

# LARNE HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Update to Attendance Policy 2013  
Approved Main Board 18.9.2017

## 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.

Larne High School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. This is in keeping with the ethos of the school.

### **Ethos**

Larne High School is a co-educational, non-denominational, non-selective school. The school has a caring ethos, friendly pupils and a dedicated staff of 34 full-time and part-time teachers and 12 support staff, working to ensure that all our young people achieve the highest standards. We prize academic achievement for all, whilst supporting the development of the whole person.

## 2. AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Larne High School
- To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
- To promote good relationships with Educational Welfare Service.

## 3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### **The School**

- The Principal of Larne High School has overall responsibility for school attendance. Form Tutors should initially raise concerns regarding pupil attendance with the relevant Year Head. Year Heads should then liaise with the Vice Principal or his appointed Deputy who will ensure the Principal is informed.
- The Board of Governors will provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring that it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.
- Teaching staff will regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of Registration and at the start of each lesson throughout the course of the school day.
- Larne High School will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02 to ensure that pupil attendance is recorded and monitored in a consistent way.

### **Parents**

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

- 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 he/she have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.” Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986
- If a child is registered in Larne High School, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend the school.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians 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 for registration at 9.00am and to arrive punctually for the beginning of all classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child(ren) arrive(s) punctually to school. Lateness is recorded at registration and will be recorded on the pupil’s attendance record.
- In the event of a pupil appearing reluctant to attend school the parents/guardians should discuss the matter promptly with the relevant Form Tutor or Year Head to ensure that the school is able to provide appropriate support. **LARNE HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **Pupils**

- Every pupil of Larne High School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly.
- In the event of absence from school, it is the responsibility of the pupil to provide their Form Tutor with a written note from their parent/guardian explaining the reason for the absence, on their first day back at school.

## **Education Welfare Service**

- Education and Library Boards through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their child(ren)'s education.
- Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational attainment 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.

## **4. ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

- Pupils should aim to arrive on time (9.00am). If a pupil arrives in school after 9.15am, due to a medical or other appointment, or after 11:00am for any reason, a written explanation from parents/guardians must be brought to the School Nurse. Pupils arriving late with no valid reason will be recorded as such.
- A pupil who has been absent must bring a note (signed, addressed and dated) from parents/guardians stating the period and cause of absence. A note which states 'absent with my permission' or simply 'appointment' will not be accepted. The note must be presented to the Form Tutor on the day on which the pupil returns – a phone call will not suffice. Parents can complete the slips in the homework diary and the Form Tutor will remove them to retain as a record.
- If a pupil is going to be absent for a prolonged period, a written explanation from parents/guardians must be brought to the Form Tutor prior to the absence. Permission will not normally be given for holiday requests during term time.
- No pupil may leave school during school hours without his/her Form Tutor's permission. This will only be granted on reasonable grounds and at the written request of parents/guardians. Dental (excluding orthodontic) and medical appointments should be made outside school hours unless in an emergency, whenever possible.
- If a pupil has permission to leave school during the day, he/she must complete a yellow slip, have it signed by the Form Tutor and bring it to the School Office before leaving. If the pupil returns to school on the same day, he/she must sign in at the School Office.
- Pupils must not leave the school grounds during school hours. Only pupils in Years 12-14 may leave the school at lunchtime provided they have a valid lunch pass.
- Pupils who bring a car to school may park in the designated areas at the rear of the school. Pupils are encouraged to park legally and considerately and to ensure that they are not causing any problems for local residents.
- Once they have arrived in school, pupils must not leave again in any circumstances without seeking permission and following the correct procedures. Failure to comply with the regulations with regard to leaving school may result in a detention.
- Truancy will be considered a serious offence. The pupil may be detained after school or asked to attend school during staff development time in order to make up the work missed.

## **5. FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

- Larne High School 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.

## **6. PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING NON-ATTENDANCE**

- Attendance will be recorded and monitored through SIMS Lesson Monitor.
- Pupil attendance will be recorded during Registration period by the Form Tutor and at the start of every period by the subject teacher.
- A designated member of staff will have responsibility for the administration of attendance within SIMS and for signing in pupils who arrive late into school after registration closes.

- Following a period of absence pupils are required to provide their Form Tutor with a written note from their parent/guardian explaining the reason for the absence. The Form Tutor provides the designated member of staff with the reason for absence and this is recorded within SIMS.
- If no information has been provided by parents/guardians by the third day of a pupil's absence, a letter is posted home by the school to request an explanation for the absence.
- The Vice Principal generates a monthly attendance report from SIMS. This report identifies the names of pupils whose attendance is below 85%. These details are passed on to the relevant Year Head to investigate the reasons for the attendance pattern.
- If necessary, the Vice Principal will make contact with the parents/guardians of those pupils whose attendance is causing concern.
- In the event of the attendance of a pupil of compulsory school age falling below 85% without appropriate mitigating circumstances, the pupil will be referred to Education Welfare Service. The School will work with EWS and other appropriate external agencies to provide support to the pupil and his/her parents/guardians in order to improve school attendance.
- The School will seek to support pupils (and their parents/guardians) with specific attendance issues through procedures relating to school age mothers, long-term illness and school refusal.

## **7. REVIEW & EVALUATION**

This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly and amended in the light of further DE guidance and/or changes to the school's procedures.

**Date of next review:** June 2020