St. Eoghan's P.S
Moneyneena

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

January 2025

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PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE

The Department of Education believes that 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. Eoghan's Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils. We embrace the concept of equal opportunities for all. We endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued, welcome and secure.
For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

This policy has been revised in accordance with ***DE circular 2023/11*** and taking into account ***DE Attendance Matters – practical guidance to improve attendance together (August 2024).***

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance and punctuality of pupils at St. Eoghan's 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 on good attendance.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the School

St Eoghan's Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. The principal has the overall responsibility for school attendance, with staff brining any concerns regarding attendance to their attention.

The school will:

- ensure its registration system is accurate and consistently used by staff, with staff recording attendance at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- analyse data regularly and identify the actions that need to be taken.
- follow up unexplained absences.
- show due cognisance that school attendance is not only linked to academic achievement but is connected to pupil's emotional health and well-being and supports them to thrive within their community.
- continue to create a nurturing environment, where children are welcomed back after absences, ensuring that they know that they are a valued and important member of our school community. Time will be allocated if necessary for staff to ease re-integration and help anxiety around a return to the classroom.
- promote good attendance and punctuality by raising awareness in assemblies, Pupil Induction, through PDMU & PATHS learning and School Council. Regular certifications and an end-of-year award is given out to Primary 7 pupils at the annual prizegiving.
- work in partnership with families and the Education Welfare Service
- evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2023/11, which can be found at the following link:
https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Circular%202023%2011%20for%202023%2024%20Academic%20Year%20-%20Attendance%20Guidance%20and%20Absence%20Recording%20By%20Schools.pdf

Responsibilities of the Board of Governors

Attendance is a Standing Agenda item at each BoG meeting, where school attendance figures are reviewed. A summary and evaluation of the school's strategy

for promoting pupil attendance at the school is included in the School Development Plan. Through their training, governors are aware of barriers to attendance.

Responsibilities of Parents/carers

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education suitable to age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have. If a child is registered in school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school. The school will work in close collaboration with the parent to resolve any attendance issues.

Parents will:

- ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually
- **inform the school as soon as possible, on the first day of their child's absence. This should be followed up with a written note when the pupil returns to school.**
- avoid taking holidays during term time
- work alongside the school to support pupil attendance.
- Infographic guide to parents contained in Appendix 1.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9:00am for registration and the beginning of classes.

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

Responsibilities of Pupils

- Each pupil at St. Eoghan's Primary School will 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.

Responsibilities of the Educational Welfare Service

- To monitor registers regularly
- To identify pupils/families with attendance difficulties
- To agree time-limited action which needs to be taken by the school or EWO
- Provide advice and work in partnership with school and parents

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

- If a child is absent, the parent/guardian must inform the school by contacting the office on the first day of the child's absence by 9:20 am, and this should be confirmed with an absence note on the child's return to school.
- If no contact is made by parents in the case of a child's absence, the principal/secretary/Senior Teacher will contact the parents by 10 am.
- All absences are recorded by using the appropriate code on the class register (see Appendix 2).
- It is important that we receive accurate information for parents with reasons for the child's absence, to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING NON-ATTENDANCE

- Attendance is monitored regularly by the principal and class teachers. Teachers should inform the principal if they notice patterns of absence.
- When a child's attendance reaches 90%, the principal will make a phone call home to discuss pupil attendance with the parent.
- If the pupil's attendance continues to drop, the principal will make a further phone call home or write a letter inviting the parents for a meeting to discuss attendance. If levels of absence fall below 85%, a "cause for concern" notice may be issued, depending on the reasons for the absence, and involvement from the Education Welfare Officer may be required.

- St Eoghan's Primary School remains committed to supporting families where there are difficulties with absence, due to illness, anxiety, emotionally-based school avoidance, or other reasons.
- The principal, Designated teacher for Child Protection and the class teacher will work together to provide support for a child experiencing these difficulties. Depending on the child's condition, illness or situation, the following may take place:
  - Phone calls or Teams sessions
  - Letter
  - Strategies provided to improve attendance
  - Nurturing and well-being sessions
  - EWO involvement

- Attendance is standing agenda item at BoG meetings and the principal will report to the governors on pupil attendance.
- Individual pupil attendance will be reported to parents at the end of the school year. The following grades will be used:

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a 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%,** 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.

Frequent Absence

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. Initially the principal will speak with the parent. If this is unsuccessful, the school will send parents a letter, informing them that they are seeking advice from the school's Education Welfare Officer (E.W.O.) **Lynn Dinsmore. Tel: 02870868588**

Promoting pupil attendance and Celebrating attendance

We believe ourselves to be extremely fortunate at St Eoghan's Primary School to have regular high attendance through our preventative ethos.

Regular communications are relayed to parents ensuring that they are aware of the importance of attendance, and their responsibility with regards to this. Regular attendance is celebrated whole-school assemblies, certificates and end-of-year awards.

