



WELLINGTON COLLEGE BELFAST

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed by Board of Governors October 2016

Attendance Policy

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.

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

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Wellington College.
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.

The Vice Principal Pastoral will oversee all aspects of pupil attendance operating through the Heads of Year and Tutors in the first instance.

Role of the School

The principal at Wellington College Belfast has overall responsibility for school attendance; the Vice Principal Pastoral will bring any concerns regarding school attendance to 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 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 through 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 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm

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

Role of Parent

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 8.45 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 Head of Year or Vice Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Wellington College must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

[Absence Procedures \(see Appendix A below\)](#)

[Family holidays during Term Time](#)

Wellington 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. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

[Procedures for Managing Non-attendance \(see Appendix A\)](#)

[Education Welfare Service](#)

The Education Authority 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.

Appendix A

Wellington College Belfast

Policy on Attendance and Registration

The College expects full and punctual attendance from all pupils.

- Link between attendance and attainment
- Development of good practice and discipline
- Preparation for the world of work

Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children attend the College, and in so doing will have the full support of the College.

In line with Department of Education guidelines the College makes the decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. ***Parents cannot make this decision.***

[Attendance and registration policy and procedures](#)

Morning and afternoon registration is a legal directive of the Department of Education. Staff should pay particular attention to accuracy and follow the LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION when completing Lesson Monitor.

[Pupils should](#)

Arrive in the College, leaving enough time to go to their locker before registration

Line up outside their form rooms at 8.45am for registration

On being brought into the classroom by their tutor they should place their diaries on their desk

Produce a note for the tutor explaining the reason for any recent absence

On those mornings when there is a Year Assembly they should go to the designated venue for 8.45am and line up in their form groups for registration

If a pupil is late

They should go directly to the office to be registered if they arrive after 8.45am

They should then report to their tutor if it is before 9.05am on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and their subject teacher on Wednesdays and Fridays

Parents should

Contact the College by telephone if their child is going to be late or absent that day

Provide a note explaining their absence for the tutor on the day of their return

Teachers should

Meet their form groups at 8.45am for registration

Take a register and record those who are absent

Ask for notes from those pupils who have been absent

Report any concern they have about a pupil who is absent to the Year Head

Meet their form group at the designated venue at 8.45am on those mornings when there is a Year Assembly

Complete Lesson Monitor for their registration group during first period

Complete Lesson for each individual teaching period and particularly for junior classes during period 6 and senior classes during period 7 in line with DE directives

Holidays During Term Time

Absence during term time can seriously affect a pupil's progress.

In line with Department of Education guidelines the College cannot give permission for holidays during term time.

The parents of pupils in Years 11 to 14 will be actively discouraged from taking their child out of school for holidays.

Any request to take a pupil out of school for a holiday should be made in writing to the Principal and this must be done before the holiday takes place.

Medical and dental appointments should not be made during school time, if possible.

Pupils who need to leave the College during the School Day

Pupils in Years 8-14 are allowed to leave the school premises during the school day only if a request, in writing, from a parent/guardian is received and approved by the school.

Acceptable reasons

- 1 Medical appointments
- 2 Family funeral
- 3 Special occasions e.g. music exam, University interview, participation in a major sporting event

Punctuality

Punctuality needs to be continually encouraged amongst pupils.

For school purposes, a pupil is late if they are not lined up outside their form room at 8.50am.

The Form tutor will contact parents by letter if there is persistent lateness

The Year Head will invite the parents for interview if there is no improvement after the letter has been issued

Pupils arriving in the College after 8.50am must report to the office.

For statistical purposes pupils arriving after 8.50am will be marked late.

Absence Follow Up

- 1 A weekly OMR Absence Sheet is placed in the register every Monday
- 2 Parents are expected to contact the College on the first day of absence
- 3 Absence notes to be kept in registers for a term
- 4 Absence notes to be checked by Form Tutors and any queries to be referred to Year Heads.
- 5 Year Heads must contact parents if a pupil fails to produce a note of explanation for their absence

Form Tutors must maintain constant supervision of attendance. Any concern must be reported to the Year Head.

Year Heads must review the attendance of pupils in their year at least once a week.

The Year Head must report persistent absentees to the Head of Pastoral Care.

Truancy

Any pupil truanting must be:

- 1 Interviewed by the Year Head to try to find out the reason
- 2 Parents must be involved either by interview or by telephone
- 3 Monitored by the tutor to ensure work is caught up
- 4 Placed in detention if deemed appropriate
- 5 Monitored carefully in the future

Absence from class during the College Day

This should be dealt with in the same way as above, including detention.
Attendance at classes will be recorded for each lesson using Lesson Monitor
In all cases, parents must be informed.

Punctuality follow up (Lates in this case are 'school' lates)

NB In the case of buses being late, i.e. through no fault of the pupil, sanctions should not be issued

If a pupil misses their bus it is not a legitimate excuse

The Year Head will contact parents if there is persistent lateness.

Pupils returning to School after an extended absence

Each pupil may be different in their needs when returning to school after a long absence due to illness. The Year Head should discuss the pupil's re-integration with the pupil and his/her parents before the pupil returns to school. Arrangements need to be made:

- a) To enable the pupil to catch up with work
- b) To re-establish or establish friendship groups and
- c) To monitor progress closely

Encouragement of good attendance and punctuality

Pupils should be encouraged to maintain good attendance and punctuality, especially by their form tutors.

Certificates for 100% attendance, 100% punctuality and less than 5 day's absence (very good attendance) should be awarded at least annually.

Monitoring of attendance and punctuality

- 1 Form tutors must check for patterns and likely problems on a daily basis.
- 2 Year Heads will access Lesson Monitor, at least once a week for patterns and likely problem's.
- 3 The Head of Pastoral Care will monitor attendance and punctuality monthly.

Attendance/Punctuality in Practice

Form Teachers

- To complete Lesson Monitor accurately according to guidelines.
- To request first day contact, made by the office, if there are concerns about a pupil.
- To request and monitor absence notes to distinguish between authorised/unauthorised absences.

- These will be taken out of registers and filed at the end of each term
- To report unacceptable levels of attendance/punctuality to Year Heads

Year Heads

- To discuss problems with Form Tutors on a weekly basis
- To decide on a course of action following school guidelines

Head of Pastoral Care

- To be informed by the Year Head of major problems
- To interview the pupil
- To contact the EWO if required or if attendance falls below 85%

EWO

- To be informed by the Head of Pastoral Care of major problems
- To follow up as appropriate