

Banbridge High School

Pupil Attendance Policy

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.

Banbridge High School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secured. We aim to promote the personal development of every pupil in a caring, happy environment which is sympathetic and responsive to individual needs, aspirations and talents.

Aims of the Policy

- (a) To improve the overall attendance of pupils at Banbridge High School to 95% and above.
- (b) To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- (c) To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
- (d) To promote good relationships with the Education and Welfare Service.

Role of the School in Promoting Good Pupil Attendance

The Principal at Banbridge High School has overall responsibility for school attendance. The day to day management of school attendance is through the pastoral structures of the school; Vice Principals, Year Heads and Form Teachers. All are expected to refer on their attendance concerns to the relevant member of staff at the most appropriate point.

The Board of Governors support the Principal in promoting and maintaining good levels of pupil attendance by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring that pupil attendance is discussed on a regular basis at Governor meetings.

Teaching staff regularly monitor pupil attendance through the school computerised system using Lesson Monitor. Pupils are marked present at the beginning of each lesson and attendance concerns should be referred through the pastoral system as deemed appropriate.

The school will refer pupils to the Educational and Welfare Service (EWS) where attendance is 85% or below or where there are other relevant factors at work affecting attendance. A Vice Principal will meet with EWS on a regular basis for the purposes for EWS support.

To ensure that our school records and monitors pupil attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provide in the Department of Education Circular 2013/13.

Role of the Parent/Guardian in Promoting Good Attendance

Banbridge High School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Parents 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 may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.”

(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of the 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 classwork, homework or any other arrangements which may be required.

Parents/Guardians, where possible, should ensure that medical and other appointments are not organised during the school day and that the patterns for sustained regular school attendance are not disrupted.

Pupils are expected to be in school by the beginning of the school day, 8:55am and to be in their classes at the beginning of each period for registration. It is also the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to ensure that your child is punctual to school and classes. Lateness is recorded at registration and also on the child's attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the school to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

It is important to remember that poor attendance at school will have a negative effect on your learning and progress.

Role of Pupils in Promoting Good Attendance

Each pupil at Banbridge High School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly. This means arriving in school at the beginning of the school day, ensuring that you arrive promptly at all your lessons. The school expects that every child should be in school to make full use of the opportunities for learning that are available. Lateness to school or classes is recorded in the pupil's attendance record.

If you have been absent from school a written note from your parent/guardian must be given to your form teacher on your return to explain the reason for your absence. Where the attendance falls to 85% or below the school will make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

It is important to remember that poor attendance at school will have a negative effect on your learning and progress.

Family Holidays During Term Time

The school very much discourages holidays that take your child out of school during term time. This will have an impact on their learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

Procedures for Managing Non-Attendance

The school would expect that if a child is going to be absent from school that the Parent/Guardian would make the school aware of this immediately. There would be an expectation that the child concerned would return to school as soon as possible.

Where non attendance is longer or part of a regular consistent pattern, the school would expect the parent/guardian to engage with them in order to resolve the matter so as to permit the return of the pupil as soon as possible. Where the school deems it appropriate it will make a referral to the Educational and Welfare Service.

Possible Strategies for Managing Long Term Non Attendance

The school will expect that the parent/guardian of a child who is likely to be sent from school in the longer term, makes the school aware of this situation as soon as possible. In these circumstances the school would seek to support the young person in the most appropriate way.

The Role of the Education and Welfare Service

The Education and Library Boards, through the Education and Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents/guardians 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% the EWS will support school staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Approved by BOG: 12th December 2013