Holidays in term time

We discourage 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.

Policy Training and Resources

All staff are expected to acquaint themselves fully with the Attendance Policy. To ensure continued success, our whole-school staff (teaching and non-teaching) receive yearly training in the delivery of the policy.

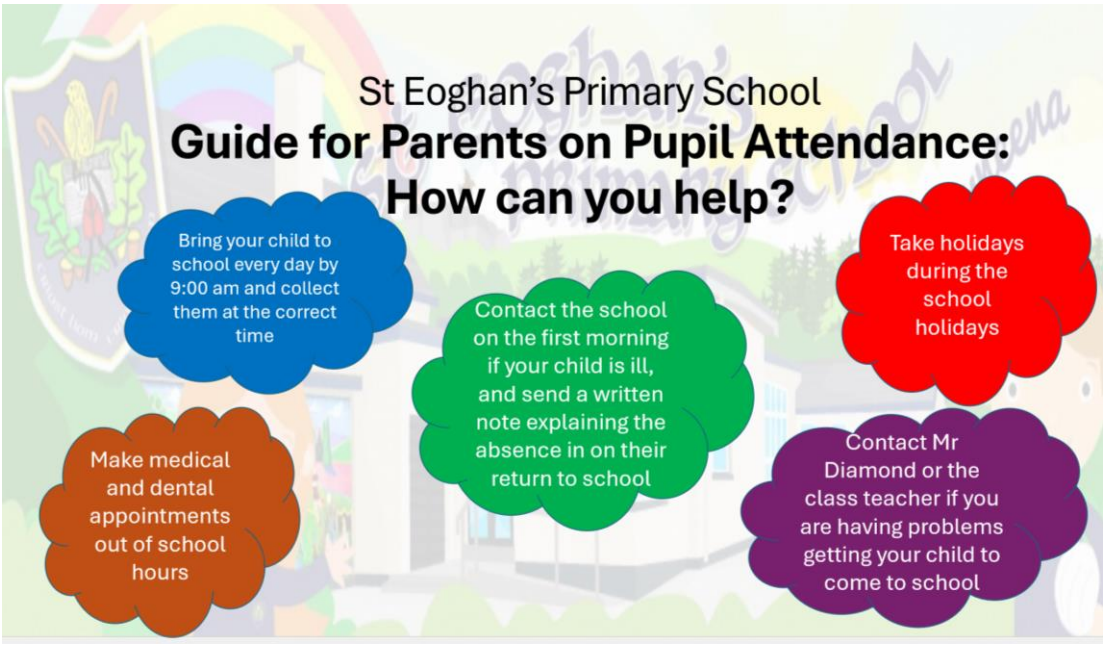
Ratification of Policy

Ratified at the Meeting of the Board of Governors on 15th January 2025.
This policy will be reviewed Term 1/2 of the 2026-27 school year.

Signed by : _____ Chairperson Board of Governors

Date: _____

APPENDIX 1


St Eoghan's Primary School
Guide for Parents on Pupil Attendance:
How can you help?
Bring your child to school every day by 9:00 am and collect them at the correct time
Contact the school on the first morning if your child is ill, and send a written note explaining the absence in on their return to school
Take holidays during the school holidays
Make medical and dental appointments out of school hours
Contact Mr Diamond or the class teacher if you are having problems getting your child to come to school

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Attendance Codes on current C2K system (Updated August 2024)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION
[illegible]	Present – 1 (AM) / 1 (PM)	[illegible]	Only staff should attend
[illegible]	Artistic Endeavour	[illegible]	Exceptional Closure
[illegible]	Bereavement	[illegible]	Holiday for all
[illegible]	Suspended	[illegible]	No attendance required
[illegible]	No reason provided for absence	[illegible]	Community Provision [illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Exceptional Teaching Arrangement / Hospital
[illegible]	Family Holiday (not agreed)	[illegible]	Elective Home Education
[illegible]	Other Absence	[illegible]	Pupil Referral Unit
[illegible]	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	[illegible]	Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework – EF)
[illegible]	Extended Leave	[illegible]	Training Organisation (under EF)
[illegible]	Late (before registration closed)	[illegible]	FE College (under EF)
[illegible]	Medical / Dental Appointments	[illegible]	Intensive Support Learning Unit
[illegible]	No reason yet provided for absence [illegible]	[illegible]	CAMHS - Mental Health Support
[illegible]	Other Exceptional Circumstances		COVID-19 SPECIFIC CODES – SHOULD NO LONGER BE USED
[illegible]	Approved Activity	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Religious Observance	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Study Leave	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Late (after registration closed)	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Educational Visit / Examination	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Work Experience	[illegible]	[illegible]

Absence Category Colour Code

Present - Approved Educational Activity	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Attendance not required