

MALONE INTEGRATED COLLEGE

BELFAST



Malone College

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their full potential.

Malone Integrated College will strive to promote a culture and ethos which encourages good attendance and where each student will feel valued and secure

<p>Related Policies for Malone Integrated College</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy: Ensures the safety and well-being of students, particularly in relation to unexplained absences or patterns of concern. Pastoral Care Policy: Supports the holistic development of students and underpins the school's approach to addressing barriers to attendance. Behaviour for Learning Policy: Links attendance and punctuality with student conduct, including consequences for lateness and truancy. Positive Behaviour and Rewards Policy: Reinforces attendance through achievement points and recognition for full or admirable attendance. Special Educational Needs (SEN) Policy: Ensures that attendance concerns for students with additional needs are addressed with appropriate support and communication with the SENCO. Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities Policy: Ensures accurate attendance records are maintained when students are off-site for approved activities. Data Protection and Privacy Policy: Governs the handling of attendance data, including its collection, storage, and communication via systems like SIMS. Health and Wellbeing Policy: Addresses the impact of physical and mental health on attendance and outlines support mechanisms. Equality and Inclusion Policy: Ensures that attendance strategies are inclusive and sensitive to the diverse needs of the student population. <p>Summary: Malone Integrated College's Attendance Policy emphasises the vital role of regular attendance in ensuring students reach their full academic and personal potential. The policy outlines the shared responsibility of students, parents, and staff in promoting a culture of high attendance and punctuality. It highlights the legal and pastoral duty of parents to ensure their children attend school consistently, and the school's commitment to supporting families facing challenges. Staff are expected to maintain accurate records, monitor attendance closely, and intervene early when concerns arise. Students are encouraged to aim for 100% attendance, with rewards for full and admirable attendance. The policy also details procedures for reporting absences, managing lateness, and ensuring students remain on-site during the school day. Through proactive communication, structured monitoring, and collaboration with external agencies, when necessary, the policy aims to maintain a minimum attendance rate of 95% and foster a safe, supportive, and achievement-focused learning environment.</p>	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <p>Department of Education Northern Ireland:</p> <p>Circular 2024/13 – Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording by Schools</p> <p>This is the most current and comprehensive guidance for schools on managing and recording pupil attendance, including the use of C2k attendance codes.</p> <p>https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202413-attendance-guidance-absence-recording-schools</p> <p>School Attendance Overview</p> <p>This page provides general information and links to relevant policies and strategies related to school attendance. https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-attendance</p> <p>Miss School Miss Out Strategy</p> <p>A public-facing campaign and strategy aimed at improving pupil attendance across Northern Ireland.</p> <p>https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/</p> <p>Education Authority:</p> <p>While the EA supports schools in implementing attendance policies, specific guidance is often disseminated through DENI circulars. However, schools can access EA support services such as the Education Welfare Service (EWS) for students with persistent attendance issues.</p> <p>History:</p> <p>Drafted June 2025</p> <p>By Vice Principal</p> <p>Key Dates:</p> <p>Emailed to Board of Governors:</p> <p>Discussed at Board of Governors</p> <p>Circulated to staff: June 2025</p> <p>To be reviewed:</p>
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Introduction: Attendance and School Vision/Values

At Malone Integrated College, our vision is clear:

“To maximise the potential of all learners in our community by providing a high-quality education in a supportive environment. We strive to achieve excellence through a culture of respect, ambition, and inclusivity.” This vision is not merely aspirational—it is foundational to every policy and practice within our school, **including our approach to attendance**.

The Attendance Policy reflects our unwavering commitment to ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive academically, socially, and personally. Central to this is the understanding that consistent school attendance is essential for students to access the full breadth of our curriculum, develop strong relationships, and build the habits that underpin lifelong success.

