



Ashfield Girls' High School

Attendance Policy





Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

Attend today: Achieve tomorrow

The aim of our school is to provide pupils with a secure and appropriate learning environments for a programme which meets their individual needs and which brings them success and fulfilment in their school life and prepares them for the life beyond school.

School Ethos / Culture

Ashfield Girls' High School believes that every pupil is capable of reaching their potential and can only do this by contributing fully, and achieving enjoyment from their involvement, in the life of the school.

The school recognises that this can only be achieved by creating an atmosphere where every pupil wishes to attend school and does attend school because they feel valued and secure.

This policy is one of a number of interrelated policies which are concerned with pupils' welfare, including our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

We at Ashfield are committed to working with parents, carers, pupils, Education Welfare and other outside agencies to support and encourage the attendance of pupils at our school. We believe that through engagement with parents and encouraging them to play an active part in their daughter's education that this will have a major role in improving attendance and punctuality and in reducing absenteeism.

Ashfield Girls' High School will strive to promote an ethos which encourages good attendance and punctuality and where each pupil feels valued and secure. This will include the rights of pupils in our charge to be protected from harm and to do what is reasonably possible to safeguard and promote their physical and emotional well-being.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure an effective system for recording attendance, recording reasons for non-attendance and efficient systems in place to respond to issues related to attendance.

- to strive to achieve the Northern Ireland average for attendance for non-selective post primary schools , as set out by the Department of Education
- to improve attendance by actively involving parents, carers, pupils and outside agencies through advice, support and guidance
- to improve attendance to help impact positively on achievement of all pupils
- to improve attendance and punctuality which will enhance the pupils sense of belonging to the school community
- to develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities of personnel in school in relation to attendance and punctuality
- to ensure compliance with all statutory requirements as laid down by the Department of Education
- to promote good relations with the Educational Welfare Service (BELB and SEELB)
- to instil good habits and values for adult and working life
- to raise pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance
- to develop an attendance reward schemes which recognises pupils' attendance achievements

Role of the school

The Principal at Ashfield Girls' High School has overall responsibility for school attendance; the AVP (Head of Pastoral Care) should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.

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.

Principal will:

- set attendance targets in accordance with the Schools Development Plan;
- monitor the progress of attendance;
- liaise with the Board of Governors in relation to attendance;
- ensure that strategies to promote and implement the policy in school are in place;
- determine whether to authorise any requests by parents to take their daughter out of school for an extended period of time;
- approve decisions on alternative school provision for pupils to AEP/ EOTAS

Head of Pastoral Care will:

- meet with the Head of Junior School (Pastoral) in relation to attendance and punctuality in Junior school
- support the work of the Head of Junior School (Pastoral) and Heads of Progress in the monitoring of attendance and punctuality;
- manage the Heads of Progress & Head of Sixth Form in relation to Senior schools attendance and punctuality
- regularly review the pupils who are being supported by the Education Welfare Service
- meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to update and monitor pupil attendance below 85% and pupils whose attendance has dropped significantly due to medical, social, emotional or disengagement issues
- monitor the academic progress of pupils and pastoral issues through the tracking system (Years 11 and 12 and support for Sixth Year tracking)
- liaise with external agencies and feed back to Heads of Progress and other relevant staff
- feedback information to SLT and Principal in relation to attendance and punctuality
- seek approval from the Principal on alternative school provision for pupils with medical or disengagement issues
- monitor provision for pupils in AEP / EOTAS eg attendance, progress and visits to placements
- arrange regular attendance meetings for Heads of Progress
- make use of attendance data to monitor the progress, identify trends and set targets for improvement
- co-ordinate the work of the Home Liaison Officer
- to adhere to any guidance provided in the Department of Education Circulars in relation to attendance

Head of Junior School (Pastoral) will:

- manage the work of the Heads of Progress in the monitoring of attendance and punctuality for Junior school
- regularly review the pupils in Junior school who are being supported by the Education Welfare Service
- meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to update and monitor pupil attendance below 85% and pupils who's attendance has dropped significantly due to medical, social, emotional or disengagement issues
- monitor the academic progress of pupils and pastoral issues through the tracking system for Junior school
- liaise with external agencies and feed back to Heads of Progress and other relevant staff in relation to pupils attendance in Junior School
- liaise with the Home Liaison Officer in relation to pupils in Junior school
- feed back to the Head of Pastoral Care in relation to attendance issues in Junior school
- make use of attendance data to monitor the progress, identify trends and set targets for improvement
- monitor provision for pupils in AEP / EOTAS eg attendance, progress and visits to placements for pupils in Junior school
- to adhere to any guidance provided in the Department of Education Circulars in relation to attendance

