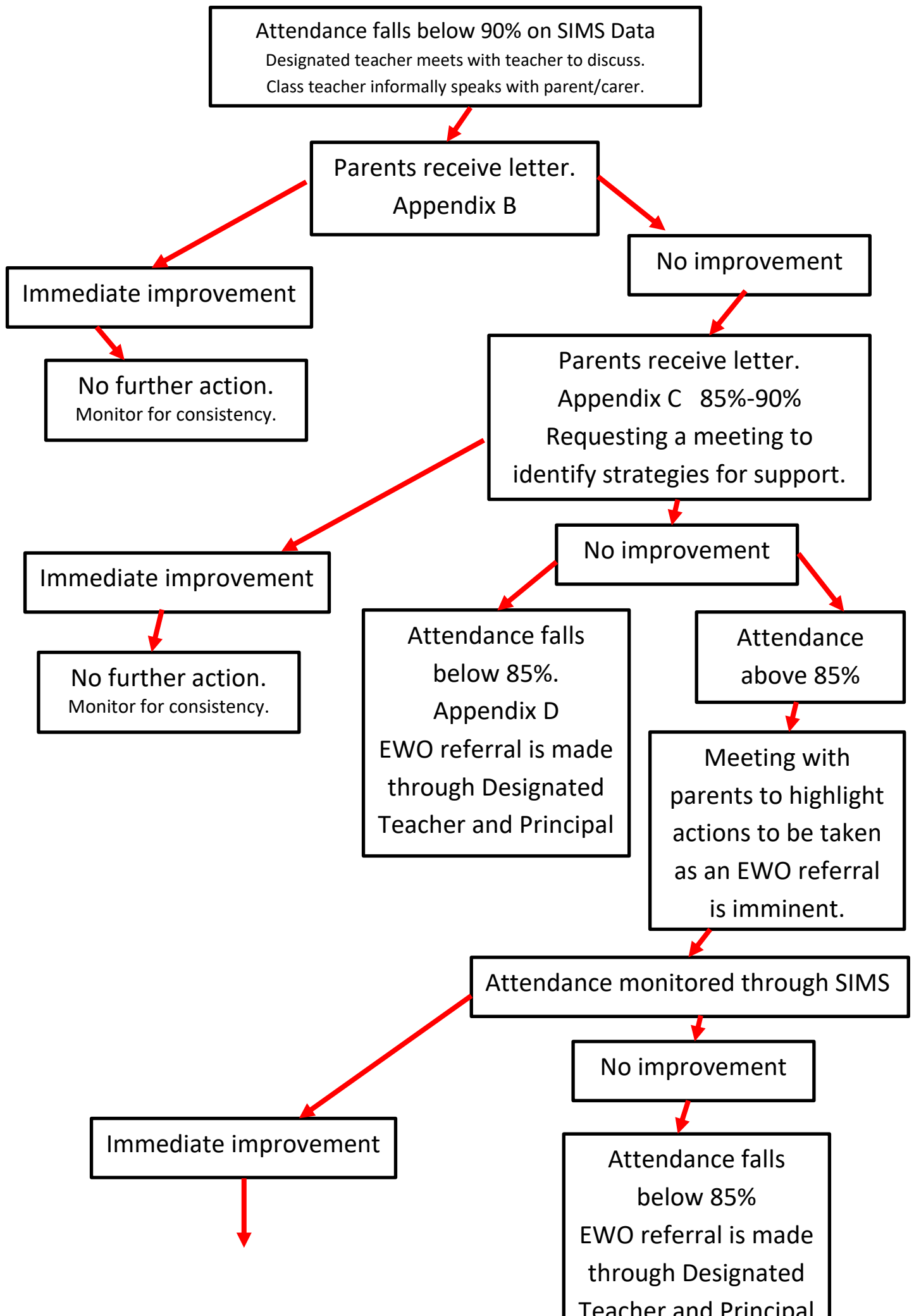
The Education Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal duty to make sure that parents/carers meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

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/carers in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

- Under Part III of Schedule 13 to the 1986 Order, if a child or young person who is registered at a school does not attend regularly a parent/carer can receive a fine not exceeding £1000 in court (for each child). An Education Supervision Order (ESO) could also be made by a court under Article 55 of the Children (NI) Order 1995.

- *Source: School Attendance Matters – A Parent's Guide*





No further action.
Monitor for consistency.



Morning Routine

Dear Parent/Carer,

Please take a few minutes to look over our morning routine and times.

8am Breakfast Club. Please feel free to drive into the staff car park for a safe drop off for breakfast club. Children should not be dropped off before 8am. Unfortunately, we have observed pupils as young as P3 being dropped off as early as 7:50am and left standing unsupervised in the dark.

