

*Windmill Integrated  
Primary School  
and  
Nursery Unit*

*Attendance  
Policy*

Date ratified by Board of Governors: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2015

## **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.

Windmill Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit 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 Windmill Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit we have the highest expectation for the achievement of every child, and we aim :

- To provide a broad and balanced curriculum, based on the Northern Ireland Revised Curriculum, that is appropriate to the needs of each child enabling him or her to take advantage of every learning opportunity and reach his or her full potential.
- To provide a happy and stimulating environment where the highest standards of attainment and behaviour are expected and where each child can achieve success.
- To encourage children to value and respect themselves, others and their environment.
- To ensure that all our children are aware that they are part of a wide and diverse society and to equip them to become independent and self confident and take responsibility for their future.
- To encourage children to value their own particular tradition and develop knowledge, understanding and respect for other traditions and cultures.
- To ensure that the school is a place where parents and carers, staff and children work together in partnership to develop each child's potential.

On a journey together....learning for life.

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

#### **Mission Statement**

In Windmill Integrated Primary School children are cherished, and everyone is valued and respected as individuals. We are committed to our Integrated Ethos where we celebrate, share and value difference.

## Aims

1. To improve / maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Windmill Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit.
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 Sandra Ferguson, as Principal of Windmill Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit 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 S. Ross (Vice Principal/ Designated teacher for Child Protection)

Mrs E Vaughan (Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection)

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.

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 2013/13.

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

Windmill Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit 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 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.

Primary school begins at 8.55 am, Nursery begins at 8:50am. It is important that your child arrives at school on time. When pupils arrive late it makes things difficult for everyone. The teacher has to stop and wait for the latecomer to settle down and the rest of the class is disrupted. The latecomer misses the first part of the day and may feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. Similarly, when a child is picked up late repeatedly, this causes concern for the child and issues for teachers who have duties when the children leave.

Pupils are expected to be in school at Windmill Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit 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.

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.

- discouraging use of blue screen/technology at bedtime.
- encouraging them to prepare the night before, those items needed for school the next day.
- checking that homework has been completed and signed
- making sure they are up in time to have breakfast and to leave the house promptly.
- keeping your child at home if they are genuinely unwell.

## **REMEMBER: SCHOOL COMMENCES AT 8.55AM/NURSERY UNIT AT 8:50AM**

If your child been absent from school or very late, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to their teacher upon return.

## **FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

Windmill Integrated Primary School and Nursery Unit 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 (Code 'G').

## **Responsibilities of Pupils**

At Windmill Integrated Primary School, we encourage children to take increasing responsibility for themselves.

## **We expect the following from all our pupils:**

- That they attend school regularly
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day

## **ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

- ❖ Attendance / absence of pupils are recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon registration sessions. The morning register remains open until 9.05am. Pupils who come to school after this time will be marked absent (Code 'U') for the morning session and this will appear as an unauthorised absence on their school record, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- ❖ To assist Parents/Guardians in reporting absences, forms are readily available at the school office

- ❖ 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

### **Responsibilities of Governors**

The Board of Governors has the ultimate responsibility for school attendance but on a day-to-day basis this is delegated to the Principal. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's Attendance Policy and Procedures. The Principal reports to Governors on these matters.

### **Responsibilities of the School**

#### **Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- Contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason
- A summary of the child's attendance and punctuality at parent teacher meetings and end of year report

### **SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the Principal to:

- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy as part of the annual review

- Ensure that each member of staff receives the necessary training and support to enable them to carry out their responsibilities

### **MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

The daily register is completed by the class teacher at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. If a child is absent for a morning or afternoon session only, this will be recorded. This information is then recorded electronically on the Department of Education's system. Attendance levels are monitored on an individual and a whole school basis.

### **PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING NON-ATTENDANCE**

At the end of each month the school will run:	Official Register Report.
	Percentage Summary Report.
	Percentage Summary (less than 85% attendance) Report.
	Unexplained Absence Letters
	Certificates

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, the Principal will manage the absenteeism using the following procedures:

a. Contact the parent and arrange an appointment to discuss the issue in order to agree a strategy for improving attendance and/or punctuality.

b. Should such contact fail to resolve the issue, the school may refer the matter to

the Educational Welfare Service for additional direction and support.

c. If the situation remains unresolved, the school will report the case to the E.W.S. As a normal rule, any pupil whose attendance falls below 85% during the school year, will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service.

Parents may also seek advice and direction from the Educational Welfare Service.

The local Education Welfare Office is at:

Dungannon Primary School

27 Circular Road

Dungannon

BT71 6BG

Tel No: 028 87 723311

A failure by parents to ensure their child's attendance can ultimately lead to prosecution.

