



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

St. John's Primary School

Policy Reviewed: June 2024



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.

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

Our Mission Statement

In St. John's Primary School, we aim to create a happy, calm and caring environment, where each child will be encouraged to reach their true potential and experience success in their learning and development.

Central to the creation of this environment is a commitment to the Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of school life. It reflects the values, attitudes, beliefs and practices of our Catholic Faith and recognises the value and worth of each child through the development of self-respect and understanding.

We aim to establish a community wherein pupils, teachers, parents, support staff and Board of Governors enjoy a sense of belonging and have an important part to play. In St. John's we strive to ensure that every child will: **'Learn to Love and Love to Learn.'**

Aims of Policy

1. To improve the overall attendance of pupils at St. John's P.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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of School

The Principal at St. John's has overall responsibility for school attendance; and class teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to 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 each meeting. A termly review of attendance will be provided by the Designated Teacher for Child Protection.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning registration sessions.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided by the **Department of Education Circular 2020/08**.

St. John's is committed to working with parents/guardians 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. (Article 45 (1) of 'The Education and Libraries (NI) Order' 1986).

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. 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 before 9.00am and for registration at the beginning of the school day. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. A parent will be contacted and support given if their child is late on a regular basis.

If a pupil must leave during the school day for an appointment, the school should be informed by either telephone or by written note.

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 St. John's must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, the reason for this absence should be made known to the school through a phone call or a note.

Absence Procedures

If a child is to be absent from school, then their parent is required to ring the school that morning and explain the reason for the absence or provide a note through a sibling. If a parent has not contacted the school by break time to explain the absence, a call will be made to them to ascertain the reason for the child's attendance.

Family Holidays during Term Time

St. John'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. Teachers will not provide work for pupils who are absent due to holidays.

Procedures for Managing Non-Attendance

- Attendance is monitored by the Safeguarding Team at the end of each month.
- The parent of a child falling below 90% will be contacted and asked to explain why their child's attendance has fallen to this level.
- If a child's attendance falls below 85% (without reasonable explanation) a parent will be contacted and a referral will be made to the EWO.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents 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.