

Mossend Primary and Nursery Class



Attendance Policy

Reviewed March 2023

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Attendance Policy

Article 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance) Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.

Article 28 (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this

Introduction and background

Mossend Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. We closely monitor attendance in Mossend to allow us to support pupils to achieve their potential and to offer support to children and families if required. There is a clear link between attendance and attainment: if children are not in school then they cannot learn.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school reports.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance. This is currently 95%
- Support staff to record attendance daily, morning and afternoon on Seemis.
- Work intensively with families who fall below the attendance target to support areas of specific need.
- Carry out weekly attendance monitoring by Senior Management Team.

Section 30 of the 1980 Education Act lays a duty on every parent of a child of 'school age' to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Attendance must be recorded twice a day, morning and afternoon.

Regulation 7 of The Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Amendment, Etc. Regulations 1993 requires each child's absence from school to be recorded in the school register as authorised or unauthorised, as defined by the Scottish Government.

Procedures for informing the school of pupil absence

Parents and carers are asked to inform the school if a pupil is unable to attend from the start of the school day on the first day of absence. Failure to do so will result in school staff accessing all contact numbers provided for the child and will result in the school sending a text message. If no reply is received to the text message by 10am, clerical staff will highlight this to a member of management and a phone call home will be made.

In terms of child safety, other agencies including Police may be contacted if all attempts to locate the child have been exhausted.

Parents should be asked to inform the school by letter or telephone if their child is likely to be absent for some time, and to give the child a note on his/her return to school confirming the reason for absence.

Every effort should be made to avoid family holidays during term time as this both disrupts the child's education and reduces learning time. Parents/guardians should inform the school by letter of the dates before going on holiday.

Absences will be classified as authorised only in exceptional circumstances.

Such circumstances may include:

- A family holiday judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events.

A family holiday classified under the 'authorised absence' category will not include such reasons as:

- The availability of cheap holidays.
- The availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experience during school holidays
- Holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term

- Parental difficulty obtaining leave (except in cases where evidence is provided by the employer that it cannot accommodate leave during school holidays without serious consequences)

Family holidays with the above similar characteristics will be classified as unauthorised absence. Where the Head Teacher's prior agreement has not been sought the absence will automatically be classed as unauthorised.

Extended leave with parental consent holiday

Where most family holidays will be recorded as unauthorised absence (see above) extended leave with parental consent will not be considered the same as a family holiday. Leave in such circumstances will be authorised under circumstances such as:

- Extended overseas educational trips not organised by the school
- Short term parental placement abroad
- Family returning to its country of origin (to care for a relative, or for cultural reasons)
- Leave in relation to the children of travelling families

Exceptional domestic circumstances

Parents may request permission for such leave in writing and the school may authorise such requests under the following circumstances:

- The period immediately after an accident or illness
- A period of serious or critical illness of a close relative
- A domestic crisis which causes serious disruption to the family home causing temporary relocation

It should be emphasised that North Lanarkshire Council investigates unexplained absence, and that they have the power to write to, interview, or prosecute parents, or to refer pupils to the Reporter to the Children's Panel, if necessary.

Procedures for managing attendance

The school regards attainment of under 95% attendance to be causing concern and will monitor such attendances closely.

At the end of every second month, attendance for the whole school is printed off and monitored by the Management Team. It is at this point; letters will be issued to parents/carers of pupils with absences below 95%. The school appreciate that from time-to-time children will be unwell and will have to be absent from school and that parents/carers may have phoned to inform the school of the absence or, indeed, sent in a letter but it is important to provide parents/carers with this information as part of our monitoring procedures.

Our attendance statistics will be published by the Scottish Government to allow parents to see how we are doing in comparison to other schools across Scotland.