### **EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

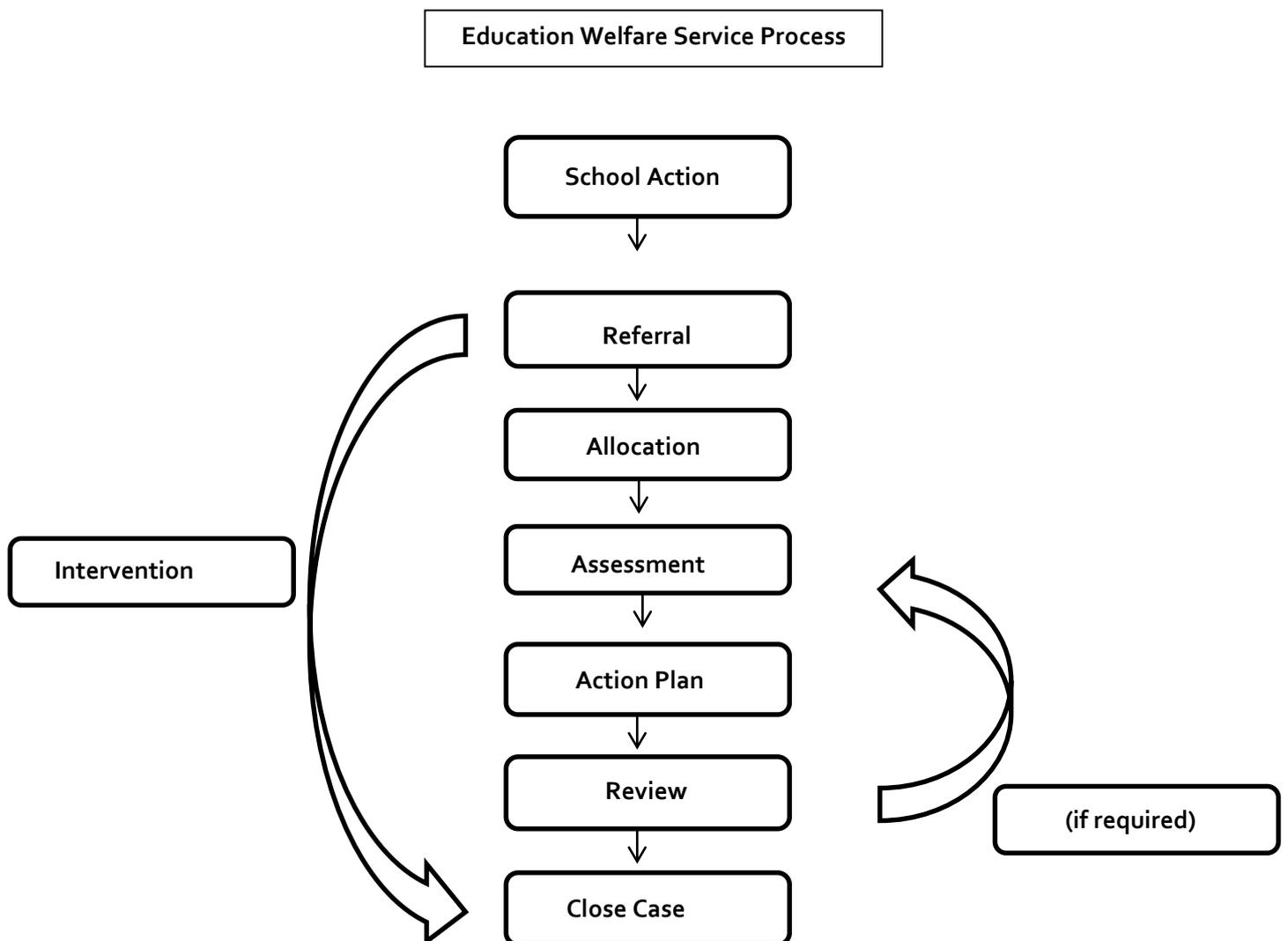
Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

The referral will take place within the context of:

- Shared policies and operational practices between the Education Welfare teams and the schools in their area. Clearly defined roles of school staff and the Education Welfare Officer.

- How much time the Education Welfare Officer will devote to the school.
- Expectation of the quality of the Education Welfare Officer's intervention and support.
- Arrangements for referral, regular review, monitoring and evaluation.
- Procedures for resolving difficulties.

The chart below reflects and outlines the necessity for the mediating process within a potentially complex framework of problems.



## EVALUATION OF POLICY

The effectiveness of this policy and our procedures in monitoring and improving attendance levels is evaluated in a number of ways:

- Parents are given a summary of their child's attendance and punctuality as part of the parent teacher meetings and end of year report.
- The Board of Governors monitors the effectiveness of this policy through Principal's reports on attendance at Governor meetings.
- The annual attendance figures are published in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents.
- An officer from the Education Welfare Service regularly monitors attendance levels on a whole school and individual basis.
- Educational Authority Southern Region receives information on pupil attendance as part of the annual audit.
- The Department of Education monitors the school's attendance statistics as part of the Annual School Census.

### School Attendance

