



Buick Memorial Primary School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed: June 2025

Ratified: September 2025

Review Date: September 2026

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. Staff use SIMS to record pupil attendance.

The Attendance Policy aims:

1. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/carers and pupils.
2. To establish a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To maintain/improve the overall attendance of pupils at Buick.
4. To promote positive relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal (Miss R. Peters) at Buick Memorial Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; all staff should 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 SIMS. 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 2021/16, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202116-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools>

Buick Memorial Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of the Parent

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall enable him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. As stated in **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 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 Buick Memorial Primary School for registration and the beginning of classes no later than 9:05am. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. If the child appears reluctant to attend school, please share the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure a speedy resolution.

Role of the Pupil

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

Lateness

Although we promote punctuality and encourage children to prepare for the start of school at 9:05am, we would rather pupils come to school, than missing the whole day.

Pupils who come to school after 9:05am are marked as late and must enter by the main entrance. This is recorded in the daily attendance register and continual late comers are brought to the attention of the Education and Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures

The school uses a computerised attendance system. Pupils will only be given an attendance mark for completing the whole morning session (9:05am to 12:15 pm) and afternoon session (1pm-2/3pm). We do not give a present mark unless a child attends the full session or is at a school event.

A pupil returning after an absence, must bring a note, signed by the parent/guardian, stating the reason for the absence. A voicemail or email is also acceptable. A note must also be brought to the class teacher if a child has to leave school during the school day. Such absences should only be for important reasons, i.e. medical appointments which cannot be done after school. If a child has a medical appointment during the day and they also attend school, they would receive a present mark. The detail of the collection time and/or return must be noted on SIMs

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

- If your child is sick or cannot attend for any reason, you must call us before 9.15am that day to let us know.
- If we are concerned about the welfare of a child, we reserve the right to contact social services.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification of this from a parent/carer.

Unauthorised Absences

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child does not attend without the permission of the school. The following reasons are examples of the kind of absences that will not be authorised: Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell, Absence of siblings if one child is ill, Parental illness (alternate arrangements should be made to get children to school- except in the case of emergencies), Oversleeping, Inadequate clothing/uniform: Confusion over school dates, Medical/Dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reason, Child's/family birthday, Shopping trip, Holidays.

Authorising Absence

Only the Principal can authorise an absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some form of communication between the parent and school.

Family holidays during Term Time

Buick 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.

Parents should inform school by letter if they are going on holiday. We appreciate the courtesy of this information although, usually, we cannot authorise the absence.

At Buick Memorial we monitor attendance closely. All children with 85% attendance or below will be discussed by Education Welfare Officer and the Principal. Through a discussion of the notes sent in for absences or knowledge shared with the school, a determination will be made on the way forward.

| | | |
|-----------------|--|--------------|
| 100% Attendance | 0 days missed. | Excellent |
| 95% Attendance | 9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed. | Satisfactory |
| 90% Attendance | 19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed. | Poor |
| 85% Attendance | 28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed. | Very poor |
| 80% Attendance | 38 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed. | Unacceptable |
| 75% Attendance | 46 days of absence 9 weeks and day of learning missed. | Unacceptable |

Education Welfare Services

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. The EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Buick Memorial Nursery Unit

The Nursery Unit provides a pre-school year for children; it is not a legal duty for the child to go to school. However, if a parent chooses place a child in our Nursery, we would expect that all efforts would be made to achieve a high level of attendance. The children's attendance will be recorded and monitored in the same way as the school.