

# CARRICKFERGUS GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY



<b>Carrickfergus Grammar School policy on:</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Date implemented:</b>	June 2022
<b>Review date / led by:</b>	June 2023/Principal
<b>Consulted:</b>	Board of Governors / Pastoral Team
<b>Allied School Policies:</b> Promoting Positive Behaviour, Safeguarding.	

### Introduction

The school's target average attendance rate is 96%.

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. It is also an important aspect of preparing pupils for adult and working life. Carrickfergus Grammar School strives to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. Regular attendance to the age of 16 is compulsory in law and it is also a requirement of Carrickfergus Grammar School for those pupils entering Sixth Form.

In a caring environment we aim to: -

- Equip our pupils and staff to meet the challenges of a changing society;
- Increase academic, physical and social potential;
- Develop moral and emotional maturity;
- Nurture a sense of community.

And, in so doing, it is our common goal to: - *educate, nurture and prepare each of our pupils for the future that awaits them,*

### Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Carrickfergus Grammar school.
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 Education Welfare Service.

## Overview of roles

<b>Agent</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>Board of Governors</b>	Endorse Policy and Practice by following statutory guidance.
<b>Principal</b>	Ensure Policy and Practice in line with statutory guidance and principles of good practice.
<b>Head of Pastoral Care</b>	Oversee Policy and Practice.
<b>Head of Year</b>	Monitor and address attendance and punctuality in Year Group through Class Tutors.
<b>Class Tutor</b>	Daily Registration Procedures and Absence Recording. Assisting Head of Year to monitor attendance and punctuality.
<b>Subject Teacher</b>	Recording and monitoring of lesson attendance and afternoon roll.
<b>Clerical Officer</b>	Maintenance of attendance records.
<b>Pupil</b>	Conformity with school's attendance procedures.
<b>Parents</b>	Support for school's attendance procedures.
<b>Educational Welfare Officer</b>	Support the school in instances of persistent absence.

## Role of the School

The Principal at Carrickfergus Grammar School has overall responsibility for school attendance; the Head of Pastoral Care should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/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.

Heads of Year and Class Tutors monitor data provided on attendance and punctuality and liaise with Head of Pastoral Care about individual cases.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circulars 2013/13 and 2015/2.

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

Carrickfergus Grammar School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

### **Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

*Every child of 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 a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. If 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 **8.45am 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 recorded on your child's attendance record. If a pupil is late to school for a medical reason a note must be provided. If no note is provided the lateness will be recorded as 'late with no reason'.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the Class Tutor or Head of Year to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

### **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at Carrickfergus Grammar School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly.

### **Absence Procedures**

- Daily attendance, absence and punctuality are monitored by the Class Tutor during morning registration;
- Attendance at every teaching period is recorded on Lesson Monitor;
- Parents are contacted by text on the first morning of absence to inform them that their child's absence from school has been registered and to ask for a reason for absence;
- The text is sent in the late morning to allow for morning medical appointments and the return of pupils from our partner schools in the Carrickfergus Learning Community (CLC);
- Parents are required to respond to the text by the end of the school day to explain why their child is absent. This message is stored centrally and serves as an absence note. Parents who do not respond to the text message by late afternoon will most likely receive a phone call from school. A phone call to school from parents during the school day, instead of a text response, will also serve as an absence note;
- The Clerical Officer notes the absence codes onto the Schools Information Management System (SIMS) on return of text messages;
- In the unlikely event that a reason for absence is outstanding when a pupil returns to school, it must be received within seven days either through a parental note, phone call from parent or return text. Otherwise, the matter will be referred to the Head of Year and a detention may be issued;

- If a child is off school for more than three days due to ill health, it is likely that school will make a courtesy call to check on the child's progress back to health.
  - On a monthly basis Heads of Year review the attendance and punctuality of their Year Group and report to Head of Pastoral Care;
  - Letters of concern will be issued where poor attendance is highlighted;
  - Where a pupil's attendance continues to give cause for concern, either through genuine illness or otherwise, a parent is invited to the school for interview with Head of Year and/or Head of Pastoral Care to address the issue and formalise support;
  - Those pupils whose attendance is less than 85% are reviewed by Head of Pastoral Care and Head of Year and pupils in Years 8 – 12 are referred to Educational Welfare except in the case of exceptional circumstances.
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- Pupils who are late are given a Demerit;
  - Continued poor punctuality will lead to further sanction;
  - If poor punctuality continues the pupil will be interviewed by Head of Year and/or Head of Pastoral Care and parents will be contacted by telephone or invited in for interview;
  - Pupils who are persistently late and do not respond to sanctions may be required to Register with Head of Year until punctuality improves or to stay behind after school on a daily basis.
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- It is requested that appointments for your child are kept out of school hours, where possible;
  - If your child needs to leave school for an appointment during the school day, a parental note should be brought in and shown to the Class Tutor with an explanation of the type of appointment. Simply writing 'appointment' on the note is not sufficient;
  - The Principal reserves the right to refuse permission for a child to leave school if no reason is provided through a parental note, as outlined above, or if the reason is not sufficiently explained. School also reserves the right to request evidence of appointments, if deemed necessary.
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- Pupils' attendance and punctuality are reported to parents biannually through the Winter and Summer reports;
  - Expected standards of attendance are communicated to parents through Induction materials, mail-shots and on reports as above. This takes the form of the *School Attendance Matters* brochure issued annually by the Department of Education. They are communicated to pupils through morning registration and assemblies on a regular basis.

### **Family holidays during Term Time**

Carrickfergus Grammar 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. This is communicated to parents through Induction materials, mail-shots and school reports, as well as directly by Heads of Year.

**Procedures for Managing Non-attendance:** See Procedures above

## **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service has 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.