



# **HART MEMORIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY UNIT**

**Pupil Attendance Policy  
January 2025**

## **Abstract**

This Policy was created to outline the current provision for Monitoring Pupil Attendance in Hart Memorial Primary School and Nursery Unit. It was devised in line with relevant documentation, current practice, and stakeholder consultation.

**Principal:** Mr Andrew Frizzell  
afrizzell135@c2kni.net

## **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 his/her potential.

At Hart Memorial Primary School, we strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil feels valued and secured.

## **Mission Statement**

***In the Hart, the needs of our pupils are at the heart of every decision we make.***

## **Aims**

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Hart Memorial Primary 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 the Education Welfare Service.

## **Role of the School**

The Principal at Hart Memorial Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

The Vice Principal at Hart Memorial Primary School has responsibility of monitoring and reviewing attendance each month. This supports the production and analysis of data, but also allows opportunity for a breadth of pupil/ family knowledge and patterns to be investigated. The vice principal will meet with EWO monthly.

The Board of Governors provides support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

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

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 2024/13, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202413-attendance-guidance-absence-recording-by-schools>

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/articles/school-attendance-0>

Hart Memorial Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. A letter promoting good attendance will be issued to parents/ guardians at the beginning of each school year (see Appendix 2). Attendance Posters and leaflets will be issued to parents/ guardians each term to encourage the ongoing visibility of attendance and engaging in effective collaboration together (see Appendix 7).

Hart Memorial Primary School has developed an '**Attendance Matters Initiative**' to connect the importance of good attendance with lifelong learning and skills for a sustained future. Hart Memorial Primary School has joined with local businesses to support any child who attends school for ONE full month. The '**Attendance Matters Initiative**' allows a child with FULL school attendance for one month to be entered into a raffle at the end of that month to win a voucher from our local supporting businesses. This initiative is not only linked to a child improving academically but is connected to pupils' emotional well-being and supports them to thrive in their community.

## **Role of Parent**

Parents have a legal duty (The Children Order NI 1995) to ensure their children 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, his/her parent has a legal duty to ensure that he/she regularly attends 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* via Seesaw App or online absence form which can be found on our school website, <https://www.hartmemorialps.org/about-us/contact-us/> (see Appendix 1). 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 8.50am for registration and the beginning of classes at 8.55am. *It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual.* Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record (L code from 8.55am-9.14am; U code 9.15am onwards). If a child is continually late for school the parent/ guardian will receive a letter outlining how many late sessions the child has in one month. (see Appendix 6).

If a child appears reluctant to attend school, the parent should discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or principal to ensure that both the parent and child receive maximum support.

## **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at Hart Memorial Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly.

## **Absence Procedures**

Parents / guardians must inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence and are required to complete the attached absence notification form which provides a clear reason for any absence on the child's return to school. Teachers should be informed in writing (via Seesaw) of any absence known in advance.

## **Family holidays during Term Time**

Hart Memorial Primary 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; this will be at the discretion of the principal.

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

Attendance and punctuality are monitored on a day-to-day basis through pupil registration. If a parent has not contacted the school to report a child's absence, the school will contact the parent by phone within 3

school days of the absence (if the child is still absent) to ascertain a reason and expected return date. When a child returns to school, a reason via seesaw App or online school form (see Appendix 1) must be given to the class teacher with a reason provided for the absence. If a reason for absence is not forthcoming within 3 days of the child's return, a D code (no reason provided for absence) will be recorded for all the days of the absence. D codes are scrutinised by the Department of Education for Northern Ireland. If a pupil's attendance drops below **85%**, the vice principal will write to the parents / guardians highlighting this (see Appendix 3) and encouraging improved attendance. If the pupil's attendance does not improve or continues to decline, the vice principal will write to the parents / guardians again, (see Appendix 4) informing them that any further absences will lead to automatic referral to the Education Welfare Service. In the event of continued absences, the principal/ vice principal will refer the pupil to the Educational Welfare Service; (see Appendix 5) an Educational Welfare Officer will then contact the parents / guardians to ensure better attendance in the future.

