

BROOKFIELD SPECIAL SCHOOL

"Caring Sharing and Learning Together"



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Brookfield School Mission Statement

'Pupils, staff and parents will create together a happy, caring and productive learning environment, within which children will be encouraged to develop their abilities and talents to their fullest extent.'

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.

There is a strong correlation between regular school attendance and improved attainment. Poor school attendance has a negative effect on achievement.

At Brookfield School we seek to realise our mission statement by striving to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil feels valued and secure, thereby having the opportunity to develop their potential.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Brookfield 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

Brookfield School is required to maintain a daily attendance register each school year, in accordance with Department of Education N. Ireland (DENI) procedures.

The Principal at Brookfield School has overall responsibility for school attendance. The Vice-Principal is the Designated Teacher for monitoring school attendance, in seeking to maintain/improve overall attendance and in providing the Board of Governors with information pertaining to school attendance. The Board of Governors provides support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.

Class teachers ensure that daily attendance and punctuality is accurately recorded and monitor each pupil's attendance by ensuring that parents/guardians provide a reason for each day of absence.

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 2022/January

Brookfield School will encourage good school attendance through:

1. Seeking and recording a reason for each day of absence.
2. Informing parents of their child's attendance at Annual review (recorded on form AR1) and on the Annual School report. Concerns regarding absence will also be raised by the class teacher at parent-teacher meetings in the autumn term and/or by telephone.
3. Promoting and seeking positive working relationships with parents

Role of Parents/Guardian

Brookfield School is committed to sustaining a strong home-school partnership including working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. Brookfield School encourages parents to be aware of letters and information sent home from school and to take an active interest in their child's school life and work.

Parents/Guardians have a legal duty to ensure that "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/she may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. (Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986)

It is the parent/guardian's duty to ensure their child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance.

If your child is reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Vice-Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Pupils will be reminded of the importance of regular school attendance in class and at whole school assemblies. They will be encouraged to attend school by teaching staff.

Absence Procedures

Pupils are expected to be in school by 9a.m. for registration and the beginning of class. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on the child's attendance record. Lateness is recorded in line with DENI procedures.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence (telephone school 92622978 and leave a message with the office staff).

This should be confirmed with a written note or completion of an absence form when the pupil returns to school.

Parents should inform school if the absence is likely to be prolonged to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Teachers will record absences as required according to DENI procedures.

Procedures for managing Non-Attendance

DENI leaflet entitled 'School Attendance Matters: A Parent's Guide' will be sent to parents/guardians during the 1st term of each school year.

Class teachers will:

1. Maintain an accurate daily attendance report and record subsequent reasons for absences using the appropriate code on SIMS
2. Take registration at 9a.m.
3. Record pupils arriving into school after 9.15a.m. as late (L- before registration closes)
4. Record pupils arriving into school after 9.15a.m. as late (L- before registration closes) 'U' (with time of arrival recorded) if in after 9.30a.m.
5. Request a written reason from the child's parent/guardian, using school absence forms as appropriate
6. Update registration codes as appropriate, following reason provided by parent/guardian for child's absence
7. Seek to contact the parent by phone, and record the reason given, if a parent/guardian fails to provide a written reason
8. Update the attendance register according to the reason provided (Enter code 'D' if no reason provided)
9. Share concerns regarding a pupil's attendance at Parent-teacher meetings
10. Inform the VP of initial/on-going concerns regarding a pupil's absence

The Vice-Principal will:

1. Monitor and review whole school attendance on a half-termly basis
2. Identify individual attendances below 90%
3. Seek to account for attendances below 90% through liaison with class teachers
4. Make initial/further contact with the parent/guardian to share concerns and discuss the reasons for a pupil's poor attendance
5. A school absence letter, detailing the level of pupil absence, will be issued to parents/guardians when levels of absence become a 'Cause for Concern'
6. Monitor improvements/decline in pupil attendance and inform parents accordingly. A letter detailing improvement in pupil attendance will be sent to parents/guardians.
7. Discuss on-going poor pupil attendance with the school Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) if levels of attendance remain a 'Cause for Concern'

8. Make referral to the Educational Welfare Service following discussion with the school EWO, for pupils whose attendance falls below 85%

Family Holidays during Term Time

Brookfield School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time cannot be authorised and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Appointments

Missing school at any time is detrimental to a child's education; therefore appointments should be made, where possible, outside school hours.

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.

Retention of Records:

Copies of pupil attendance records and pupil registration records will be held for not less than ten years from the date on which the registration ceased to be used.