



Portlethen Academy
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1st November 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

Aberdeenshire Attendance Policy

This school session, the local authority has updated the school attendance policy for use in all primary and secondary schools in Aberdeenshire. This is for the purpose of improving attendance rates for all pupils, and to ensure that we are all aware of all absences at the start and during the school day.

This will mean several changes to the way in which we report absences to you. For start of the day and after lunch absences, we will still send a groupcall text message to you, but earlier than previously, as required by the new attendance policy. In the morning this will usually be by 10.15 am or before, and in the afternoon, within around 45 minutes of the afternoon beginning. In some cases we may call you to discuss your young person's absence. If you have already informed us of the reason for the absence, this will not affect you, as your young person's absence will have been recorded already. If you have not informed us that your young person is going to be absent, they will be marked as 'absent, awaiting a reason' on the register, you will receive the text message asking for a reason and you will be required to get in touch with school to let us know why your young person is not here. If we have no reason by the end of the day, you will automatically receive an official letter via email, formally asking for you to provide a reason.

The bigger change will be regarding period-by-period registration. Previously, we have informed you via group call text if your child is not in class when they should be, and this was done at two points during the day, at periods 2 and 5. We are now required to inform you each period if your young person does not attend class when they should. This means for every one of the six periods across the school day, if your young person was present in the morning, and then does not attend class when they should, you will automatically be informed of that absence. This change will improve communication, ensure that your young person is where they should be and will ensure that you can follow up with your young person, any absences that occur during the school day. These will be followed up in school also, either by Principal Teacher of Guidance or Year Head.

Every pupil has a timetable that they must follow and our registration process requires them to be in each class timetabled for them. If they are not at the class within the first 10 minutes, and are consequently not registered as present, the new policy system will automatically send you a text informing you that they have not attended that period. You will then need to get in touch to let us know if they have gone home or if they have another reason for not being in class. If we do not hear from you and they do not turn up to their next class, we will try to locate them at school however if they are not in their timetabled class and have not informed us of where



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they are instead, we may call you at this point. We are a school of 940+ pupils and we rely on our register system and timetable, along with parents, carers and pupils informing us of any changes, to ensure we can account for all pupils. Your support with this is greatly appreciated.

For both start of the day and period-by-period attendance, there are some set letters that we must now send as a school to inform you of absences and to request information and reasons from you, in order that your young person's attendance record is accurate, and reflects approved and non-approved absences. If we have not heard from you as to why your young person has been absent that day, you will automatically receive an attendance letter via email, asking for a reason for the absence. If we do not hear from you following this, the local authority now requires us to initiate attendance monitoring procedures, which would be explained to you via subsequent letters, phone calls from the Guidance Team and further communication. Where required and where absence is not resolved or improved, this will require you and your young person to attend Child's Planning meetings to monitor attendance and seek solutions.

The changes required by this new policy are intended to support you as parents and carers, in ensuring your young person attends school as is required by law. For those pupils attending in S5/6 and over 16, this process will still apply as per terms of the S5/6 agreement. The purpose here is to ensure attendance at all timetabled classes, account for your young person's whereabouts at all times and maximise learning potential whilst at school.

As a school we would encourage you to discuss these changes with your young person and ensure that they know that it is their responsibility to be on time to all classes, to avoid initiating attendance monitoring procedures. We will be informing all pupils of these changes via assemblies over coming weeks.

Finally, if your young person has an appointment during the school day, please ensure you let us know by calling the school office. For appointments during the school day, please ensure your young person knows they must sign out at the office after being collected by a parent/carer and that they must only sign out for appointments without being collected, if prior agreement has been made.

Thank you for your support and cooperation.



Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



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Yours sincerely,

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Portlethen Academy
Learn and Improve. Get Involved. Think of the Consequences. Respect All.

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland