



# Pupil Attendance Policy

Updated Dec 2016

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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.

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

### **Aims**

- To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Termoncanice Primary School & Nursery Unit.
- To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
- To promote good relationships with Education Welfare Service.

### **Role of the School**

- The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.
- The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance. She will work with the EWO to set annual attendance targets and meet with the Senior Leadership Team on a monthly basis to monitor pupil attendance.
- The VP has responsibility for the identification of pupils with attendance concerns and implementing the attendance protocol. Teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

### **The SLT will:**

- Liaise with teachers to identify erratic attendees and decide on interventions.
- Regularly check the daily attendance record for school, analyse data and identify contributing factors to low attendance.

- Plan interventions to try to break these patterns in consultation with Teachers, EWO and, if necessary, SENCO and set individual targets.
- Decide on appropriate rewards (certificates and prizes) to be awarded annually.
- Maintain displays within school to promote and highlight attendance
- Use assemblies to celebrate and promote inter-class attendance competitions
- Work closely with EWOs to ensure that parental contact is maintained with the homes of low attending pupils.
- Inform staff of the intended re-integration of a long term absentee back into school.

### **The Teachers will:**

- Take the register every morning and afternoon using the appropriate codes.
- Record authorised absences if an explanation has been provided.
- Review unexplained absences and provide appropriate codes in a timely fashion
- Notify Secretary of anticipated absences so that it is coded accurately.
- Remind parents to notify the office when children are leaving the school
- Give any required information re absence to the Principal / VP.

To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2013/13

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

Termoncanice Primary School & Nursery Unit is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

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

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

- Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special

educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence.

- Short term absences (e.g. stomach bugs) where the pupil will only be absent a day or two require only a phone call through to the office on the first day of absence or a written note when the pupil returns to school.
- Longer absences (e.g. due to serious illness, hospitalisation or close family bereavement) should be phoned through to the office as soon as possible to alert the teacher to your child's circumstances. 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 9am for registration and the beginning of class. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on your child's attendance record.
- If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Vice-Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

### **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at Termoncanice Primary School & Nursery Unit has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly.

### **Family holidays during Term Time**

Termoncanice 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, unless circumstances are exceptional.

## **Education Welfare Service**

Education and Library Boards through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education. Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

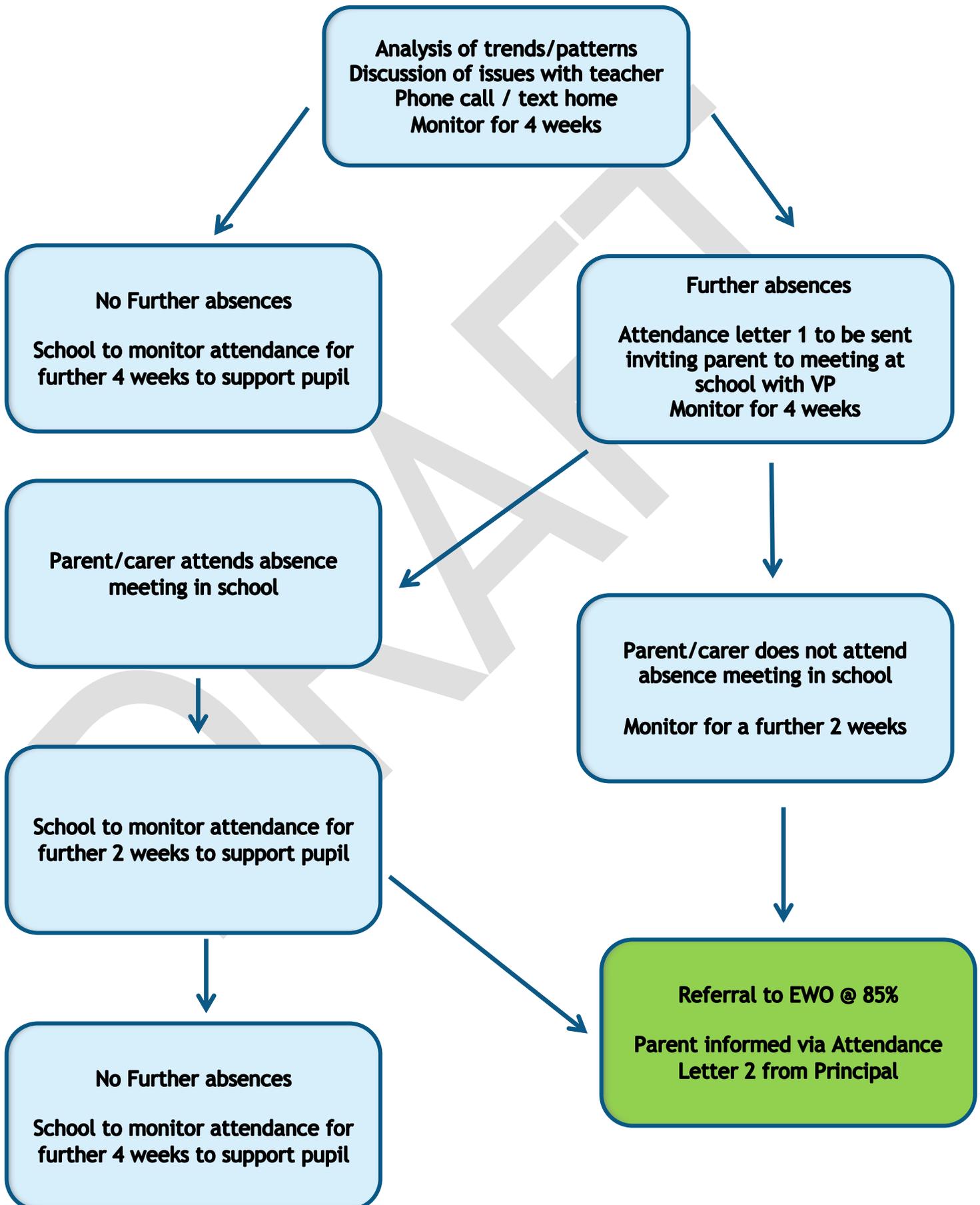
### **Termoncanice Primary School Protocol for addressing low attendance.**