Our school values—Respect, Ambition, Inclusive, Success, and Excellent (RAISE)—are embedded throughout the policy. We promote respect by fostering a culture where every student’s presence is valued and where punctuality and reliability are seen as signs of mutual regard. We nurture ambition by setting high expectations for attendance, encouraging students to aim for 100% participation. Our inclusive ethos ensures that barriers to attendance are addressed with empathy and support, recognising the diverse needs of our learners and their families.

By prioritising success and excellence, we reinforce the message that regular attendance is not just a requirement but a pathway to achieving one’s full potential. The policy outlines clear roles and responsibilities for students, parents, and staff, ensuring a collaborative approach to maintaining high attendance standards.

Ultimately, this policy is a call to action for our entire school community. It is only through shared commitment and consistent effort that our vision can be realised—and that every student can truly reach to their full potential.

Rationale

In our loco parentis role, Malone Integrated College holds a **critical duty of care** to safeguard students and ensure their whereabouts are known throughout the school day. **Regular attendance** is essential for students to reach their full potential and prepare for future success in education, employment, and life. Prioritising attendance helps students develop **healthy habits**, avoid risky behaviours, and build a strong foundation for achievement.

To support this, **all staff—teaching and non-teaching—must maintain accurate and timely attendance records**. Teachers, with their daily contact and holistic understanding of students, play a pivotal role in identifying and addressing attendance issues. **Clear communication** between administrative and teaching staff is vital to ensure the integrity of attendance data and the effectiveness of pastoral care.

DENI have issued the following information as guidance to help Parents and Students understand how absence can affect the overall attendance record.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

The benefits of consistent attendance at school are innumerable, but we believe the following are vital in terms of the academic and social development of your child(ren).

- Consistent learning and development of key skills
- Consistent development of social skills and maintain friendships
- Forming regular habits and routines
- Developing the life skill of punctuality and good time management
- Reducing risk of dangerous behaviour
- Improving readiness for employment

Aims

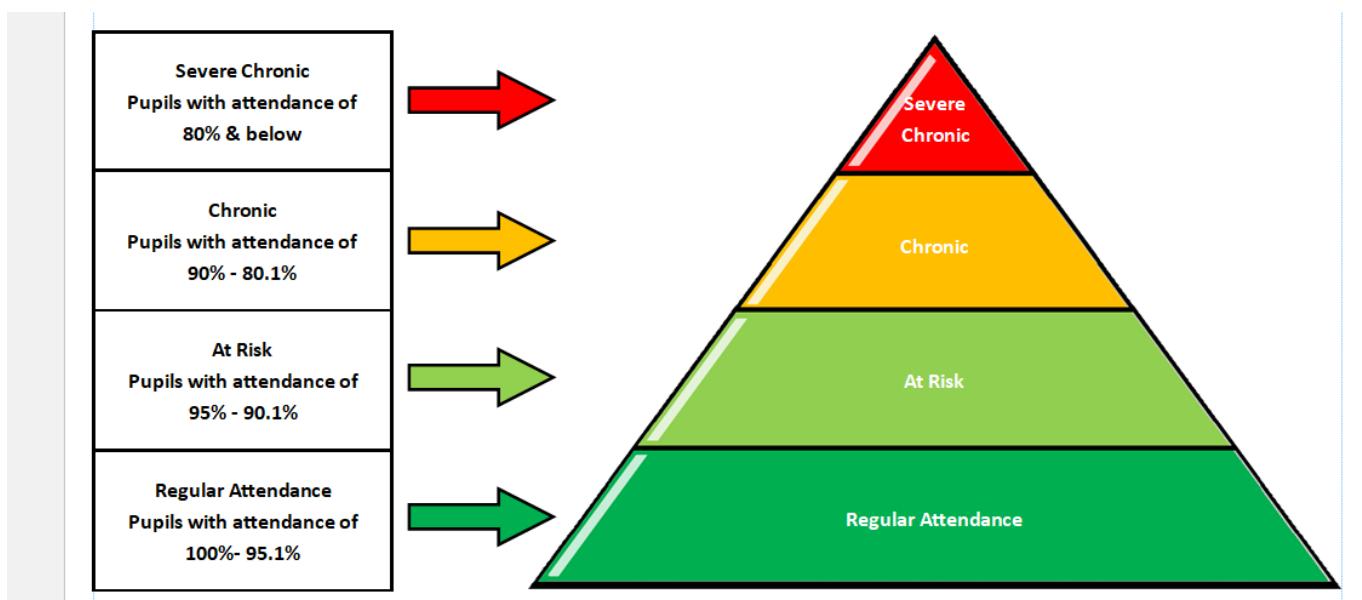
Malone Integrated College expects students to maintain high levels of attendance. Poor attendance inevitably has a negative impact on learning and achievement. We encourage students to attend school every day, to be punctual in the mornings and to lessons. Malone Integrated College uses the SIMS Parent App service to inform Parents/Guardians daily of student attendance. Parents/Guardians must be confident that the information we communicate is accurate.

