

Attendance Policy

Port Ellen Primary School and ELC

Date of last review:

November 2024

Review Date:

Spring 2026

Aims

*At Port Ellen Primary School, we recognise that regular attendance is vital for children to gain the full benefits of their education. We are committed to creating a welcoming, supportive environment where all pupils feel valued and safe. Every child has the right to access the education to which they are entitled, as outlined in **Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**: “Every child has the right to an education.”*

Regular attendance supports the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators, particularly helping children feel Safe, Achieving, and Included. As part of our GIRFEC approach, we monitor and support attendance to ensure every child’s needs are met.

We believe that good attendance is key to achievement, wellbeing, and long-term success. Parents and school staff share the responsibility for encouraging and supporting regular attendance and punctuality.

Why Regular Attendance Matters

Frequent absence or lateness can disrupt a child’s learning, impact their progress, and reduce their sense of belonging in the classroom. It may also affect the learning of others. Ensuring regular attendance is a legal responsibility for parents and carers, and failure to do so without valid reason may constitute a breach of education law.

Promoting Good Attendance

We actively promote good attendance through:

- The **School Handbook**, which provides clear information on procedures for reporting illness, absence, and lateness
- **School newsletters** and communications throughout the year
- **Pre-school induction meetings** and **parent information evenings**, where expectations around attendance and punctuality are shared

We work closely with families to address any concerns that may affect a child’s attendance. We understand that even small worries can impact a child’s desire to come to school. Staff are committed to listening and helping resolve any issues that arise.

To minimise disruption to learning, we ask that **family holidays are arranged outwith term time**. Parents intending to take their child out of school during term time must contact the Headteacher. Repeated term-time absences may result in a formal meeting with the Headteacher. Holiday dates are issued at the start of each school year.

Types of Absence

All absences are recorded and classified as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**, following national guidance.

Parents must inform the school of their child's absence **on the first day**, preferably by telephone. If no explanation is received, the school will make contact as part of our welfare procedures.

- **Authorised absences** include illness, unavoidable medical or dental appointments, family emergencies, or other legitimate circumstances.
- **Unauthorised absences** are those where the school does not consider the reason acceptable, or no explanation has been provided.

Children arriving after the register has been taken will be marked as **late**. Attendance and punctuality data is shared with parents in end-of-year reports.

In cases of authorised absence due to illness or exceptional circumstances, the school may provide access to digital resources or learning tasks online through Seesaw to minimise disruption.

We understand that attendance may be affected by additional needs or wider wellbeing concerns. The school will work closely with families to ensure individual circumstances are taken into account and that appropriate support is provided.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

Attendance is monitored regularly. If a child's attendance or punctuality gives cause for concern, the Headteacher will contact the family to discuss how the school can support improvements. Ongoing patterns of absence may result in formal letters or meetings, as persistent absenteeism can negatively affect a child's learning, confidence, and long-term outcomes.

Truancy

If there is any concern that a child may be truanting, the school will act immediately to ensure their safety. The Headteacher will contact parents by phone or, if necessary, arrange a home visit. The aim is to work with families to identify underlying issues and put appropriate support in place.

Pupil Voice and Inclusion

In line with Article 12 of the UNCRC, pupils will be encouraged to share their views about any issues affecting their attendance. We are committed to ensuring that every child feels respected, listened to, and supported.

Conclusion

At Port Ellen Primary, we believe that every child has the right to an education in line with the **UNCRC**, and that regular school attendance plays a central role in realising that right. By working together—school, families, and children—we can ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive, in line with their right to education and wellbeing.