



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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 Anne's Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. As a school we are committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Attendance Percentage	Number of Days Missed	Category
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.

For some parents 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year. That's nearly 4 school weeks.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St Anne's Primary School.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To work in partnership with parents/guardians to establish good patterns of punctuality and attendance.
4. To keep parents/guardians informed about their child's attendance and punctuality.
5. To encourage children to be independent and come to school every day, on time and with the correct resources.
6. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

The Importance of Good Attendance and Punctuality

A good pattern of attendance and punctuality is important because it helps children:

- To learn.
- To have fun.
- To make new friends.
- To experience new things in life.
- To develop awareness of other cultures, religion, ethnicity and gender differences.
- To achieve.
- To develop new skills.
- To build confidence and self-esteem.
- To develop the confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others.
- To develop good habits in readiness that will last throughout their lives.
- To have the best possible start in life.

Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in their education and are at risk of becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and becoming victims of crime or abuse.

Source: (Adapted from) School Attendance Matters – A Parent's Guide.

Role of the School

- The Principal at *St Anne's Primary School* has overall responsibility for school attendance. The Vice-Principal is responsible for managing pupil attendance.
- To analyse attendance trends and to correspond with parents/guardians/pupils if a problem is identified.
- To provide guidance and support to parents/guardians who are having difficulty getting their child to attend school each day.

Role of Board of Governors

- To provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets. A report on attendance Policy and data to be presented, at least annually, to the Board of Governors.

Role of the Teacher

- To regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded accurately on their OMR register or SIMS and to return the register to the office each Friday.
- To follow up any unexplained absences by sending home a “reason for absence” request note to be completed by the parents. Appendix 1
- To keep a record of reasons given by parents for absences.
- To report any concerning patterns of absences/punctuality to the Vice-Principal
- To provide an attendance figure on each school report in June

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-and-absence-recording-by-schools

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.

- To fulfil their legal duty to ensure that their child regularly attend school.
(1 Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986)
- To inform the school of the reason for a pupil’s absence on the first day of absence. This can be done by phoning the school office or by emailing the school info account.
- To confirm reasons for absences with a written note when the pupil returns to school.
- If the absence is likely to be prolonged, to share this information with the school so that any necessary arrangements which may be required can be arranged.
- To let the school know as early as possible of any issues that may impact upon attendance.
- To ensure their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child’s attendance record. Pupils are expected to be in school at 9.10 am for registration and the beginning of class.
- If a child appears reluctant to attend school, to discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Vice-Principal/Principal to ensure that both parent and child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

- To attend school punctually and regularly.
- To bring a written note giving reasons for absences when returning to school.
- To talk to a teacher or trusted adult about any worries they have about school which may affect their attendance and punctuality, in order that the school can take action if necessary.

Procedures for Monitoring Punctuality.

Children may arrive in the playgrounds from 9 am when supervision begins. Class begins at 9.10 and pupils are expected to be punctual. Where this is a cause for concern, class teachers will raise the issue with parents and explore what can be done to positively impact on the child's punctual arrival to class. If punctuality does not improve, the Class Teacher will consult with the VP with responsibility for managing attendance.

Absence Procedures

Parents/guardians are asked to make contact with the school on the morning of their child's absence. This can be done by phoning the school office or emailing the school info account

On returning to school, a written note should be given to the class teacher providing a reason for the absence.

Medical/dental appointments should be made, where possible, outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, it is expected that children will only miss part of the school day.

An appropriate adult should sign the pupil out and back into class at the main school office in Block D.

Procedures for Monitoring Non-attendance

Class teachers will raise the issue of attendance with parents of any child who has a low percentage attendance resulting from intermittent attendance pattern and/or significant periods of uninterrupted absence. The class teacher will focus on the impact that poor attendance is having on the child's learning. This can be done at the Parent-Teacher consultation or at subsequent meetings or phone calls arranged, as required, throughout the year.

Termly audits of attendance will be carried out through SIMS by the Vice-Principal which will identify pupils whose attendance is under 85%

The Vice-Principal will liaise with the teacher of these pupils to ascertain reasons given for the pupil's absence. If attendance remains a cause for concern and there is not sufficient reason to explain this, an initial letter will be sent to parents/guardians advising of the school's concern.

If the attendance/punctuality continues to be a cause for concern a second letter will be sent to the parents/guardians, advising them that their child's attendance is being monitored by the Education Welfare Officer.

The parents will also be advised that a referral to the Education Welfare Service will occur if there is not an improvement.

The Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service has a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

If attendance does not improve and falls below 85% the Vice-Principal will meet with the Education Welfare Officer, and together they will review the attendance of any child falling below 85%. The Vice-Principal and the Education Welfare Officer will determine the next steps which should be taken, which may include making a referral to the Education Welfare Service. Parents/Guardians will be informed of this decision.

The Education Welfare Service will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance and will engage with the family in a supportive way in order to improve the child's attendance.

Family Holidays during Term Time

St Anne's Primary School 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 by the school Principal.