



**SAINT EITHNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

# **Pupil Attendance Policy**

**Date of Review: October 2021**

**Chair of Governors: \_\_\_\_\_**

## **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.

Saint Eithne's Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

## **Saint Eithne's Primary School Mission**

*As a Catholic school, we stand for respect, dedication, achievement, equality, success, creating opportunity, high standards, and strong ties with our parish and community.*

*We strive to develop happy learners through providing an education that nurtures and develops each child as a whole person, in the image of Christ.*

## **Aims**

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Saint Eithne's.
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 has overall responsibility for school attendance; (teachers/designated staff) should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his 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.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link:

[www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools](http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools)

Saint Eithne's is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.



## **Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents/guardians have a legal duty<sup>1</sup> 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/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's/guardian'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 school at 9am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

## **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at Saint Eithne's must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

## **Absence Procedures**

All parents/carers are required to complete the attached absence notification form which provides a clear reason for any absence.

## **Family holidays during Term Time**

Saint Eithne's 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.

<sup>1</sup> Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

## **Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

A positive reward system is used to encourage and reward good attendance, including regular Star of the Week targets for good attendance and punctuality. Stickers are awarded at the end of each month, prizes and certificates are awarded at the end of each term and 100% certificates are awarded at the end of the year.

Parents are contacted by school when there is an unexplained absence from school.

Reminder notes are sent out to parents where a note has not been provided on the day of return.

Percentage attendance is recorded on the pupils' report at the end of the year

Attendances are regularly monitored, any child whose absence gives cause for concern will be contacted by the principal prior to a contact by the Education Welfare Officer.

Parents are encouraged to inform school in advance of planned absences, for example medical or dental appointments, either by written note to the teacher or by telephoning the school between 8.45am and 12.10pm on (028) 71377077.

Where a child has to leave school for a medical appointment, parents should make all reasonable efforts to ensure the child comes back in to school where possible.

Medical appointments and Sporting events, particularly when this happens on a regular basis, may affect a pupil's attendance and reasonable efforts should be made to arrange these outside of school hours, with the exception of Sporting Events where the child is representing the school.

In the case of persistent unexplained absences or where the attendance has dropped below 85%, the school may contact the Education Welfare Officer to seek further guidance or advice.

### **Education Welfare Service**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.