Heads of Progress will:

- manage the work of the form tutors in their house in the monitoring of attendance and punctuality
- ensure the accuracy of attendance records on SIMS of pupils within their house
- regularly review the attendance of pupils in their house who are being supported by the Education Welfare Service
- meet regularly with the Head of Pastoral and Head of Junior School (Pastoral) to update and monitor pupil attendance
- when required, complete Education Welfare Service referrals for pupils
- provide information to support the tracking system
- liaise with the Home Liaison Officer in relation to pupils in their house who may require a home visit
- issue correspondence in relation to pupils attendance / punctuality to parents
- facilitate meetings with pupils /and or parents in relation to attendance and punctuality
- make use of attendance data to monitor the progress, identify trends and set targets for improvement for pupils in their house
- co-ordinate the provision of work for pupils who are unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances
- use a variety of interventions / strategies to overcome poor attendance, lack of engagement and underachievement for pupils in their house

Home School Liaison Officer will:

- develop relationships with parents and students and to act as a resource person to both
- work with Heads of Progress and link with parents of identified pupils on a weekly basis
- work with pupils and address barriers which prevent them from attending school
- liaise with the Pastoral Care team in order to identify pupils with unsatisfactory attendance
- use a variety of interventions to overcome poor attendance, lack of engagement and underachievement at school
- link in with the schools Education Welfare Officer to assist with home visits of pupils who have been referred
- monitor the changes in attendance of pupils who have been supported by the Home School Liaison Officer
- provide regular feedback to the Head of Pastoral care and Head of Junior School (Pastoral)

Form Tutors will:

- accurately record pupil attendance each morning and afternoon
- send a teacher2parent text on the first day of pupil absence. By day 3 a phone call home should be made if no response from the parent/guardian on the reason for absence.
- follow up with pupils and parents in relation to reasons for absence
- make use of attendance data to monitor the progress and identify trends in their form class
- ensure that N codes are changed within 5 days to the reason for absence. D codes should only be used in exceptional circumstances
- collect absence notes, question reasons and record in SIMS the reason for pupil absence
- retain absence notes in the Pastoral filing system. These should be filed in the pupil's school folder in the school office at the end of each year
- print twice monthly attendance figures and make necessary adjustments to pupils SIMS records
- inform the Head of Progress of attendance and punctuality concerns in their form class
- informally meet with pupils whose attendance is of concern and discuss strategies to improve attendance / punctuality

Classroom Teachers will:

- register pupils using SIMS lesson monitor for each class
- if concerned or suspicious regarding the absence of a pupil, inform the Head of Progress without delay.

Office Administrator (Attendance) will:

- complete the monthly attendance returns to Belfast Education and Library Board
- liaise with the Pastoral Team on issues relating to attendance records eg non-marking of rolls
- daily checks to ensure AM and PM roles are marked
- removal of pupils names from the SIMS register, as requested by the Vice Principal
- transfer the pupils SIMS record to their new school , when required

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

Every child of a 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 role of the Parent/ Guardian to:

- encourage excellent attendance (98% and above)
- make medical appointments outside school hours where possible
- avoid booking holidays during term time
- inform school of the reason for a pupil's absence by phone , no later than the third 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
- ensure that their daughter arrives to school on time
- in the event of a parent requesting an anticipated absence, the pupil should be sent in with a written request to her form tutor at least one day in advance
- if a pupil appears reluctant to attend school parents should discuss the matter promptly with the form tutor or Head of Progress to ensure that both parent and pupil receive maximum support

Role of Pupil

Each pupil at Ashfield Girls' High School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly. If a pupil has been absent from school a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to their teacher when they return to school. If a pupil falls ill during the school day she must report to the School Nurse who will contact the parent where necessary.

Procedures

Punctuality

The school day begins at 8.40am and finishes at 3.20pm with the exception of a Friday when pupils finish at on Week A at 1.30pm and Week B at 2.15pm. Pupils are expected to remain in school throughout this time.

