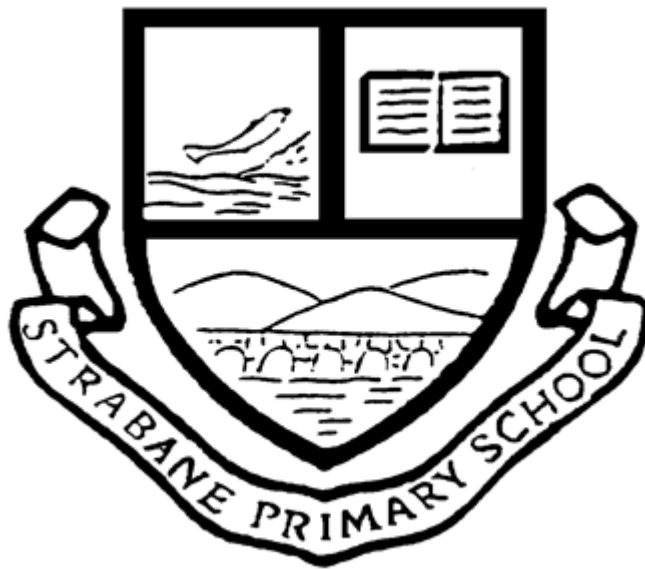


Strabane Controlled Primary School



Attendance Policy

Date approved by Board of Governors:

28th May 2024

Review Date:

28th May 2027

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction

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. Strabane Controlled Primary will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Our Vision

In Strabane Controlled Primary School our vision statement is: Safe, Secure, Successful

Aims

- 1 To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Strabane Controlled Primary 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 Educational Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal at Strabane Controlled Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers and non-teaching staff 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 placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.

Staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded daily. If a child needs to leave school for an appointment in the afternoon they will then record this on the class attendance record which is recorded on the attendance software.

To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the current Department of Education Circular Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording By Schools – Updated Circular 2021/16 and have noted information provided in the Department of Education's *Strategy for Improving Pupil Attendance* (2016).

Strabane Controlled Primary 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 school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed either by telephone call to the office, in written form or email. 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.

School opens at 8.15am with an optional breakfast club, 8.45am whole school supervision in playgrounds and pupils are expected to be in school punctually, ready to commence lessons at 9.10am, with registration closing at 9.15am. 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 the Vice Principal/Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

It is important to note that non-emergency appointments should, where possible, be made outside of school hours. It is understood that this is not always possible and so, occasionally, urgent appointments will have to occur during the school day. Communication requesting permission for temporary absence must be sent to school. It is not normally necessary for pupils to stay off school for the whole day to attend an appointment and so we would expect parents to bring pupils into school/back to school before and after their appointment.

It is not appropriate or permissible for children to leave school to attend a birthday party etc. It is also important that children are not collected early with a younger sibling because it is more convenient for the adult collecting the children, but that pupils remain in school for the full numbers of allocated school hours commensurate with their age. The Miss School, Miss Out message applies to both full and partial school days. Pupils leaving early with no appropriate reason to do so will be recorded as absent for that part of the day which may then result in Education Welfare involvement.

Role of Pupils

Every pupil at Strabane Controlled Primary School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly. If a pupil has been absent from school, a written letter/email or phone call from a parent/guardian must be provided to the class teacher or school office on returning to school.

Absence Procedures

- 1 Absence from school requires the parent/guardian to inform the school of the reason for absence. The school should be informed, in advance, of any dental/medical appointment that necessitates a child being absent from school for part or all of the day.
- 2 Where no reason for absence is forthcoming, it is the responsibility of the class teacher, in the first instance, to ascertain the reason for absence. This may be done by contacting the parent/guardian by phone, email or speaking in person to the parent/guardian when the child is being left at or collected from school.

If no reason is still forthcoming, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised. If attendance is causing concern (falling below 85%), and the reasons given are unsatisfactory, this concern should be communicated to the parent.

Internal Procedures to Facilitate the Implementation of the Attendance Policy

- 1 The class attendance sheet should be completed accurately each day using SIMS.
- 2 'N' marks should be investigated as soon as the child returns to school.
- 3 An 'Unexplained Absence' list will be issued regularly. Teachers should annotate this in light of information received about such absences.
- 4 Where no note or reason for absence is received, teachers should contact the parent to seek an explanation for the absence using Appendix 1.
- 5 The school is obliged to consider and record unexplained absences as unauthorised.
- 6 Where attendance does not improve and falls below 85%, the Principal will follow the further procedures outlined in the attendance policy.

Family Holidays during Term Time

Holidays must not be arranged during term time.

Strabane Controlled Primary School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will routinely be categorised as an unauthorised absence unless there are exceptional circumstances surrounding this need for absence. If permission has not been sought for such absence in advance, then this will also be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Where accumulated absence falls below 85%, the school will contact the parent/guardian. If attendance remains problematic, the parent/guardian will be contacted a second time and offered a meeting to discuss the matter. Parents will receive a letter advising them that failure to redress this situation will result in their child's attendance being discussed with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) which could likely result in a referral being made to this agency. Should the parent/guardian fail to respond, or if there is no improvement in the child's attendance, the matter will be referred to the EWO.

Educational Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service has 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.

Parents of a child with a serious or long term illness, which could require pupil absence to be prolonged or frequent, should contact school to ask for advice and guidance as to what further support may be available to assist with such a situation.

Principal: _____ Date: _____

Chair of Board of Governors: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 1

Absence Form

Dear _____ (Parent/Guardian) Date: _____

Your child _____ was absent from school on _____.

Please reply stating reason for absence in the space below.

Yours sincerely

_____ Class Teacher

Reason for absence

Signed: _____
(Parent/Guardian)

Date: _____