### **Education Welfare Service**

Through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have 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 Education Welfare Service if appropriate. The Education Welfare Service will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

**Appendix 1** Online absence form

**Appendix 2** 'Promoting Good Attendance' letter

**Appendix 3** monitoring attendance <85% : letter 1

**Appendix 4** monitoring attendance <85% : letter 2

**Appendix 5** monitoring attendance <85% : referral

**Appendix 6** letter regarding poor punctuality

**Appendix 7** Attendance Poster

## Appendix 1

The screenshot shows a web browser window with two tabs: 'MY-SCHOOL' and 'Contact Us'. The address bar shows the URL 'hartmemorialps.org/about-us/contact-us/'. The browser's bookmark bar contains several links, including 'Managed bookmarks', '4-7 E safety lesson...', 'Addition and Subtra...', 'Anti Bullying Week...', 'Be kind to everyone...', 'Bird Foot Types - W...', 'Birds Educational V...', 'Calming Music For...', 'DIY crafts How to m...', and 'Home Mentally He...'. The website has a decorative header with a colorful border featuring flowers and a child's hands. The main content is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'Contacting the Hart' and contains contact information for Hart Memorial Primary School. The right column is titled 'Absence' and contains a form for reporting a child's absence. A large, light gray 'DRAFT' watermark is visible across the bottom half of the page.

### Contacting the Hart

Please find our contact information below. If you would like to email us directly, you can use the form to the right - this will go directly to our school email account.

Thank you.

### Contact Us

**Address:**  
Hart Memorial Primary School,  
Charles Street,  
Craigavon,  
Co Armagh,  
BT62 4BD,  
Tel: 028 3833 2817

**Email:**  
[info@hartmemorial.portadown.nischnuk](mailto:info@hartmemorial.portadown.nischnuk)

### Absence

If your child is absent, please fill in this form once they have returned to school.

**Child's Name \***

**First date of absence: \***  DD  MM  YYYY

**Last date of absence: \***  DD  MM  YYYY

**Reason for absence: \***

**Parent/Guardian's name: \***

**Submit**

## ATTENDANCE

### Promoting good attendance at school

Every parent wants the best for his or her child:

- ✓ to be happy in school
- ✓ to make good progress
- ✓ to mix well and have friends
- ✓ to achieve their full potential

Good attendance is essential for these to occur; that is why attendance is closely monitored by each school and by the Educational Welfare Service. The procedure is as follows:

- Attendance Assemblies/ videos and class talks every term
- at the end of the year, pupils with 100% attendance for the year receive awards at our Prize-giving Ceremony
- attendance is monitored by the school on a monthly basis. If a child's attendance drops below 90%, it is monitored closely
- if attendance drops below 85%, the parent will be informed in writing. At this stage, the Educational Welfare Officer (who calls in to school each month) will also begin monitoring the child's attendance
- if, after another month, the child's attendance has not improved (i.e. there have been further absences) a second letter will be issued asking the parents to meet with the vice principal to discuss the matter
- if, even after this, attendance does not improve, there is a responsibility on the school to refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Service; parents will be informed in writing that this referral is being made. An Educational Welfare Officer will then visit parents at home to see how best they can be supported to improve their child's attendance. The Educational Welfare Officer has a *supportive* role
- school doors open at 8.40am to give children time to get to class and be ready for lessons to start at 8.50am. If children come in after 8.55am, they are automatically marked 'late' in the register. Latecomers can be disruptive to the rest of the class and miss important elements of the curriculum so do please ensure that your child arrives on time for school each day

*With this in mind, we look forward to a happy, healthy new school year with good attendance and punctuality by all!*

Please ring to make an appointment to discuss this matter if there is any additional information you wish to share.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Andrew Frizzell  
Principal



Mrs S White  
Vice Principal



## Hart Memorial Primary School and Nursery Unit

Charles Street  
Portadown  
BT62 4BD

**Principal:**

Mr A Frizzell BA (Hons) PGCE MEd  
Email: afrizzell135@c2kni.net

**Vice Principal:**

Mrs S White  
Email: swhite410@c2kni.net

☎ 02838 332817

Web: [www.hartmemorialps.org](http://www.hartmemorialps.org)

October 2024

**To the parent/guardian of:**

**Date of Birth: ??/??/??**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We have recently analysed the register and have noted that your child's attendance has dropped to %.

