



Pupil Attendance Policy

Date: 12th November 2020

Date Approved (remotely) by B.O.G: 10th November 2020

Review Date: September 2023

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

Vision Statement

St. Colman's P.S is a living, celebrating Catholic school where every child is valued and encouraged to achieve their best in a warm and welcoming environment.

Mission Statement

- ❖ At St. Colman's we nurture the emotional, social, physical and spiritual needs of all our children. Pupil's voices are heard and responded to in a positive and caring way through a range of ways, including our Student Council.
- ❖ We are a school that works together to build effective relationships and to ensure every child is valued and respected in an inclusive community that celebrates diversity and promotes mutual understanding. We provide high quality teaching and learning experiences across a broad and balanced curriculum.
- ❖ At St. Colman's we provide an enriching and extending curriculum. Every child matters and we recognise and celebrate success in everyone. Relationships with staff and pupils are nurtured to be warm and respectful, providing opportunities for our children to grow and achieve their best.
- ❖ St. Colman's provides a vibrant, happy and safe learning environment which enables every child to achieve the best they can. Our curriculum and ethos promotes in every way the social, emotional and spiritual development of our children. We provide programmes and activities which promote the physical and mental health of our children.
- ❖ The Board of Governors in St. Colman's works collaboratively, sharing power, decision making and communication. They are committed to ensuring we achieve the highest standards across all aspects of school.
- ❖ At St. Colman's, we are committed to building strong and collaborative partnerships with families, the Church and the wider local community to enhance the experiences of our children. We communicate effectively with parents and provide them with opportunities to have their views heard and to be involved in their child's learning.
- ❖ At St. Colman's our Catholic faith underpins everything we do and is reflected in all aspects of school life. Our children are nurtured to develop their faith and to deepen their relationship with God.

This policy has been revised in accordance with *DE circular 2019/14* and taking into account the *DE Improving Pupil Attendance Strategy: Miss School = Miss Out*.

Aims

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

Role of the School

The Principal at St. Colman's Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; 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.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning registration. This is completed by each class teacher on our School Information Management System (SIMS) using the appropriate code.

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2019/14, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201914-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools-updated-february-2020>

Role of Parent/ Guardian

Parents/Guardians 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/ guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence by calling the school office. This should be confirmed with a written message to the child's class teacher 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.

At St. Colman's Primary School parents/carers should phone the office to advise of any absence on the first day their child is off school, before 9.30am. They should provide a written message upon the child's return to school. (During the period of Covid19 restrictions, this must be sent via ClassDojo.)

Pupils are expected to be in school by 9.00am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness (9.05am) 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 St. Colman's Primary School 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. (During the period of Covid19 restrictions, this must be sent via ClassDojo.)

Absence Procedures

In St. Colman's Primary School parents should notify the school of a child's absence as soon as possible, preferably before 9.30am on the first day of absence. This should be via phone call to the school office. The child's teacher will be informed of their absence. The teacher will mark the attendance register accordingly using attendance codes. A written message to explain the absence should be sent to the child's teacher on their return. (During the period of Covid19 restrictions, this must be sent via ClassDojo.)

If no explanation is provided a parent/guardian will be contacted to ask for one.

If your child is attending medical appointments, please also provide a written message informing their teacher of this. (During the period of Covid19 restrictions, this must be sent via ClassDojo.) Attendance is marked daily for morning and afternoon sessions so it is important that any absences are recorded.

Family holidays during Term Time

St. Colman's Primary School discourages holidays and outings 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.

Procedures for Managing Non-Attendance

In St. Colman's Primary School a 'Parents Guide to Pupil Attendance' is also available to view on the school website. The attendance of pupils will be monitored by class teachers and the Principal. When a child's attendance becomes a concern, the Principal will make a phone

call home to discuss pupil attendance with the parent. If the pupil's attendance continues to fall this will be discussed with the school's Educational Welfare Officer.

The school is committed to supporting families where there are difficulties with absence. We endeavour to engage families and explore opportunities to help increase attendance. The Principal, Deputy Designated teacher for Child Protection and the class teacher will work together to provide support for a child returning to school after a long absence.

Punctuality

It is very important that children arrive at school on time. The school day starts at **9.00am**. Supervision is provided in the school playgrounds from **8.45am**. Children should not be on school grounds prior to this time, unless attending Breakfast Club.

(Due to current Covid19 restrictions, school start and finishing times are subject to change, please ensure you keep up-to-date with current procedures by regularly checking the school website and messaging platforms.)

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.

(This policy has been approved remotely by our Board of Governors and will be officially ratified at the next B.O.G Meeting.)

Signature: _____ (Principal)

Signature: _____ (Chair of Board of Governors)

Date: