



**St Francis of Assisi Primary School**

**Pupil Attendance Policy**

<b>Policy ratified by Governors</b>	<b>OCT 2017</b>
<b>Date of Policy Review</b>	<b>OCT 2018</b>

## **ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

It is very important that children in St Francis of Assisi PS come to school, and want to come to school every day. This will be achieved by creating a warm, welcoming and secure environment where the pupils feel valued, ensuring also that the children access a curriculum that is stimulating and challenging.

Parents should make every effort to make sure that children do not miss any days at school. There is much to do and much to learn and children who miss days at school can very quickly fall behind in their school work and become anxious and worried.

It is very important that children come to school on time and do not arrive in school after class has started. Children can miss out on important activities e.g. Words of the week, handwriting etc. and will often disrupt the work of the class.

Children should arrive at school gates no longer than five minutes before first bell rings each day. Rushing in the mornings can upset children and can get the day in school off to a poor start leaving children anxious and unhappy. It also can form poor habits as children grow to believe that it is not important to be on time and that being in class for early morning activities does not really matter.

Children may be in school grounds from **8.55 am** onwards as staff will be present to supervise. We operate a Breakfast Club in St Francis of Assisi PS and school is open from 8 am each morning at the cost of 50p per day or £1 per family.

Lateness on a regular basis is a cause for concern and parents will be asked to come to school to discuss poor time keeping and how we might give support to ease this problem.

## **Aims**

1. To encourage a positive approach to the importance of good school attendance and to maximise attendance of all children.
2. To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all stakeholders
3. To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty
4. To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
5. To work closely and utilise the support from outside agencies, particularly the Education Welfare Service
6. To affirm and reward those pupils and parents who are always punctual and attend school well.

## **Responsibility of Parents**

The responsibility of ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents. However, where school attendance difficulties occur, the key to resolving these issues is to engage the child through early intervention by collaborative practice between the parent and the school

Parents should:

- Provide written confirmation briefly explaining reasons for absence on the child's return to school
- Ensure their children attend regularly
- Ensure they are punctual for school
- Ensure they are appropriately dressed and have requisite break, books etc.
- Comply with the attendance policy
- Make sure their child understands good attendance and punctuality is important
- Make sure medical/dental appointments are made outside school hours wherever possible and provide evidence for the appointment when it is not
- Plan for holidays outside of term time, however in the event of special circumstances, consult with the Principal
- Only allow absence for legitimate reasons
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure high standards of attendance are maintained

## **Responsibility of Class Teacher**

Effective practice in relation to managing individual pupil attendance depends on the class teacher implementing the following procedures;

- Developing trusting relationships with their pupils and encouraging pupils to come to school every day
- Monitoring attendance in their class i.e. collecting absence notes, identifying pupils with irregular attendance patterns
- Following up with pupils if there has been no explanation regarding their absence
- Talking to individual pupils about their attendance
- Promoting class attendance to receive full attendance award
- Referring pupils attendance concerns to Principal

## **Responsibility of Board of Governors**

The Board of Governors of St Francis of Assisi PS has the ultimate responsibility for school attendance but this is delegated on a day to day basis to the Principal. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's attendance policy and practice. Attendance Data is reported as part of the Principal's report to the Board of Governors at termly meetings

## **Responsibility of Office Staff**

Office staff have an important role to play in recording and monitoring attendance in St Francis of Assisi PS. The following are some of the roles they undertake;

- Operating the Attendance feature on SIMS
- Taking phone messages from parents when pupils are absent from school, and informing class teacher
- Phoning parents of pupils who are absent from school
- Collecting registration data
- Providing monthly printouts for Principal and DENI
- Providing updates of attendance for EWO upon request for individual children on EWO register

## **Recording of Attendance**

St Francis of Assisi PS uses Assessment Manager accessed through SIMS to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relation to attendance.

Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of pupil's attendance.

The register must record whether the pupil is present, absent or attending an approved educational activity. Attendance and all forms of absence should be recorded using the Absence and Attendance Codes as outlined in DENI circular .

## **Daily Procedures**

- Teachers mark attendance sheet from Monday to Friday adhering to attendance codes( Appendix A – Absence Codes Guidance for Schools)
- Fully completed attendance is processed onto SIMS at the end of each week by office staff
- A print out of absences is sent to class teachers at the end of the month

## **Lateness**

Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at 9.30 am, will be considered as late. Pupils arriving after 9.30 am must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded. Persistent lateness will necessitate in Principal requesting to meet with a parent to discuss persistent lateness and agreeing a way forward to address the matter

## **Medical or Dental Appointments**

Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents should inform the school in advance and show the letter or appointment card as evidence.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

## **Holidays During Term Time**

Parents can demonstrate their commitment to their child's education by not taking holidays during term time. Every effort should be made to book family holidays during school holiday time. We understand the reasons why parents may choose to go on holiday during school time but the time lost is extremely difficult for children to make up. School holiday lists are given to all parents at the beginning of the academic year to forward plan holidays

All applications for holidays must be made to the Principal these applications will be considered on an individual basis.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

- Attendance in St Francis of Assisi P.S is monitored at the end of each month, attendance concerns will be discussed with teachers and actioned by Principal as deemed appropriate
- Teachers must inform Principal when they notice a child's poor pattern of attendance emerging
- EWO will meet with Principal regularly to discuss current referrals and highlight attendance concerns
- Principal/SLT will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy, attendance target, and the strategies to improve good attendance
- School will contact parent by letter if attendance falls 90% or below
- School will inform parents that a referral to EWS has been made if attendance is below 85%

### **Reporting Attendance**

#### **To Parents**

Attendance information pertaining to individual pupils will be reported to the parents at the end of the academic year within their child's report.

Throughout the course of the year attendance is also addressed at Parent Teacher Meetings.

In order to give parents/guardians a benchmark to their child's attendance the following grades are used:

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
96%-99% Attendance	1- 8 Days of Absence	Very good
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence	Cause for concern
<b>85% Attendance</b>	<b>28 Days of Absence</b>	<b>Poor</b>
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence	Unacceptable

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

(School Attendance Matters- A Parent's Guide Department of Education 2013)

**If a child's attendance falls below 85% the school is required to refer the child to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) who will then deal directly with the family. It must be noted that EWS will act in a supportive capacity, seeking a resolution to improve attendance**

### **A Positive approach to Attendance**

We use a system of reward and encouragement. Absences are always explained either in note form or by phone-call.

- Children who have full attendance or 96%-99% attendance for one term receive the school full/very good Attendance Award Certificate.
- Children who achieve full attendance for the academic year receive a medal.
- Attendance is tracked each month with reward given to class which has the best attendance.
- Assemblies and weekly Newsletters highlight the importance of coming to school regularly and on time- 'Every School Day Counts'

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