While 100% attendance is clearly the ideal, in many cases legitimate illnesses, or other factors can prevent it. However, when attendance falls below a certain level, we become concerned, as our aim is to help your child reach his full potential. This is difficult to achieve if a lot of days are missed from school.

Having analysed the register in detail, I do note that many of the reasons provided are relating to \_\_\_\_\_; hopefully you are making some progress with regard to addressing this problem.

If you feel that you wish to discuss the situation, please contact the school office to make an appointment with me.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andrew Frizzell  
Principal

Mrs S White  
Vice Principal



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**Vice Principal:**

Mrs S White  
Email: swhite410@c2kni.net

October 2024

**To the parent/guardian of:**

**Date of Birth: ??/??/??**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Despite having written to you in October 2024, \_\_\_\_\_ attendance has continued to deteriorate, and his/ her attendance is now XX%, meaning that he has missed XX days of school already; this is XX academic weeks.

I must advise you that unless \_\_\_\_\_ attendance improves the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service following our next meeting.

If you would like to speak with me regarding this, please make an appointment via the school secretaries.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andrew Frizzell  
Principal

Mrs S White  
Vice Principal





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Mrs S White  
Email: swhite410@c2kni.net

October 2024

Dear Mr & Mrs \_\_\_\_\_,

The Educational Welfare Officer for our school has instructed me to refer \_\_\_\_\_ to the Educational Welfare Service in order that she may meet with you and support you in improving \_\_\_\_\_ attendance.

Therefore, in order to fulfil our duty of care for \_\_\_\_\_ I will be making a referral to the Education Welfare Service today.

His attendance is currently **66%**.

\_\_\_\_\_ really needs to be at school on a much more regular basis from now on. Hopefully the Educational Welfare Officer will be able to provide you with the support and advice needed to assist you in having \_\_\_\_\_ **at school every day** from now on.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Andrew Frizzell  
Principal

Mrs S White  
Vice Principal

Enc printout of \_\_\_\_\_ attendance

Date:

Dear (names of parents / guardians),

I am enclosing a printout of the (child's name)'s attendance to date to highlight the significant amount of 'lateness'.

(Child's name) should be in school at 8.45am, ready to start lessons at 8.55am. Being late almost every day has the following impact:

- (Child's name) misses out on the social period of being with and chatting to their friends between 8.45am and 8.55am
- She / he is unprepared for class activities which start promptly at 8.55am
- She / he misses out on part of her play time / initial activity in the classroom; this develops Literacy and Numeracy skills, hence is a key time of the day.
- She / he feels embarrassed / uncomfortable / self-conscious entering the classroom after activities have started.
- She / he disrupts the lesson.
- She he takes the teacher's attention away from the rest of the class as the teacher must then complete attendance forms, dinner register, collect money etc for her / him individually rather than as part of the whole class.

I hope that you can see that it is with (child's name)'s welfare and best interests at heart that her / his punctuality needs to improve.

Children who arrive punctually each day are:

- Better prepared
- Happier and more self-confident
- More relaxed
- More alert
- Higher achieving
- Enjoying school more

I hope to see a significant improvement by (date) when I monitor attendance and punctuality again.

Yours faithfully

*S. White*

Mr. A Frizzell  
Principal

Mrs S White  
Vice Principal

PUNCTUALITY MATTERS....  
TO OUR PUPILS  
TO YOUR CHILD





## THINK

JUST 2 missed school days per month = 20 missed days in ONE year = 1 missed month of school

## MISS OUT

children who miss 2 days of school per month are 5 times more likely to fall behind in reading, writing and Numeracy skills.

## SIMPLE

Attending school everyday  
= Academic Success  
= SUCCESS IN LIFE!

# ATTENDANCE MATTERS

## CLEVER IDEA

Prepare your child for sickness by stocking up on vitamins and eating a healthy diet.

## IS IT NECESSARY?

While some absences may be unavoidable, limiting your child's absence puts them on a better path for their future!

## NEW YEAR

New School year  
=  
New fresh start to Education for 2024-2025

**Policy Review/ Design/ Implementation**

Designed/Renewed	October 2024
Reviewed by Principal	November 2024
Reviewed by Staff	January 2025
Reviewed by Parents/Guardians	January 2025
Reviewed by Governors	January 2025
Ratified by Governors	
Implemented	

Chairman:

Date: