

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

SAINT COLUMBAN'S P.S.

BELCOO



Signed:

Gerry McAloon

15/03/2016

Chair of Board of Governors

Date

Liam Magee

15/03/2016

Principal

Date

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

Mission Statement:

St Columban's Primary School in partnership with parents and the community will strive through effective teaching to enable pupils to discover and develop to the full; their talents, attitudes and abilities in a caring, supportive environment, seeking excellence and permeated by our caring Catholic ethos, so that ultimately they will be able to participate actively, productively and responsibly in society now and in the future."

Aims of the School Attendance Policy:

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St Columban'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 Mr Magee has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his 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 and afternoon registration sessions.

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 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

St Columban's is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent

Parents 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 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. (This can be done by phoning the school office or emailing the school info account - (info@stcolumbansps.belcoo.ni.sch.uk)

This should be confirmed with a written note 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.

Pupils are expected to be in school for registration and the beginning of classes at 9.05am. It is the responsibility of parents 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.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at St Columban'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.

Absence Procedures

Parents are required to provide a written reason for their child's absence on their return to school. This can be done by filling in the appropriate form in the child's homework diary.

If there is a prolonged absence (of more than 5 days) due to illness, parents should maintain contact with the school throughout the duration of the absence so that the school can assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Family holidays during Term Time

St Columban'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 and this has to be discussed with the Principal. Class work will not be provided for children prior to them going on a family holiday. Homework that is missed due to family holidays will be given to the child to complete on their return, if requested.

Procedures for Managing 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 will be done at the Parent Teacher meeting or at subsequent meetings arranged through-out the year.

The Principal will monitor the whole school attendance rates and the attendance percentage for each class on a monthly basis. Individual pupil records will be reviewed for any pupil falling below a percentage attendance rate of 85%.

The Principal will meet with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) as necessary and together they will review the attendance of any child falling below 85%. Where there is cause for concern about a child's attendance, the Principal and the EWO will determine the next steps which should be taken which could include making a referral to the Education Welfare Service for any child about whom there is a significant concern.

In such cases the Principal will issue correspondence advising the parents that their child's attendance is causing concerns. The parents will also be advised that a referral to the Education Welfare Service will occur if there is not an improvement.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority (EA) through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal 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.