



ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. 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.

Lurgan College will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

'Academic excellence in a caring environment'

2. Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Lurgan College to enable them to achieve their full academic potential..
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

3. Role of the School

The Principal at Lurgan College has overall responsibility for school attendance; The The Pastoral Vice-Principal and / or Attendance Officer should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets.

The Attendance Officer will oversee all arrangements pertaining to pupil attendance. The Principal emphasizes importance of attendance and punctuality in letter addressed to Parents in August.

House Teachers regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils in their House group by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of the morning session.

All teaching staff are responsible for recording attendance of pupils during each timetabled class throughout the school day using Lesson Monitor.

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link:

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-andabsence-recording-by-schools

4. Role of the Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for leading the proactive promotion of the importance of good attendance and punctuality throughout the school.

In carrying out the duties the Officer will be directly responsible to the Vice-Principal who has overall responsibility for Pastoral Policy and Practice.

Job Purpose:

- To be a member of the Pastoral Care Team and to support the monitoring, evaluating and development of the pastoral care work within the school.
- To monitor the attendance of all pupils and take appropriate action to reduce or remove any barriers to learning so that their academic progress will not be hindered unnecessarily by irregular, avoidable or prolonged absence.
- To support individual House Teachers to maintain acceptable standards of attendance and punctuality within their own House group.

Specific Duties include:-

1. To have overall responsibility for the recording of attendance using the schools computerised system and for printing the school register once a month.
2. To provide Heads of Year, House Teachers and the Pastoral Vice-Principal with percentage attendance reports at the end of each month.
3. To collect absentee notes from House Teachers and record them in the attendance module.
4. To take appropriate action if absentee notes are not handed in promptly once a pupil has returned to school.
5. To liaise with House Teachers about the authenticity of all such notes and then to file them chronologically in the pupil's personal file or EMA folder.
6. To inform appropriate members of the Pastoral Care team about any irregular or prolonged absence which gives cause for concern and may require remedial action.
7. To inform the office when a pupil has been absent for more than 5 days in order that the home can be contacted and work sent out if required.
8. To prepare on a weekly basis an attendance report for Years 13 and 14 pupils for the purposes of EMA administration.
9. To prepare any statistics concerning attendance as required by the Headmaster.
10. To check periodically on late-comers to school in order to identify persistent offenders and decide appropriate action.
11. To liaise with the EWO about pupils with poor attendance records.

12. To attend any meeting of the Pastoral Care team as required by the Headmaster or Vice-Principal (Pastoral).

Lurgan College is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

5. Role of Parents

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

*Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first 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.

Pupils are expected to be in school at Lurgan College for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record. If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

6. Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Lurgan College must attend school punctually and regularly. If he / she has been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to his / her teacher when he / she returns.

Any pupil who arrives late to school must report to the Office and sign the late register stating time of arrival and reason for lateness. A note must also be submitted to confirm reason for late arrival.

A note requesting permission to leave school for special circumstances (such as medical appointment) must be presented by the pupil to the office in advance. The pupil will then be granted permission to leave at the time stated on note and must sign out on the register provided at the Office.

7. Absence Procedures

House teachers inform Attendance Officer about any pupil in their House group who has had three consecutive days of absence. Attendance Officer will then phone parents to establish reason for absence unless parent has already made contact with school. Arrangements are made for work to be collated and sent home if pupil is likely to require further time off to recover from illness.

Office staff informs Attendance Officer on a daily basis if a parent has contacted school to report illness of their child.

Parents of those pupils whose attendance has given cause for concern (unauthorised absences / pastoral concerns) to be contacted on first day of absence.

House Teachers to encourage students to return absence notes on pro-forma slip provided (see appendix) following period of absence. All pupils should have returned an absence note no later than 5 days after their period of absence from school. Failure to do so should be further investigated by House Teacher and then reported directly to the Attendance Officer, Head of Year (if a pastoral care concern is affecting attendance) or to the Vice Principal (Pastoral) for more serious issues.

House Teachers to check authenticity of absence notes. Vigilance on the part of the House Teacher is required and if necessary, check hand-writing on other notes in pupil's file.

Erratic attendance or any period of absence giving cause for concern should be reported immediately to the Attendance Officer.

All absence notes are dated in the Office and then forwarded to Attendance Officer for processing.

All Parents/Guardians are required to complete the attached absence notification form which provides a clear reason for any absence.

8. Promotion of the importance of good attendance and punctuality throughout the school

- *The following are some of the strategies implemented by Lurgan College to encourage good attendance and punctuality throughout the academic year:*
- Pupils with 100% attendance are presented with certificates at Speech day to recognise this achievement and promote importance of good attendance.
- Initiative introduced to celebrate pupils with 100% attendance per term and also to recognise those students who have improved their attendance figure per term. Certificates are presented in a special Year Assembly dedicated to attendance.
- A Poster campaign to highlight importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Guest speaker to conduct an Assembly for Year 12 pupils on the theme of Attendance and Punctuality. Information regarding how attendance is monitored within the workplace and the procedures followed if attendance is deemed as unsatisfactory.

- Personal development period dedicated to attendance with PowerPoint presentation highlighting correlation between attendance and exam performance. Group work activities whereby students assume role of employer and discuss how they would deal with poor attendance. Focusing pupils' attention on fact that attendance less than 95% is unacceptable. Try to alter perception that percentage figure in the 80's does not equate to good attendance.
- Late record form attached inside every pupil's homework diary. House Teacher signs this when a pupil arrives late to registration. Three periods of lateness (with the exception of medical or late bus) and pupils are placed in lunchtime detention. House Teachers also receive on a monthly basis a copy of the late register for their House Group so that they can review their House Group's punctuality over a four week period.
- Heads of Year are informed of % attendance for their Year Group per month. They together with Attendance Officer speak to those pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern.
- Attendance officer liaises with Education Welfare Officer as regards attendance of pupils in Years 11 and 12. Pupils whose attendance falls below 85% are referred to EWO when there is no satisfactory explanation for days missed.

9. Family holidays during Term Time

Lurgan College discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence and a letter explaining the school's stance on holidays during term time is sent home to parents. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

10. Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

If no significant improvement is evidenced after the Head of Year / Attendance Officer has spoken to a pupil whose attendance is giving cause for concern then the Attendance Officer will make contact with parents / guardians of a pupil to establish reason for poor attendance. Depending upon the reason cited, Attendance Officer will liaise with the Pastoral Vice-Principal and decide upon the best course of action.

If a pupil is failing to attend with no valid reason for absence then Attendance Officer will explain to parent that a significant improvement must be seen during the following days / weeks at school and, if not, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

11. Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority (EA) through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal duty to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85%, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

12. Review and Evaluation

This policy will be revised on an annual basis.