

Ballymacward Primary School



Pupil Attendance Policy

Reviewed On: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

• Version 1

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

MISSION STATEMENT

As a Catholic School our policy is to encourage the practice of Christian values and attitudes.

We aim to provide:

- An atmosphere which encourages children to respect themselves and others
- An environment in which our children can learn and grow spiritually, academically, aesthetically and physically.
- We aim to build a system whereby staff members may develop professionally in order to facilitate the needs of our pupils.



Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Ballymacward 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 Ballymacward Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/her attention.

The Board of Governors through the principal 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. 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

Ballymacward 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.

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 by 9.15am 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 class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Ballymacward Primary School 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.

A positive approach to school attendance

We use a system of reward and encouragement. Absences are explained either in note or by phone- call.

- 1. Children who have full attendance for one term receive the full attendance award.**
- 2. Children who achieve full attendance for the academic year receive a certificate and prize.**

Punctuality

It is very important that children come to school on time and do not arrive in school after class has started. Children can miss out on important activities e.g. mental maths and will often disrupt the work of the class.

Children should arrive in school five or ten minutes before class starts each day. Rushing in the mornings can upset children and gets the day off to a poor start leaving children anxious and unhappy. It can also form poor habits as children grow to believe that it is not important to be on time and that being in class for early morning activities does not really matter.

Lateness on a regular basis is a cause for concern and parents will be asked to come to school to discuss poor time keeping and how we might give support to ease this problem. Children receive a star for being on time every day. **5 occasions of lateness will result in a phone call from the class teacher, 10 occasions of lateness will result in a meeting with the principal in school.**

Absence Procedures

Absences are recorded daily and a print out of attendance for the whole school is given to the principal on a regular basis for monitoring.

All appointments for doctors and dentists etc should be arranged for after school hours if at all possible.

All Parents/Guardians are required to complete absence notification in a letter to the school, providing a clear reason for any absence.

Family holidays during Term Time

Ballymacward 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.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

The principal shall monitor attendance of pupils regularly using attendance data from SIMS. If a pupil falls below 90% attendance, the class teacher will initially discuss the issue of poor attendance with the parent. If the problem persists, the principal will have a meeting with the parent to emphasise the importance of good attendance and expectations from then onwards. If this continues, a letter will be issued to the parents to highlight if it persists, then a referral will be made to Education Welfare Officer. Regular meetings will be held with the welfare officer to discuss non-attendance.

Education Welfare Service

Education Authority 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 EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

EWO contact details:

Main office in Dundonald 02890 566498

Ballymacward EWO Joanne Jordan – joanne.jordan@eani.org.uk, 07970886960.

Head EWO Simon Cunningham - 07970886134

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-attendance-matters-parents-guide>