We hope, that through our approach to student attendance, to achieve the following aims:

- **Students, parents, and staff will strive** for high attendance
- Our overall student attendance will be a **minimum of 95%**
- Punctuality will be of a high standard
- Students being removed from school for appointments during school hours **will be minimal**
- Parents **will not plan holidays** for their families during term time.
- Students' attainment will be increased.
- Students being tracked for poor attendance will demonstrate prolonged improvement
- Referrals to outside agencies will be extremely low

Attendance Absence Tiers:

Student attendance is categorised into the following four Tiers, as shown below.



Expectations

Consistent attendance at school for the benefit of all students requires everyone working together

School:

The Principal is responsible for the overall management of the school's attendance policy and procedures. The work is supported via the work of the school office, Vice Principal, and the School Attendance Officers (Mr D Totten and Mrs A Martin).

All staff will consistently highlight the importance of full attendance in the following ways:

- We encourage every student to aim for 100% attendance and all staff should continually stress the importance of this to students
- Student attendance and punctuality will be monitored closely through the Form Teacher and Head of Year.
- Staff will liaise with Parents/Guardians if there are concerns over a student's attendance. These are referred to as Pastoral Calls.
- Staff will collaborate with Parents/Guardians and relevant agencies to resolve issues if they are identified
- Parents/Guardians can check student absence and/or lateness using the parent app
- Students who have 100% attendance for the month will be awarded 15 achievement points.
- Students who have 95% (Admirable Attendance) for the month will be award 5 achievement points.

Parents/Carers:

Parents / Carers must accept their responsibility to ensure students' attendance is high. Parents /Carers have **a pastoral and legal duty** to make sure their children attend school. If Parents/Carers fail to meet their obligations, it will have a profound impact on their children's education and future opportunities.

Parents should communicate with the school if there are reasons why it becomes difficult for their child to consistently attend school. This enables the school to meet the pastoral care needs of the student and help families' access external support if required. The school recognises that there are often demands on families which present challenges to punctuality and attendance. We want to work with parents and carers to ensure families access support available to help with these demands as relevant.

If a Parent is failing to meet their responsibilities the school is obliged to intervene. To not send a child to school regularly is a reason for the involvement of outside agencies, possible legal action and, in the most extreme situations, an investigation into potential neglect or/and abuse.

What is Expected of Parents/Guardians?

Parents/Guardians should note that “minding the house”, looking after family members, shopping or holidays are **not** valid reasons for absence from school. There is a statutory requirement on parents to ensure their child’s attendance at school.

