



St Joseph's P.S. Attendance Policy

AIMS AND ETHOS

Our school aims to ensure that every child will want to attend school. We want to work with parents to ensure this happens.

We have a good record of attendance which we wish to maintain this. We also want to ensure that pupils arrive at school punctually.

THE MANAGEMENT OF ATTENDANCE

Responsibilities of:

Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school and arrives punctually. Parents are asked to phone the school on the first day of their child's absence and inform the school of the reason for this and the expected length of absence or alternatively they can send a letter of explanation when the child returns to school.

Board of Governors

The Board of Governors has the ultimate responsibility for school attendance, but this is delegated to the Principal on a day-to-day basis. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's attendance policy and practice and will be provided with regular reports about attendance issues.

The Principal

Overall responsibility for attendance on a day-to-day basis lies with the Principal who has the role along with the Board of Governors for determining resources and staffing to deal with attendance issues, ensuring the Board of Governors is informed about attendance issues and ensuring statistical information is provided as required. She will liaise when needed with the Education Welfare Officer about pupils whose attendance is below 85%. The Principal will consult with class teacher for contextual information on the pupil and reasons for absences.

The principal will:

The Principal or class teacher will speak with parents when a child's attendance falls below 85% and no adequate explanation has been given.

This will be followed up by a letter to parents requesting an explanation.

In cases where there is continued concern the EWO will be informed.

Roles and Responsibilities of Class Teacher

Inform the Principal of any pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. Encourage pupils to attend and to come to school on time. They also have a responsibility to create environments where children want to be.

The class teacher will:

- Endeavour to develop trusting relationships with all pupils
- Monitor attendance – mark daily registers, check absence notes, notify administration staff early about absentees and identify pupils with irregular attendance patterns
- Follow up pupil absence if notes are not forthcoming
- Talk to parents about their child's irregular attendance eg at parent interviews (teachers will be provided with their class attendance percentages for referral during interviews)
- Promote good attendance through the curriculum
- Provide support to pupils after a long absence from school
- Provide and mark work for pupils who are absent from school, if appropriate

Roles and Responsibility of Office Staff

Office staff have an important role to play in monitoring attendance in school. The following are some of the roles they undertake:-

- Compiling the class registers
- Taking phone messages from parents of pupils who are absent and passing information on to class teacher
- Phoning parents of pupils who are absent from school without explanation
- Compiling monthly whole school absence lists of pupils below 85% and sending to EWO.

The Recording of Attendance

The Department of Education has issued guidelines about categorising absence as authorised. The coding mechanism used is outlined in Appendix 1.

It is the responsibility of the school to authorise absence. The school does not have to accept a parent's offered explanation as a valid reason for absence. The possible reasons for authorised absence are outlined in Appendix 2.

Daily Registration Procedures

- The class register is marked in the morning by the class teacher
- Markings will be stored electronically by the secretary
- Children who arrive late will be marked thus by the class teacher
- Substitute teachers will be informed about attendance procedures

Punctuality

When pupils arrive at school after 9.15 a.m. they will receive a late registration mark.

The importance of good punctuality habits will be discussed at assemblies and in class.

Children will be encouraged to cultivate good punctuality habits, and be supported to improve when necessary. Where possible, parents may be contacted also to enlist their support to help children improve punctuality.

Specific strategies to promote excellent attendance and punctuality

In order to promote excellent attendance and punctuality, a number of various strategies may be used. These will include:

- Excellent attendance certificates, termly and annually.
- Special mention at assemblies
- Specific curriculum teaching associated with attendance and punctuality
- Personal attendance and or punctuality target setting

The range and type of promotion strategies will be kept under constant review.

Review

This attendance policy will be kept under review.

Revised February 2015