8:40am Senior playground will be supervised by an adult.
The school gates will be supervised by Mr Boyd / Mr Beckett.

8:45am 1st bell and doors open.
Parents are welcome to bring P1 & P2 children to their respective doors.
We ask P3 – P7 children to walk on their own to their entrances at the rear of the school.

8:55am 2nd bell and doors close.
The playground should be clear and the gates will be locked for pupil safety.

9am Classes have started

Late Attendance - Any pupils arriving after the doors and gates have closed should not enter the playground and should go directly to the entrance at the main office.
The monitoring and recording of late attendance will be kept in the school office where the pupils enter in the morning after 9am. Families who are regularly late (more than 5 times in a half term) will receive a formal letter from our pastoral team. If this persists the details recorded on our school SIMS attendance system will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Late is identified as:

- **Arrival after 9am in the morning**
- **Arrival after 3:10pm in the afternoon**
- **Arrival after 4pm after an after school club**

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

Thank you for your cooperation and support in this matter.

Mr Beckett

Principal: Mr Tim Beckett

100 Towerview Crescent, Bangor, BT19 6AZ

Tel: 028 91 270 480

Fax : 028 91 473 623

Email : tbeckett098@c2kni.net

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Appendix B

School Attendance

Dear Parent/Carer

In September we distributed to all parents a leaflet supplied by the Department of Education entitled 'School Attendance Matters – A Parent's Guide'. This leaflet highlights the point, **"For some parents, 90% attendance may seem acceptable but the reality is that your child misses 19 days in the school year – that's nearly 4 school weeks"**. When a pupil's attendance falls below 85% the Education Welfare Officer becomes involved. At Towerview Primary School we have very high standards and take great pride in seeing our children achieve their potential. In order for us to continue to achieve our goals we need our pupils to have a pattern of good attendance throughout their school life.

- To date _____'s current attendance is _____ %.
- This equates to _____ weeks and _____ days of learning opportunities missed.

We understand that in some cases there are extenuating circumstances, in many cases medical or bereavement issues. It is important that the teacher is made aware of this so that the correct codes are used when filling out the attendance record.

We thank our parents for their continued support of the school and wish to work in partnership with you to give your child the best possible start in life.

Yours sincerely

Mr Beckett

Acting Principal: Mr Tim Beckett

100 Towerview Crescent, Bangor, BT19 6AZ

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Appendix C

School Attendance between 85% - 90%

Date: _____

Dear _____

I am writing to inform you that there continues to be ongoing concerns regarding your child _____'s attendance. Your child's current level of attendance is _____%.

We would like to invite you in to discuss your child's attendance and you will be contacted shortly the Designated Teacher, Mr Beckett.

If your child's attendance continues to decrease and falls below 85% without a valid reason a referral will be made to Education Welfare Services.

Yours sincerely

Mr Beckett

Principal: Mr Tim Beckett

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Appendix D

School Attendance below 85% without a valid reason

Date: _____

Dear _____

I am writing to inform you that due to _____'s attendance not improving and falling below 85% without a valid reason a referral has now been made to Education Welfare Services.

If you wish to discuss or explain reasons for your child's absence please contact the Designated Teacher, Mr Beckett.

Yours sincerely

Mr Beckett

Principal: Mr Tim Beckett

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Appendix E

School Attendance - Punctuality

Date: _____

Dear

Please find attached Appendix letter A that was distributed to all families at the beginning of the year. It has been drawn to our attention by our staff in school that your son/daughter has been late for school on repeated occasions. Our monitoring records indicate that your son/daughter has been recorded late for school on _____ occasions during the period of time _____.

and/or

Your son/daughter has not been collected promptly from school on _____ occasions during the period of time _____.

If you wish to discuss or explain reasons concerning punctuality, or seek support in addressing this, please contact the Designated Teacher, Mr Beckett.

If punctuality does not improve a referral will be made through the school to Education Welfare Services.

Yours sincerely

Mr Beckett

Principal: Mr Tim Beckett

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Appendix F

School Attendance – Punctuality Referral

Date: _____

Dear

Following your receipt of Letter Appendix E on _____ we unfortunately have not seen a sustained improvement in punctuality.

Your son/daughter has been recorded late for school on a further _____ occasions during the period of time _____, now totalling _____ occasions.

and/or

your son/daughter has not been collected promptly from school on a further _____ occasions during the period of time _____, now totalling _____ occasions.

As a result of this, a referral has been made through the school to Education Welfare Services.

If you wish to discuss or explain reasons concerning punctuality, or seek support in addressing this, please contact the Designated Teacher, Mr Beckett.

Yours sincerely

Mr Beckett

Principal: Mr Tim Beckett

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