



Blackness Primary School- Attendance

School Attendance- A Guide for all.

Attending and taking part in learning – wherever learning takes place – is fundamental to making sure that our young people become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.

The Scottish Government wants all children and young people to feel happy, safe and secure at school. We want to make sure children and young people receive day to day or additional support to attend school and engage in their learning.

Scotland's children and young people need to be included, engaged and involved throughout their education. All those who work with children and young people in learning environments have a role to play in making sure all children and young people feel safe, secure, included, listened to and supported; and should be able to discuss and respond to issues which might affect attendance at school. Parents and carers are by far the most important influence on children's lives and learning.



Education Scotland- Advice and guidance on attendance

Attendance means that a child is taking part in a programme of educational activities arranged and agreed by the school.

This means going to the school, but it can also include:

- Getting tuition if your child is in hospital or tuition at home if this has been agreed.
- Going outside the school for support with learning or behaviour if it is arranged or agreed by the school.
- Visits to outdoor centres; this could be for the day or for residential.
- Sports, musical or drama activities organised by the school in school hours.

A child can be off school if:

- They are ill.
- They are attending a doctor or hospital appointment.
- They are going to a meeting about a Children's Hearing or court, or if they are going to a Children's Hearing, care review or court.
- If they are involved in an activity and the school agrees in advance.
- Someone close to the child has died.
- There is a crisis or serious difficulty at home or in the family.
- They are going to a religious ceremony or a wedding of someone very close to them.
- If they are a Traveller family however they must seek approval/ keep in contact with the school.
- If a family is returning to a country of origin for cultural reasons or to care for a relative.

As long as parents/carers have informed the school of the reason why their child is off and the school is satisfied that this is a valid reason, these would be called **authorised absences**.

If a child is to be off school, for example if they have an appointment or important meeting to attend, it is important the parent/carers inform the school in advance.

If a child is ill and cannot go to school, parents/carers must inform the school by phone, email or by a letter/note as early as possible on the first day the child is off school. The school may ask when the child will return or to call on every day of absence.

If a child is off school because of a long-term illness or condition the school will make arrangements for the child so they can keep learning. This might include sending work home so the child does not miss too much. This will be discussed and negotiated with parents/carers.

Schools will not normally give a family permission to take pupils out of school for holidays during term-time. This means if a child is off school because of a holiday, the school will record this as an **unauthorised absence**. It is up to education authorities to decide what sanctions they will use if there is an unauthorised absence.

There are some circumstances where permission might be given for a holiday during term-time. This would include when:

- A family needs time together to recover from distress.
- A family holiday is restricted to term-time because of the parent's job (for example a parent is in the armed services or emergency services).
- There are other circumstances considered to be exceptional.

Everyone has the right to know the number of absences for their child. The school will have records they can share with parents/carers. Attendance is recorded the morning and after lunch. Attendance is shared regularly throughout the school year- yearly reports, parents evening and team around the child meetings.

If a child stays off school without permission and without good reason this is called **truancy**. Truancy can happen when a pupil doesn't attend for just a part of the day, or for the whole day.

Sometimes truancy happens because the pupil is unhappy. This may include: lack of sleep, poor diet, social media concerns, struggling with their learning, or there is conflict with teachers or other pupils. **Parents must remember that they should not ignore, agree with or condone their child's truancy.**

Working together, schools and families must do what they can to find out why a pupil is truanting, they must listen to the child's concern. Children have a right to an education and to be safe and happy at school. But sometimes children and young people can be anxious or worried about going to school. This can happen for lots of reasons but can happen when they have a worry about something like homework, or a class assessment or break down in relationships with peers. Sometimes parents let their child stay off school because of these reasons. Unfortunately, this will not help find a solution. It's important parent/carers talk to the school to address attendance issues.