- Half-termly printout of pupils with or below 90% attendance passed from office to VP
- Before half-termly meeting, Senior Teachers meet with teachers to discuss patterns of attendance, trends, issues etc.
- Texts are sent and SLT make phone calls home at 90% (if appropriate) to support parent in ensuring improved attendance
- If attendance does not improve, Attendance letter 1 sent home to parent from VP inviting them in for a meeting to discuss attendance.
- At 85% attendance, pupils are referred to EWO. Parents will be informed of this by Attendance letter 2 from the principal.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Principal

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Chair, Board of Governors

# Pupil attendance at or below 90%



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Dear Parents,

This year, we will be focusing on attendance and timekeeping at school. I hope you will support us in this by reading the information below.

- The school register is marked twice daily. If your child is being taken out in the afternoon for a medical/dental appointment, they will be marked absent for that session, and therefore will not be able to claim full attendance. “Coming to school to get marked in” is not possible.
- All appointments should be made outside school hours, unless urgent.
- If your child is late, this will be recorded into the computer system. Frequent late marks may result in a visit from the Board’s Welfare Officers.
- Classes begin each day at 9.00am. Please make sure your child is in class before this time.
- If your child is going to be absent, please phone the school that morning to let us know why.
- Your child should be able to make their way unaccompanied to their classroom. Parents are not permitted through the school in the morning unless by prior agreement with the class teacher.

***Some recognised reasons for a child to be absent from school include:***

- ❖ Illness
- ❖ Medical/dental appointment
- ❖ Death of a family member
- ❖ Marriage of a close family member
- ❖ Serious illness of parent or sibling

***Unauthorised absences include:***

- ❖ Holidays (unless in exceptional circumstances)
- ❖ Shopping trips, particularly near Christmas
- ❖ Northwest 200/ Agricultural shows/ Home exhibitions
- ❖ Days after family events or Sacraments
- ❖ Lack of transport
- ❖ Sleeping in late

**If you sleep in, you should make every effort to get your children to school when you waken, regardless of the time.** Simply phone the school and let us know what time you expect to be here, should it be lunchtime – we still expect them to come.

Unauthorised absences from school are automatically reported through the computer system to the Education Welfare Office. Repeated absences can result in interviews with Government officials, or even in legal action including substantial fines. We do take each individual circumstance into consideration, so please work with us to ensure your child’s good attendance and timekeeping.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs. C. Doherty.

Principal

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