

# **THE ROYAL SCHOOL ARMAGH**



# **ATTENDANCE & LATENESS POLICY**

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# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## ETHOS and RATIONALE

Regular school attendance<sup>1</sup> is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

The Royal School Armagh will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

### Mission Statement as agreed by the Board of Governors

*The Royal School Armagh aims to provide its pupils with an education which in its wholeness will enable them to achieve their full potential in academic, social, moral and spiritual terms. The values of the School, both implicitly and explicitly, reflect and are informed by the reformed tradition of the Christian faith. The School warmly welcomes the presence of pupils and staff of other Christian traditions, other world faiths and those with no religious convictions.*

### This Policy Aims to:

1. improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at The Royal School Armagh,
2. develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance,
3. provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils,
4. promote good relationships with Education Welfare Service.

The Head of Pastoral Care liaises with the Concourse Office and monitors attendance through the Heads of Year and Form Tutors. At the regular Pastoral Meeting attendance targets and pupils who are persistently late are reviewed and actions discussed and effected. The Head of Pastoral Care has a monthly meeting with the EWO (Education Welfare officer).

## ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

### Role of the School

**The Headmaster** has overall responsibility for school attendance; (*teachers/designated staff*) should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

**The Board of Governors** provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is regularly placed as an agenda item at meetings.

**Teaching staff** regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is accurately recorded at the beginning of each class. SIMS Lesson Monitor is used for this purpose.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2018/12, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/DE%20Circular%202018%2012%20-%20Attendance%20Guidance%20%26%20Absence%20Recording%20by%20Schools%20-%20Updated%20for%20Sept%202018.pdf>

The Royal School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

<sup>1</sup>“regularly” means “in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school” – *Lady Hale - Isle of Wight Council v Platt 6 April 2017*

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

Parents/guardians have a legal duty<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

It is a parent's/guardian'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.

If the school has not been informed about an absence, parents/guardians will be informed by text if their son/daughter has not registered in school by 11.00am.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.45am. Registration will begin at 8.50am and classes will begin at 9.10am. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on the pupil's attendance record.

If a child appears reluctant to attend school parents should discuss the matter promptly with the Form Tutor, Head of Year or Head of Pastoral Care to ensure that both parents and pupils receive maximum support.

### **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at The Royal School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly. If a pupil has been absent from school a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the appropriate Form Tutor when the pupil returns.

### **ABSENCE PROCEDURES for All Year Groups**

- (a) Absence of Pupils: - Parents/guardians are asked to discourage pupils from absenting themselves from school unnecessarily. **It is expected that parents/guardians will not arrange family holidays during term time.**
- (b) Absence Text Service: If a pupil is not marked present by 11 am, parents will receive a text message informing them of same. Under Dept of Education guideline parents need to respond to the message with a reason for the absence, if known.
- (c) Absence Notes:  
If parents have not responded to the absence text with a reason for the absence, they must provide an absence note or a completed Absence Notification Form which provides a clear reason for any absence (see Appendix A). This form should be given to the Form Tutor **on the day the pupil returns**. In the case of pending or actual prolonged absence parents or guardians should inform the school office as soon as possible.
- (d) Exeats: - Pupils are not allowed to leave school during the "school day" without first presenting a parent/guardian note or approved appointment card to a Vice Principal – an "exeat card" will then be issued to authorise the pupil to leave school. Boarding pupils must obtain authorisation from the Boarding Staff prior to seeking an exeat from a Vice Principal.

There are no “free periods” for pupils and any pupil who has a non-teaching period is expected to undertake private study in the Big School Room/Library or other designated room.

Parents/guardians should try to restrict dental appointments, driving lessons etc. to either holidays or after school hours except in emergency.

<sup>2</sup> Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

### **Family Holidays during Term Time**

The Royal 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. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised. Parents must write to the Headmaster if they intend to take their child(ren) out of school for a family holiday during term time.

### **Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

Non-attendance is followed up by the Heads of Year in the first instance. Persistent cases who do not respond to the intervention of the Head of Year are referred to the Head of Pastoral Care and the Headmaster. Parents will be consulted. The EWO is updated monthly and is involved as necessary.

### **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children’s education.

If a pupil’s absence causes concern, and/or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, 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.

## **LATENESS PROCEDURES**

This policy is designed to ensure that pupils develop an awareness of the need to be punctual. Pupils should be made aware of the rules so that they can take responsibility for their punctuality. It is expected that teachers will model good punctuality and adhere to the rules closely and apply them fairly so that pupils internalise them.

1. School rule on Punctuality: *“Pupils are expected to be in school each day by 8.45am - recurring lateness may be subject to sanction. All pupils are required to be present in assembly and at registration unless specifically excused. Punctuality is also essential throughout the school day in order for learning to proceed effectively.”*
2. Late for school:
  - a. Pupils are expected to be in school for 8.45am in order to be in registration at 8.50am.
  - b. On a morning that a pupil has assembly and arrives after 9.00am they must go straight to the **Concourse Office** where they will sign the Late book before going to assembly.
  - c. On a morning that a pupil doesn’t have assembly and arrives in school after 8.50am but before 9.10am, they go straight to their registration room where their Form Tutor will record that they have been late.
  - d. If a pupil arrives after 9:10am, they must go straight to the **Concourse Office** where they will register that they are in school, before going to their class.

3. Consequences of Being Late. (Years 8-12) In any one month
  - Heads of Year should investigate to see if there is a valid reason for an isolated incident of lateness.
  - Persistent lateness should also be investigated as there may be an unavoidable problem with buses.
  - **Late once:** (without a justifiable excuse) noted.
  - **Late twice:** offence warrants a warning.
  - **Late on three occasions:** pupils should register with the Head of Year or Head of Pastoral Care on a Friday at 3.15pm.
  - If the lateness is repeated for **a fourth** time the pupil will be required to register with the Head of Year each morning for a week.
  - Pupils will be given a fresh start at the beginning of each month. However, if the pattern is repeated each month, then the pupil should be referred to the Head of Pastoral Care who may take further action.
  - Lateness should be dealt with retrospectively after the monthly Pastoral Meeting.
  
4. Consequences of Being Late. (Years 13-14). In any one month
  - Pupils are required to attend registration at 8.50am on three mornings per week.
  - A Year Group assembly and the Headmaster's assembly will be held on the other two mornings. On these two mornings the pupils are expected to be in assembly for 8.55am and the register will be taken by the Head of Year.
  - The Head of Year will take appropriate action to deal with pupils who are persistently late.
  - Particular emphasis should be placed on the importance of pupils being on time for these two assemblies each week.
  
5. Heads of Year are responsible for dealing with repeated breaches of the lateness policy and will take appropriate action, considering all of the pastoral information available. However, HoY must work through all the stages first. **It is important that pupils recognise that the HoY will systematically monitor lateness in an effort to develop a positive attitude towards punctuality.** It is also essential that HoY are consistent in their approach.

Date Policy Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Headmaster)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairman of Board of Governors)

# Appendix A



The Royal School Armagh

## ABSENCE NOTIFICATION FORM

**Please Note – This form must be completed for each period of pupil absence and returned to the Form Tutor on the first day the pupil returns to school.**

Name of Pupil \_\_\_\_\_

Year / Class \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Absence \_\_\_\_\_

Reason \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Parent / Guardian) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_