Parents:

- Have good routines established and ensure their children attend school on time each day
- Communicate with their child(ren) the importance of good attendance
- Ensure their children are properly prepared for the school day with correct uniform and equipment
- Contact the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence (via the following email address **attendance303@c2ken.net**) if a student is unfit to attend school.
- Their children are absent only when ill health and bereavement prevents them from attending school.
- Medical and dental appointments are arranged for a time **outside school hours**.
 - If a medical or dental appointment cannot be arranged outside school hours, parents must contact the school via the following email address **attendance303@c2ken.net**, and provide details of the appointment.
 - If an appointment is organised at short notice by a parent and no note is provided, it is essential that the school has confidence in any person collecting a student. This person should be the Parent or Guardian or someone who can prove clear responsibility for the child. This person should enter school and countersign the “signing out” book at reception before leaving with the student.
- Students **MUST** sign back into school upon their return. This is essential to ensure the school fulfils its legal obligation to keep an accurate record of all persons on the school premises at any time.

No student should have an unexplained absence on their record. Unexplained absences will be treated as truancies. For Sixth Form students on EMA accurate records are vital.

Students

- Students are expected to place importance on their education and to attend school and all lessons on time and properly prepared.
- Pupils should be in school no later than 08:50am and ready for the first lesson commencing at 9.00am
- If a student is late for a valid reason, their parent or guardian, must provide a short written explanatory email to attendance303@c2ken.net. This information will then be communicated to the Form teacher and Head of Year.
- If a student arrives to school **after 9.00am they should go directly to the School Office** who will mark them late and their register will be updated by administrative staff. If no remail has been received from Parent or Guardian explaining the reason for lateness, the student will receive a behaviour mention for lateness.
- A student who is late without an explanatory reason provided will be placed into break time detention on the day of their lateness. Parents and students should note that “student slept in” or “student missed the bus” will not be accepted as valid reasons for lateness.
- **Students must always remain on the school premises throughout the day. The school premises are self-contained, and students have no reason to leave the grounds until the end of the timetable for the day.** The exceptions to this are: -
 - Students attending unavoidable medical or dental appointments
 - Students leaving school with a member of staff for an approved educational activity
- Students must catch up on any work missed due to absence.

Staff

- Subject Teachers are expected to record all attendance and punctuality for every lesson on the Lesson Monitor database.
- If a student arrives late, all teachers must record an L code against the student’s name.
- Students with lateness to school will have an L code placed on their records, and those with no explanation provided via attendance303@c2ken.net will have a behaviour mention assigned to their records by office admin staff.

- Subject Teachers are expected to inform other staff via email of the names of any student(s) who is/are absent from school on an “approved educational activity” and to record the appropriate code against the names of student(s) who will be absent. It is preferable that this is done before the event.
- If internal truancy is suspected or noted, then the student should be marked as absent from the lesson and the Form Teacher **MUST** follow this up at the next available opportunity with the student
- **Leave pre-marks in place, do not overwrite.**

Form Teachers and Heads of Year:

- Continually stress the importance of full attendance and punctuality. Form Teachers can use the reward scheme to identify and reward full attendance
- Form Teachers are expected to monitor student attendance and punctuality. Attendance reports are to be reviewed by Heads of Year and Form Teachers on a bi-weekly basis. Concerns over any pupil must be referred to the Heads of Year when appropriate and discussed at Pastoral meetings as follows:
 - When attendance for any student falls below 95%
 - When attendance for any student falls below 90%
 - When attendance for any student falls below 85%
- Leave pre-marks in place and do not overwrite
- Closely monitor the attendance of all students in their Form Class and Year Group and refer, when appropriate, any concerns to appropriate Head of Junior, or Head of Senior School.
- If you have any concerns about the attendance of IN students, the SENCO needs to be informed as soon as possible
- Reinforce with students the need to catch up on work missed following a period of absence.
- Monitor closely students who fall below 95% attendance until improvement is evident. Interviews with students and contact with parents are to be noted and copied to Heads of Year, Head of Junior/Head of Senior School.
- Heads of Year should demonstrate concern for their students by endeavouring to speak to any student on their return to school after an absence.
- Form Teachers should encourage students to catch up with work missed by providing advice, support, and practical help, e.g., collating work from other staff.

