



At **Highwood Primary School**, we believe that every child deserves the best start in life and that starts with **being in school every day**.

We take a **positive, supportive approach to attendance**, celebrating both individual and class achievements. Our aim is to make every child feel:

- safe
- included
- happy to come to school

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential.

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- ✓ To learn the Highwood Golden Rules.
- ✓ To learn and have fun.
- ✓ To make new friends.
- ✓ To experience new things in life like joining a club.
- ✓ To learn British Values
- ✓ To develop awareness of other cultures, religion, ethnicity and gender differences.
- ✓ To achieve and gain qualifications.
- ✓ To develop new skills.
- ✓ To be the best version of themselves that they can be.

 To make friends.	 To make friends.	 To get a job.	 It is the Law.	 To not miss gaps in your learning.
 To learn the Golden Rules.	 Promoting Resilience, Achieving Potential		 The key reasons why it is so important to attend school	
 To learn about British Values.			 To have fun.	
 To learn new skills.	 To celebrate diversity.	 To enjoy sports and trips.	 To join a club.	 To play.

What the Law says

Under Article 45 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 (“the 1986 Order”), it is the duty of parents who have a child of compulsory school age to ensure their child receives efficient, full time education suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and to any special educational needs they may have. Such education may be provided by regular attendance at school or otherwise, for example home education.

Paragraph 3 (1) of Schedule 13 to the 1986 Order states that it is the duty of a parent of a registered pupil of a school to secure their regular attendance at school. This applies to all children of compulsory school age who are on the roll of a school. As a parent you are legally responsible for making this happen.

Under Part III of Schedule 13 to the 1986 Order, if a child or young person who is registered at a school does not attend regularly, a parent can receive a fine in court (for each child). An Education Supervision Order (ESO) could also be made by a court under Article 55 of the Children (NI) Order 1995.

Family Holidays

Any child or young person who is absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning and will fall behind with their school work.

In each Academic Year there are only a maximum of 190 statutory school days – this allows plenty of time for holidays to be arranged outside term time.



Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that’s nearly 4 school weeks.

90% attendance = ½ day missed every week

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
		?		

Do you know how much learning gaps you will have by being off so much?


Attendance Ladder

Working with parents and carers

Attendance issues are often a result of various concerns and problems. We will work with parents and carers closely, to identify issues and involve families in finding and implementing the solutions. It is important that conversations about attendance take place, building trusting and positive relationships.

Strategies we use to support families include:

- A welcoming, inclusive environment.
- High quality teaching so that a child wants to attend and engage lessons.
- Positive relationships with staff where children feel safe and a sense of belonging.
- Recognise and celebrating good attendance.
- Parent meetings which stress the importance of good attendance and potential consequences of absence.
- Termly or half-termly attendance reports.
- Parents have a shared understanding of the expectations through regular catch up meetings with trusted school staff, parent and child to prevent escalation of attendance concerns.
- Ensuring that parents are directly involved in agreeing Attendance plans to address poor attendance. These are short term and are reviewed so targets are achievable.
- Additional support is put in place to address any barriers e.g anxiety, health, transport

Why is punctuality important?

It is important that all children arrive at school in good time, as it is disruptive for the child and the whole class if they arrive late. Phonics, Reading, Writing and Maths takes place at the beginning of each school day. Regular lateness can mean that these important lessons are missed. It is recognised that on occasions there may be genuine reasons for late arrival such as public transport difficulties. I

f there is a particular reason for your child being late, parents and carers should discuss this with the Office team who may be able to assist with any difficulties.

If your child arrives at school after registers are taken, they will receive a late mark.

If they arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of the school day, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. If your child needs to be collected earlier than the end of the school day or you may be late collecting your child, please inform the Office team regarding these exceptional circumstances.

Extra Support

Sometimes, a small number of children may find it much harder to come to school regularly. This could be due to things like health needs, or challenges at home and at school.

At Highwood Primary School, we understand that every situation is different, and we are here to help.

Working together with other services

If needed, we may also work with other professionals to support your child, such as:

- Health services
- Early Help team
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Team and Social Care
- Attendance Improvement Officer Service

This means you and your child get **joined-up support** from all the right people.

A flexible approach

We know that returning to school can sometimes feel overwhelming.

That's why we may offer:

- a **phased return** (gradually increasing time in school)
- flexible support tailored to your child's needs
- extra care and check-ins from staff

Our aim is to:

- help your child feel safe, supported, and confident
- rebuild positive routines
- support them to return to school successfully.

We are here to support you every step of the way.