Support in School

All children have the right to an education that meets their needs and supports them to achieve their potential. To be able to take part in learning every child needs to be safe and happy at school. Every child is entitled to the *personal* or *additional* support they need to make sure they are engaged in learning. This section of the policy gives information about what each child is entitled to and the support that can be provided.

Personal Support

Every member of staff in Blackness is committed to ensuring children are taking part in learning and the life of the school. Blackness has a School and Family development worker (Fiona Kelbie) assigned to support attendance along with all members of the Senior Leadership Team (Vikki Taylor, Michelle Allan and Cheryl Cuthbert).

Staff with responsibility for personal support should:

- Be available so every family can talk to them and get information or support.
- Build good relationships with the parent/carer and child.
- Be aware of problems that may occur to why a child is absent from school.
- Be part of any plan that is made with other agencies to support a child with learning or attendance at school.
- Support a child get back into school if they have been off for some time.

In Blackness we aim to provide personalised support for our families to help tackle attendance issues. Various partners can support us in this journey. Some of these include:

- Aberlour
- Barnardo's
- Place2be
- Parent 2 Parent
- Therapeutic interventions from partners
- One Parent Families
- Women's Aid



Some personal support packages may also include:

- Soft start to the day
- Breakfast club
- Access to the nurture room
- Bespoke timetable adjustments
- Therapeutic interventions in school
- Easy end
- Pupil leadership roles



Blackness Primary School- Attendance Procedures

Our Aim

- At Blackness Primary School, we aim for all children to maximise their potential. In order for children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that children attend school on time every day.
- Parents/carers are responsible for making sure their children receive their entitlement to full time education.
- Evidence shows that good attendance and engagement with learning increases the likelihood of children succeeding at school.



How we promote attendance at Blackness

- Parents/carers are expected to inform the school by 9.30am on the first day of absence. We ask that you call the school office 435939. Alternatively, you can email the school email address: blacknessprimary@dundeeschools.scot
- Seesaw should not be used as a way of officially reporting an absence.
- We will continue to offer support to you and your child in order to improve attendance for as long as is needed.
- PLEASE REMEMBER WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT AND OFFER ADVICE. PARTNERSHIP WORKING IS KEY TO SUCCESS!

Facts about attendance

- If your child's attendance sits at 80% then your child will have missed nearly a full term of school.
- Irregular school attendance can affect attainment levels, peer friendships and confidence.
- Achieving 90% in an exam or test is a fantastic result but if your child is at school for only 90% of the school year, then they will have missed 4 weeks of school.

How we promote attendance at Blackness

- Every 3/4 weeks attendance review meetings will take place between the Head Teacher and School and Family Development Worker. At this meeting the attendance levels and patterns of every child is reviewed.
- If a child's attendance drops below 90% then in the first instance parents/carers will be informed via letter.
- If attendance stays below 90%, we will continue to monitor attendance whilst offering support to you and your child.
- In order to best support Parents/carers and ultimately improve attendance for all children you may be invited into Blackness for a supportive meeting. This is to gather all relevant information and work on a support plan to help improve your child's attendance.



Local Authority Procedures

All Scottish schools have the responsibility to investigate why a child is absent from school if a reason has not been given.



In Blackness if a child is absent from school without a reason:

- Day 1 – a text message will be sent from the school office and will continue to be sent daily until a reason has been given.
- Day 3 – a phone call/house visit from SFDW will happen
- Without reason beyond day 3 – school will contact MASH (Multi- agency support hub).
- Please note other procedures may take place bespoke to individual children with an already significant low attendance/1st day referral.

It is a parent/carers legal responsibility to ensure a child is educated and attends school. Once a child is enrolled at school, the law states the child must attend unless permission has been granted from the education authority to withdraw the child.

School will do everything they can to support a family before the education authority become involved.

In Blackness this procedure involves:

- A letter will be sent from the school alerting the family of attendance concerns (appendix 1)
- If attendance hasn't improved from the letter then an informal parent meeting arranged
- If attendance still hasn't improved, a Team around the child will be arranged
- If no improvement, then a Team around the child Level 3 with social work and locality officers invited will be arranged.

