

**MALONE COLLEGE
BELFAST**



**ATTENDANCE POLICY
2020**

AIM

To raise the levels of pupil achievement and ensure the highest possible level of attendance and punctuality at school.

OBJECTIVES

- To keep an accurate and up to date record of attendance
- To inform parents of attendance and punctuality issues
- To identify causes of poor timekeeping and/or non-attendance and take action
- To refer students to the Education Welfare Service when attendance is below 85% and when the school believes there are excessive unauthorised absences.
- To improve attendance and punctuality of individuals, groups and the whole School.

THE LAW

The duty of a parent, in relation to the education of their children, is found in the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and says:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable to his/her age ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.” Education and Library Boards through their Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents and carers meet their own responsibility towards their children’s education. If they do not, the Education and Library Board is duty bound to use the legal processes of Court action, to uphold a parent's duty to make sure that the young people in their care receive an education.

DUTIES

Form Teachers shall:

- emphasise the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Display ‘traffic-light’ sheet (issued each month), discuss attendance target(s) and review progress with class
- insist that all students attend a.m. and p.m. registration (students on report card or required to see other staff must report to their form teacher for registration first)
- take an accurate a.m. and p.m. registration and ensure the register is saved on SIMS at the end of registration. If there is a problem accessing SIMS take a paper register & send / telephone it to the office
- make every effort to establish the reason for an unexplained absence
- upon returning from an unexplained absence students should be asked for a completed tear-out slip (in homework diary) or a note signed by their parent/guardian
- on any occasion of unexplained absence (i.e. ‘N’ code) phone home to establish the reason

- students with <95% attendance without good reason or on-going poor timekeeping are to be identified as 'priority students'. Phone parents to inform them of your concern and place student on SIMS report. Agree a realistic target and monitor progress:

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- achievement points on SIMS should be used to celebrate good attendance
- if improved, email the office (ED) to request congratulations letter sent home
- if there is no improvement after a suitable time period (minimum 10 days) and attendance falls below 90% refer the student to your Head of Year (by email) outlining all actions that have been taken.
as / when required, use teacher conferencing time to:
- meet students with 2 (or more) 'L' codes / week or 3 (or more) / 2 weeks. If
- they do not attend - inform the Head of Year who will place them in after-school detention
- meet students who deliberately miss registration (for each offence). If they do
- not attend - inform the Head of Year who will place them in after-school detention
- contact parents to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns

achievement points on SIMS should be used to celebrate good attendance

- 1 week full attendance: add 1 achievement point
- ½ term full attendance: add 1 additional achievement point

Inform the Attendance Officer of any information relating to referred students that the EWO should be made aware of

Year Heads shall:

- on a weekly basis, monitor attendance statistics
- monitor and review the attendance/punctuality strategies and targets Form Teachers on a weekly basis, monitor attendance statistics
- monitor and review the attendance/punctuality strategies and targets Form Teachers are using with individual students
- highlight the importance of attendance and punctuality at assemblies and distribute attendance awards for 100% attendance over ½ term
- visit and highlight best attendance form class of the week

Following the referral of a 'priority student' by their Form Teacher:

- place student on SIMS report
- contact parents by phone, letter or invite for interview:

if improved, email the office (ED) to request congratulations letter sent home after a suitable time period if not improved and <85%, refer the student to the Attendance Officer by forwarding referral from Form Teacher with cc to Vice-Principal outlining additional steps / actions taken.

at pastoral meetings, using the format shown in appendix 1 review all students on <95% attendance list and update priority list accordingly.

- Stage 1: <95% without good reason, identified as a 'priority student' by Form Teacher due to level or pattern of attendance / late-coming
- Stage 2: <90% referred by Form Teacher to the Head of Year
- Stage 3: <85% referred to Attendance Officer by Head of Year
- Stage 4: Possible open case with EWO
- distribute a copy of the Attendance Priority List to the Vice-Principal, Form Teachers and Attendance Officer following each meeting
- place in after school detention students referred by their Form Teacher for non-attendance at a teacher conference for attendance matters
- inform Attendance Officer of any information relating to students who have an open case with the EWS

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Attendance Officer shall: monitor attendance on a weekly basis and distribute data to all staff report attendance statistics to the Vice-Principal and Principal provide Heads of Year with data for awarding monthly and ½ term attendance awards on a weekly basis (years 8-12 compulsory school age) display on the notice boards up-to-date:

- Whole school attendance %
- Year group with best attendance %
- Class with best attendance % in each year group
- Class with best attendance % in whole school ensure the office (ED) is informed in a timely manner to facilitate issuing 'traffic light' sheets on a monthly basis provide lists for the office (ED) to write to parents at ½ term intervals informing of following referral of a student by the Head of Year:
 - excessive late-coming (>1/week) and attendance concern (<90%)
 - Liaise with Form Teachers and Year Heads
 - Meet with students during pm registration
 - Contact parents by phone
 - invite parents to school for interview
 - Write to parents informing them of specific attendance concerns
 - Refer students to school youth worker (S Mulholland)
 - Liaise with Social Services regarding issues relating to student welfare
 - as required, complete referrals for students to the Education Welfare Service (EWS)
 - inform and update Form Teacher & Head of Year about status of referrals to EWS
 - on a weekly basis meet with school Youth Worker (S Mulholland) to consider all who have been referred by their Head of Year. Agree actions to be taken and continually review progress.

- liaise with SENCO regarding special needs where it impacts on attendance.
- meet bi-weekly with the school BELB link EWO to monitor & review:
- whole school attendance currently open cases
- possible new referrals. The Principal, Vice-Principal and Leadership Team shall:
- Implement the Attendance Policy
- Inform parents about the school policy on attendance
- Monitor and review Attendance
- Set and monitor an attendance target
- Review systems of rewards and sanctions
- Give attendance a high profile
- Support staff on issues of poor attendance and timekeeping
- Have a standing agenda item for attendance at BoG meetings

Parents shall:

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- Ensure that children leave for school on time every day
- Provide an explanation (written/phoned) for absences from school
- Endeavour not to take children out of school in term time
- Notify the school as soon as problems arise with child's attendance if no letter has been sent in advance
- Telephone the school on the first morning your child is absent

Students shall:

- Upon hearing the 8.57am bell line up outside their form room
- Attend am and pm registrations
- Attend assembly
- Be on time for lessons
- Make sure a note is brought from parents to explain absences
- If late sign in with Mr Totten or the main office
- If needing to leave early get a letter signed by your Head of Year and sign out at the office before leaving school

Rewards

- Commendations
- Certificates at assembly
- Good attendance references to potential employers/FE colleges/University

Sanctions

The school reserves the right to use any of the following sanctions with the aim of improving school attendance and late-coming:

- Detention
- Attendance & Punctuality report
- Referral to EWO