- Form Teachers are expected to commend and recognise any student who achieves full attendance and Admirable Attendance (95%+) in any calendar month.

Form Teachers:

- As part of teachers 'duty of care' for their students, Form Teachers must keep a close eye on the attendance of their Form Class and intervene when attendance issues begin to arise.
- Contact home during designated time to enquire about unexplained periods of absence.
- During Form time, get students to use their Student Planners to record monthly attendance as part of helping students to actively monitor their own attendance.
- Interview those students whose attendance or punctuality is giving cause for concern, i.e., attendance below 95%, following three or more days unexplained absences or lateness to school.
- Assist any interviewed student by setting targets for improvement
- Provide support for any student who has been interviewed
- Monitor closely any student who has been interviewed until improvement is evident - if no improvement made refer to Head of Year.

Heads of Year: -

- Liaise closely with Form Teachers and other staff to monitor and review attendance and punctuality
- Contact home by 'phone when attendance falls below 95% or there are persistent unexplained absences. Inform the Head of Junior or Senior School and the School Attendance Officer
- Record details of phone call on Whole School Staff Spreadsheet.
- Contact home by letter – requesting an appointment – if no improvement is evident
- Refer when necessary to the EWO via School Attendance Officer (85% and below attendance) and send a standard letter to the parents (refer to Appendix II)

Heads of Junior/Senior School: -

- Heads of Junior/Senior School in consultation with Heads of Year and the Attendance Officer, identify those students whose attendance is between 85% - 94%. Years Heads are to monitor these students closely.

- When required, support Heads of Year at arranged meetings. Discuss with parents the amount of time lost and the likely effects of poor attendance/punctuality on attainment
- Refer to the EWO via School Attendance Officer any pupil whose attendance falls below 85%. A standard letter must be sent to the parent informing them of this (refer to Appendix II)

The Attendance Officers:

- Maintain the integrity of student attendance records on SIMS and Whole School Staff Spreadsheet by updating where necessary
- Meet with Heads of Year weekly, during a morning registration session (as mutually agreed) to update on year group attendance concerns (years 8-12 inclusive)
- Have a weekly meeting session with School EWO/EWS services (EA), including preparing letters to parents/arranging parental meetings when required
- Interview students whose attendance falls below 90%
- Attend parental meetings as required in school when attendance has been referred By HOY or Head of school
- Update and disseminate attendance update monthly using CPOMS to Leadership link and HOY's
- Send out email at the end of each day of any Missing Registers and monitor completion of such, with feedback to Vice-Principal/Principal
- Meet with Principal and Vice-Principal once per week to undertake a review of all information, processes, and actions by attendance officer

Office Staff:

- Office staff will ensure good communication regarding attendance by passing information quickly and accurately to teaching and pastoral staff
- Office staff will produce manual attendance sheets in the event of an emergency.
- Office staff will maintain a “late sheet” for latecomer pupils and email out to staff before break each day.
- Office staff will maintain a daily “out” log for pupils who are released from school
- Office staff will maintain a daily log of **emails** from parents regarding absence, lateness, or other pertaining to attendance
- Office staff will pre-mark EOTAS pupils

Procedures

- Malone Integrated College registers students for each lesson during the school day. Period 1 **lesson begins at 9.00am** and triggers the morning attendance and period 4 triggers the afternoon attendance.
- Subject teachers **MUST** take a register for all lessons each day.
- For students who arrive to school after 9.00am, a lateness mark will be recorded and the reason. SIMS will be updated by administrative staff.
- Any member of staff taking a group of students off site, for whatever reason, must provide an accurate list to the office staff at least ONE week in advance of the trip. This attendance should be further updated, if required, on the day of the actual trip. Failure to do so is likely to cause unnecessary worry particularly in the event of an emergency.
- Parent must inform the school through email (**attendance303@c2ken.net**) before 9.00am of any student absence.
- Staff **MUST NOT** overwrite any existing notified codes on the lesson monitor system (these will have been marked by administrative staff and should remain in place)

