

St Columba's Primary School Newbuildings.

Attendance Policy.



Presented to BOG for ratification February 2017

To be reviewed annually.

Reviewed by Staff March 2018

Review due: Prior to June 2019

St Columba's P.S.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Mission Statement

St Columba's recognises that gospel values and the teaching of the church is central to the life of the school. Together with parents, who are the first educators, and parish we aim to create an environment where children can develop physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially and morally. Together we hope to lead our children towards understanding, tolerance, justice and sensitivity to the need of others.

Rationale:

Regular school attendance and punctuality are extremely important, as valuable learning time is lost when pupils are absent or late. Regular attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access the school curriculum and reach their potential. Pupils need to attend school on a regular basis if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Through the ethos of the school we the staff ensure the children feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. The school takes appropriate action to promote good attendance as demonstrated in this policy.

Aims

- ✓ To maximise the attendance of all children
- ✓ To provide a stimulating and challenging learning environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- ✓ To ensure the provision a high-quality curriculum so that pupils enjoy learning and want to come to school; promoting children's independent learning, enjoyment and confidence.
- ✓ To develop an outline to define roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance
- ✓ To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with their parents to resolve any difficulties
- ✓ To analyse attendance data regularly to inform practice and future policy arrangements
- ✓ To work closely with appropriate outside agencies including the EWO and access their advice and support where necessary

Roles and Responsibilities

Partnership between parents and the school

At St Columba's we recognise that attendance is the responsibility of pupils, parents and all school staff, who will work in partnership to ensure excellent attendance so that pupils reach their potential.

Matters pertaining to attendance will be mentioned and/or agreed upon;

- when meeting new parents;

- when a concern about attendance should arise;
- in the governors' annual report to parents;
- in school newsletters

The whole school approach to attendance recognises the important roles of all members of the school community, including support staff and governors.

School Role and Responsibilities to improve attendance

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-andabsence-recording-by-schools

The **Principal** has overall responsibility for school attendance; (teachers/designated staff) should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/her attention.

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.

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.

In order to achieve an excellent standard, we at St Columba's will:

- ✓ Ensure our registration system is accurately and consistently used by all staff.
- ✓ Analyse data regularly and identify the actions that need to be taken
- ✓ Follow up unexplained absences promptly
- ✓ Promote and reward good attendance and punctuality for all
- ✓ Work in partnership with families and EWO
- ✓ Set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- ✓ Evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy
- ✓ Provide parents with a copy of this policy

Parents' Role and Responsibilities

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/guardian's responsibility to inform the school by telephone 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 an absence note is not received an absence proforma will be sent home with your child to be completed and returned 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 9.00am for assembly, 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.

In order to enable us to achieve excellent attendance at St Columba's we ask the parents to try to adhere to their role in supporting and encouraging their children. Parents should

- ✓ Ensure that their child attends school regularly and is punctual each day
- ✓ Ensure that their child understands the benefits of good attendance and punctuality
- ✓ Notify the school at the beginning of the school day by telephone or by sending a note with a sibling, that the child is ill, or give any other reason for the absence. Provide a written explanation for the absence when appropriate. There are over 30 codes for marking absences; therefore it is important that specific reasons for the absence or part attendance are given. Clear explanations help teachers code the absence appropriately on SIMMS to determine if it is authorised.

Example Code

'B' Bereavement - authorised absence

P Approved Sporting activity- Approved educational activity

D No reason provided for absence- Unauthorised absence

- ✓ Parents should notify the school as soon as possible of when a pupil will return to school. This will allow for any necessary preparations on the part of the school and will help to monitor the return of pupils.
- ✓ Avoid taking family holidays during term time. In relation to this parents are advised that it is not acceptable for pupils to be absent for the following examples and similar occasions:
 - ❑ to spend a long weekend away from home;
 - ❑ to stay at home for a delivery or similar event;
 - ❑ to go shopping;
 - ❑ to go to the airport;
 - ❑ to visit relatives;
 - ❑ to look after siblings;
 - ❑ to take an unauthorised holiday in term time;Absence from school affects the child's educational, social and personal attainment. The school therefore expects family holidays to be taken during school holiday periods.
- ✓ Work in partnership with the school to improve their child's attendance where necessary.

Pupils Roles and Responsibilities

Each pupil at St Columba's PS 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. If you are given an absence proforma slip please ensure it is given parents and returned to school the next day and given to your class teacher.

In order to ensure you have excellent attendance whilst a pupil at St Columba's PS. Pupils should:

- ✓ Ensure you get to bed early to make sure you are well rested and ready to learn in school each day.
- ✓ Prepare the night before, those items you will need for school the next day e.g. PE Kit, Bookbag, Violin.
- ✓ Make sure you are up in time to have breakfast and to leave the house promptly.

- ✓ Starting and establishing good routines now will establish independence and good practice in the future.
- ✓ Remember being late or absent in Primary school can lead to truancy at secondary school and “hard to break habits” for working life so please try your best to be in school on time planned and prepared for the day ahead.
- ✓ If you come to school late ensure you are signed in at the office and go promptly to class/assembly.