If non- attendance remains despite the support being offered, then the education authority will decide on next steps for the family. In these circumstances the education authority can use the law to insist that a parent does more to get their child to school. This may include measures for compulsory compliance. This includes families being referred to an Attendance Hearing or the Children's panel for further discussion.

References

A list of pathways to support attendance:

ParentLine Scotland

At some time all parents find that parenting can be difficult or stressful. ParentLine Scotland is the free, confidential, telephone helpline for anyone caring for a child in Scotland. You can call about any problem, however big or small.

Phone: 0808 800 2222

On line at: <http://www.children1st.org.uk/parentline>

Parentzone

Parentzone provides information for parents and carers about how you can support your child's education.

On line at: <http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk>

ChildLine

Children and young people can get confidential help about any question, concern or worry.

Phone: 0800 1111

On line at: <http://www.childline.org.uk>

Scottish Child Law Centre

The Centre helps children and young people, their families and carers, and professionals working for and with children by providing advice and information through their advice line, email and text services.

Freephone for under 18s: Phone: 0800 328 8970

Phone: 0131 667 6333

Text: text 'SCLC' and your question to 80800

E-mail: enquiries@sclc.org.uk

Govan Law Centre

The centre has a national specialist Law Unit on Education. It provides legal representation in appropriate education law cases to parents or pupils. The Education Law Helpline is available to anyone who has an enquiry about any aspect of education law in Scotland.

You can make an enquiry by phone: 0141 445 1955

Or Email advice@edlaw.org.uk.

The Centre aims to respond to all enquiries by the following working day.

On line at: <http://www.edlaw.org.uk/>

Enquire

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. It operates a helpline for parents, carers and practitioners. Publications include 'A Parents' Guide to Additional Support for Learning'. An interpreter can be arranged upon request.

Telephone helpline Phone: 0845 123 2303

E-mail: info@enquire.org.uk

On line at: <http://www.enquire.org.uk>

A Guide For Parents: The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

This is a leaflet which provides information about the new Act. There is more information about **co-ordinated support plans**. This link also contains web links to the leaflet in community languages.

On line at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/06/19549/39372>

RESOLVE : ASL

RESOLVE : ASL is an independent mediation service available in Scotland as an option to resolve conflict throughout additional support needs issues in education.

More information and contact details at: http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/html/serv_res.htm

Home educated children

There is guidance on this here: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/17133313/0>

Choosing a school: a guide for parents

This booklet is for parents who are choosing a local authority school for their child. It explains the placing request system.

On line at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/10/27093417/0>

Making the Difference

This is a series of leaflets that are about how parents can and do make a difference to their child's learning. Copies are available in English, Gaelic, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Hindi, Mandarin, Punjabi, Polish and Urdu. Available on line at: www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

Phone: 0131 244 0956

There are leaflets about:

- Homework
- Getting involved in your child's school
- Parents' evenings
- School holidays
- Out of school learning
- Starting a new school year
- Sharing information
- Healthy choices
- New technology in learning
- Enterprise in education
- Personal learning planning
- A new law to support parents

Scottish Traveller Education Programme (STEP)

STEP mainly works with educators of Traveller children and young people in Scotland. STEP helps support developments in education with and for Traveller families.

Phone: 0131 651 6444

Email: step@ed.ac.uk

Online at: <http://www.scottishtravellered.net>

School Nurse

School Nurse / SCPHN

NHS Tayside School Nursing Team

East Day Home, Kings Cross Hospital

Dundee

DD3 8DJ

Email: amanda.ferguson.1@nhs.scot

Sleep Scotland

Supporting families and professionals to improve sleep.

www.sleepaction.org [Sleep Action | UK's Oldest Sleep Charity | Formerly Sleep Scotland](#)