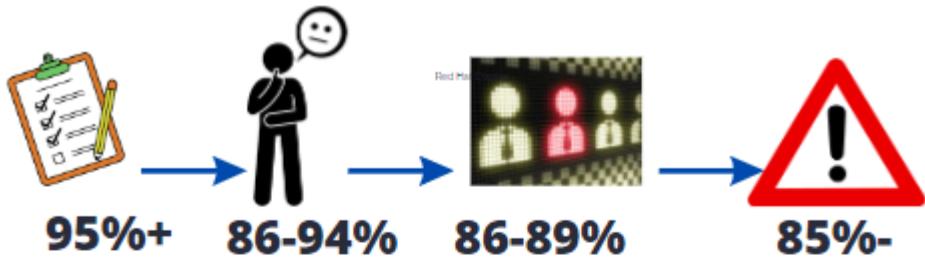
Proactive Promotion of Attendance

Our approach is first positive and proactive. It is our aim to create a culture of high expectations whereby all students aspire for 100% attendance. As a school we seek to use the following measures as a means of maximising school attendance:

- School holidays are published well in advance and circulated regularly through the school website, SIMS Parent App and our social media platforms
- Form Teachers will create an expectation of punctuality and attendance
- The students' annual reports are used to stress the high level of attendance required for success and will incorporate grades for attendance based on guidance from the Department of Education

- Achievement Points are given to students with Full Attendance in the Month and to those with Admirable Attendance (95+%) - 15 Achievement Points for full Attendance in a month and 5 Achievement Points for 'Admirable Attendance' (95-99%) Attendance in a month

SUMMARY



Form Teacher

Where concerns are identified Update
SIMS & Head of Year with Record Notes and reasons

Head of Year

Initiate Letter of Concern less than 95%
Arrange Meeting with Parent
Liaise with Head of School for those on 86-89%.

Head of School

Initiate Letter of Concern less than 90%
Arrange Meeting with Parent
Make referral to EWS via Attendance officer
Record all actions on CPOMS

School Attendance Officer

Maintain Integrity of student attendance records
Meet with Heads of Year weekly
Interview students face to face if attendance falls below 90%
Attend Parental Meetings as required by Head of Year and Head of School
Update and disseminate attendance data monthly
Send out Missing register notification daily and monitor the completion of such
Meet with Principal and Vice Principal to review all actions and processed documents



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS A Parent's Guide

Appendix 1 Less than 95% letter



«Parental_Salutation»

«AddressBlock»

Date

RE: «Forename»«Surname»

Dear «Parental_Salutation»

I am writing to highlight concerns regarding «Forename»'s attendance. **Attendance is currently at «M_Present_AEA» % since the beginning of the academic year.**

Research and statistics confirm there is **a strong link between good attendance and high achievement**. Poor attendance can result in students not achieving their full potential and recording lower exam scores. This is understandable when you consider missing 5 days of school is the equivalent of **missing 4 hours** of Maths, English and Science in one week. This is a total of 12 hours of vital core subjects.

From a legal point of view, we are obliged to inform the Educational Welfare Officer when attendance falls below the standards required. We want your child to achieve their full potential, this is only possible with full attendance in addition to hard work and cooperation.

We would request that you please stress the importance of good attendance with «Forename» and support us in helping to improve your child's attendance.

We look forward to seeing «Forename» attend more regularly for the remainder of the school year. If you require any further information or support, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

(insert name)

Head of Year

Appendix 2 Less than 90% letter



«Parental_Salutation»

«AddressBlock»

Date

RE: «Forename»«Surname»

Dear «Parental_Salutation»

As attendance is directly linked to student academic progress we are regularly monitoring and reviewing each child's individual records.

