**Mitchell House School**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**



**Introduction**

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and in ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

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

**Mission Statement**

At Mitchell House we strive to encourage mutual respect, trust and individuality. It is our goal to nurture learning and help our pupils to achieve their full potential.

**Aims**

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

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is reported upon within the Principal’s at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of each day.

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:

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

At Mitchell House School we recognise that many of our students have complex physical and medical needs which often lead to school absence directly linked to medical appointments, medical treatments and illness. We therefore understand that the attendance level of certain students might be lower than what would be accepted in a mainstream setting. We are however, 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.

Most of our pupils are transported to and from school by board transport which we expect to deliver students between 8.50 and 9am. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that the child is ready for the school transport at the allocated time.

If a child appears reluctant to attend school we would encourage parents to discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both the family and the child receive maximum support.

**Absence Procedures**

All Parents/Guardians are required to complete the absence notification attached to the home/school diary which provides a clear reason for any absence or write a note in the home school notebook or make a phone call to school to explain the absence.

**Family holidays during Term Time**

*Mitchell House 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. For example, for a charity funded Dream Flight experience.

**Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

In the instance where the school becomes concerned about a student’s non-attendance to school, the Principal will invite the Parents/Carers to discuss the matter. The school will seek to support the student and family in improved attendance in whatever capacity we can. Attendance would then be closely monitored over a period of time. In the case where attendance does not improve the case would be referred to the Educational Welfare Service.

**Education Welfare Service**

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.

The school’s Educational Welfare Officer will meet with the Principal once termly in order to review attendance rates and discuss any concerns.

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

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Principal

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Chair, Board of Governors

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_