Registration takes place at 8.45am in the pupils form room. Anyone arriving after this time must sign in late at the school office and inform their form tutor that they have arrived into school. If a pupil is late they will be detained for 15 minutes at the end of the same school day, without parental notice. Pupils will be given the opportunity to inform their parents of this. Six lates in a term will result in a 30 minute Pastoral Detention after school, with 24 hour notice. Continued lateness will result in a 60 minute Study Support with one of the Senior Leadership Team. If the situation does not improve the Head of Progress will arrange a meeting with parents at school to discuss the situation.

Medical attention requiring being sent home

If a pupil is ill during the school day, she should indicate this to her class teacher who will complete a Nurse Referral form and send it with the pupil to the Nurses Office. The pupil must also bring her Student Planner with her. No pupil may go home without following this procedure and obtaining the necessary permission from the school nurse or other relevant members of staff.

Absence

Form tutors must ensure that parents are informed on the first day of absence that their daughter has not arrived into school. Pro-forma messages can be sent through the teacher2parent text service.

A pupil who has returned to school after absence must bring a note signed by the parent/guardian stating the period of absence and the reason. Alternatively parents / guardians can complete the 'Explanation for Absence' pro-forma at the back of the Student Planner.

In the event of a parent requesting an anticipated absence, they should send the pupil with a written request to her form tutor at least one day in advance.

Family holidays during term time

Ashfield Girls' High School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays can only be authorised by the Principal in exceptional circumstances.

Procedures for managing non attendance

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.

- Below 92% Letter A
- Below 85% Letter 1
- Letter 2 after little or no improvement
- Referral to EWO

Strategies used to support and encourage excellent attendance / punctuality

Parental Engagement

- Parental engagement through events such as Meet the Principal for new parents, e-Safety nights, Parenting classes, Parents' Induction Programme – Blast-off Study Skills Night, My Maths Parents' night and Junior and Upper School Prize Days
- Phone calls home to parents
- Year 8 Induction Programme Parents' Booklet informing new parents of attendance procedures
- Teacher2parent text service to inform parents of attendance / punctuality issues
- Support from Parents and Friends of Ashfield
- Meetings with parents in relation to attendance / punctuality
- Parent Consultations
- Attendance advice leaflets

Teacher Engagement

- Staff presence at front door when pupils are arriving into school at the beginning of each day to greet pupils and also to stop pupils who have arrived late into school after registration has started
- Member of SLT present in Atrium each morning
- Head of Progress meetings with parents in relation to attendance / punctuality
- Parent Consultations
- House and Form noticeboards – information on House and Form class attendance
- One to one interviews with pupils in relation to attendance / punctuality
- Pastoral support – helping to resolve friendship issues
- High expectations of pupil behaviour in school
- Support for pupils through the LINK centre
- Outside agency support – CAPS, FACES Extern projects, DAISY, Barnardos
- AEP/EOTAS placements

Pupil Engagement

- Termly assemblies on the importance of attendance
- Reward Scheme – Gold , Silver, Bronze Awards for pupils including attendance certificates and trips
- Friendship / Respect Ambassadors programme
- High expectations of how pupils should behave in school
- Principal's Awards
- Breakfast Club
- GCSE Revision Programme
- SPSS Social Skills group work
- SPSS LINK support
- House points for excellent attendance
- Year 8 Mentor programme
- Year 12 Mentor/Exam Support
- Support for pupils through the LINK centre
- AEP/EOTAS placements
- Attendance Improvers congratulations postcards
- Lunchtime Card scheme for Years 11 & 12 for punctuality

Educational Support

- Homework Club
- Extra support for Maths and English
- Year 12 Mentor/Exam Support
- Catch up Clinics
- Exam Revision Programme
- Student Teacher 1 to 1 support for pupils

Social and Emotional Support

- Phased return to school
- Reduced timetable – in relation to medical needs
- Counselling Service including drop -in lunchtime sessions
- Friendship / Respect Ambassadors programme
- Lunchtime Friendship Club
- Group Social Skills support for pupils
- Time-out Cards – to support emotional needs of pupils
- SPSS Social Skills group work
- SPSS LINK support

Date of ratification at Board of Governors	Date of last review	Signature Chair/Vice Chair	Signature Principal



A Specialist School for **ICT**



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