At present your child has an attendance record of «M_Present_AEA» %

We would like to take this opportunity to inform you of the most up to date attendance percentage as once this falls below 85% the school has a legal obligation to inform the Educational Welfare Service.

If you have already contacted the school to provide reasoning for any absence this has already been taken into consideration and this letter is for information purposes only.

It is vital that you update the school on any reason why your child is absent. If you are unable to phone the school during their period of absence you are expected to send in a note when your child returns to school – for your convenience we have supplied absence note slips, located at the back of your child's student planner.

If you would like to monitor your child's attendance, please ensure your email address has been provided to the school to link with the SIMS Parent App which gives a day-by-day summary of their attendance.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the appropriate Year Head or myself. We appreciate your continued cooperation and would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your on-going support.

Yours sincerely

(insert name)

Head of Junior School / Senior School* (delete as appropriate)

Appendix 3 Punctuality letter



«Parental_Salutation»

«AddressBlock»

Date

RE: «Forename»«Surname»

Dear «Parental_Salutation»

I am writing to inform you that «Forename» is persistently late for school. Since the start of term «Forename» has been late «Late_both» times. **Our school day starts with lessons commencing at 9.00am sharp.**

The SIMS Parent App can be downloaded and used to monitor attendance and punctuality. Despite our school highlighting the importance of punctuality and attendance «Forename»'s punctuality is well below the required level and is hindering achievement in a range of subjects.

When students arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions being given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one student arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

For students that are persistently late (2 times per week) we have taken the decision to place the students in Head of Year Detention. You will be given adequate notice of such detentions.

Meanwhile, if anything can be done to support «Forename» getting to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact myself or the school attendance officer.

Yours sincerely

(insert name)

Form Teacher / Head of Year / Attendance Officer* (Delete as Appropriate)

Appendix 4 Miss School Miss Out

Miss School Miss Out



WHAT THE LAW SAYS -

Under Article 45 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 ('the 1986 Order'), it is the duty of parents who have a child of compulsory school age¹ to ensure their child receives efficient, full time education suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and to any special educational needs they may have. Such education may be provided by regular attendance at school or otherwise, for example home education.

Paragraph 3 (1) of Schedule 13 to the 1986 Order states that it is the duty of a parent of a registered pupil of a school to secure their regular attendance at school. This applies to all children of compulsory school age who are on the roll of a school. As a parent you are legally responsible for making this happen.

Under Part III of Schedule 13 to the 1986 Order, if a child or young person who is registered at a school does not attend regularly, a parent can receive a fine not exceeding £1,000 in court (for each child). An Education Supervision Order (ESO) could also be made by a court under Article 55 of the Children (NI) Order 1995.



Education is not an option – it's compulsory.



FAMILY HOLIDAYS -

You can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not taking holidays during term time. Any child or young person who is absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning and will fall behind with their school work.

In each Academic Year there are only a maximum of 190 statutory school days – this allows plenty of time for holidays to be arranged outside term time.

Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.



Avoid taking family holidays during the school term.

1 www.deni.gov.uk/index/schools-and-infrastructure-2/admission-and-transport/pupils-and-classes/compulsory-school-age.htm

Miss



HOW PARENTS CAN HELP -

- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Make sure your child goes to school regularly and follows the school rules.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time – not late.
- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours when possible.
- Always inform the school if your child is absent due to illness – this should be followed up with a written note when your child returns to school.
- Take truancy seriously – if your child is not attending school as you expect they may be putting themselves at risk – Who are they with? What are they doing?
- Take family holidays outside term time.
- Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work (including homeworks).
- Attend parent evenings and school events.
- Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- Always support school staff in their efforts to control difficult or challenging behaviour.
- Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school – staff are there to help and will be supportive.



Do not be afraid to ask for help if a problem arises.

School Miss Out – Variety of Languages

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/miss-school-miss-out-improving-pupil-attendance-strategy>