Responsibilities of the 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.

The Educational Welfare Service will:

- ✓ Meet with the Principal at the beginning of each school year to agree the Service Level Agreement
- ✓ Monitor registers regularly
- ✓ Identify pupils/families with attendance difficulties
- ✓ Agree time limited action which needs to be taken by school or EWO
- ✓ Provide advice and work in partnership with schools and families.

School Procedures

At St Columba’s PS we use Attendance Manager Provided by SIMS to collect, store and monitor all aspects of pupil’s attendance therefore teachers must ensure that registers are completed twice a day, in the morning and afternoon sessions. Where possible, there should be a same day follow up of absence. If pupils know their absences will be noted and acted upon swiftly they are more reluctant to absent themselves. First day contact sends a clear message to pupils and parents that attendance is very important. These procedures must be applied consistently by all staff to ensure accuracy of data.

Types of Absence

Lateness - all pupils arriving after 9.05 will be recorded as being late. Lateness will be monitored and action taken to improve punctuality where necessary.

Illness – parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of absence to notify the school of the reason. If any member of staff has concerns about a reason for absence the Principal should be informed.

Medical Dental Appointments – absences due to medical or dental appointments are considered to be authorised for prescribed appointments and parents should inform the school in advance in so far as possible. Parents/carers are encouraged to make routine appointments for outside school hours where possible

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance will be monitored regularly by the Principal. Teachers should also monitor class attendance and inform the Principal if they notice patterns of attendance. Attendance data should be discussed with EWO as and when required.

Reporting on Attendance

Parents are given a copy of the leaflet School Attendance Matters and reminders about attendance will be offered through the Monday note regularly. If there are concerns about attendance this will be communicated to the parent/carer by the Principal. Parents will receive an annual report detailing their child's attendance within the end of year report.

EWO will have meeting at the beginning of the school year to discuss attendance and review Service Level Agreement. When necessary the Principal will contact the EWO to discuss concerns over attendance. Termly as requested the Principal will return the under 85% to the EWO

The Principal will report to the Board of Governors each term on attendance levels within the school.

Improving Poor Attendance/Punctuality

If there is any cause for concern the following steps should be taken:

1. Where poor attendance or punctuality is identified the parent/carer is informed of the schools concerns
2. Should this persist the principal will arrange a meeting with the parents to further discuss reasons for the absence or punctuality difficulties and agree a plan for improvement.
3. Where no improvements are made the EWO will be informed.

The aim throughout this 3 step process is to ensure that all children have the best attendance possible, with the school working in partnership with parents and taking individual circumstances into account.

Appendices

- ✓ Absence Proforma sent by school to follow up on unexplained absences.
- ✓ Letters to parents where attendance is a cause for concern
- ✓ Letters to parents to request a meeting to discuss attendance

School Absence

_____ was absent from school on _____.

We would be grateful if you could provide some details and return this slip as soon as possible.

✂ -----

My child was absent on due to:
.....

Signed



St. Columba's Primary School
2 Duncastle Road,
Newbuildings,

BT47 2QS
Phone: 028 71 347190
Fax: 028 71 313814
Email: info@stcolumbasps.newbuildings.ni.sch.uk
Website: www.stcolumbasps.net
Principal: Mrs Caroline Callan

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In line with the DENI guidelines Education Matters the school have a responsibility to inform parents if their child's attendance is falling below what is expected. If a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school, it is essential that they attend their school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

We fully understand that children have periods of absence due to ill health or for other very valid exceptional reasons, however it is our duty of care to ensure that you are aware of your child's attendance and work in partnership to ensure it is improved where necessary.

School attendance is checked termly by the Education Welfare Officer from EA who can become involved with children and their families if attendance falls below 85%. It is our aim to avoid children falling below this as it can have an impact on their school work and learning.

School attendance percentages can be misleading as the table below highlights

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	Unsatisfactory
75% attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unsatisfactory

Below is details of your child's attendance for the first term of the school year 2017/8

Child's Name: _____ Attendance: _____

This is for your information and it is hoped that this will improve throughout the course of the year with increased attendance in the coming weeks and months. If you have any questions regarding this information please see Mrs Callan who will be happy to discuss this with you.

Yours faithfully



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2 Duncastle Road,
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BT47 2QS

Phone: 028 71 347190

Fax: 028 71 313814

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School attendance is checked termly by the Education Welfare Officer from EA who can become involved with children and their families if attendance falls below 85%. It is our aim to avoid children falling below this as it can have an impact on their school work and learning.

Having raised the issue of attendance through a letter in the previous term unfortunately the issue still remains a cause for concern as your child's attendance is currently at ____%

I would like to request a meeting with you to discuss this further and see if there are measures we can work together to put in place to rise your child's attendance or discuss further any issues that are impacting on their attendance. Please telephone the school office to make an appointment with Mrs Callan. The most suitable time for the meeting would be between 8.30am and 9.00m or after 4.00pm each day. Mrs Callan is usually out of class on Friday of this would be a more suitable day. Please telephone the office to speak to Mrs Callan who will be happy to discuss this with you.

Yours faithfully