

St Patrick's & St Joseph's Primary School



Attendance Policy

October 2023 (C/Ref. DE Circular Number 2020/08)

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 Patrick's and St Joseph's Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

MISSION STATEMENT

St Patrick's and St Joseph's Primary School is a Catholic school committed to reflecting the values, attitudes and moral perspective that are consistent with a Christian conscience and the teachings of the church. We seek to know and respect each individual child within a caring school community where happy children learn best.

AIMS

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St Patrick's and St Joseph'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 Educational Welfare Service.

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

The Principal at St Patrick's and St Joseph's Primary School 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. A report on the Attendance Policy and appropriate data will be presented the Board and recorded on the minutes at least annually.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils to ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

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 2020/08, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202008-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools>

St Patrick's and St Joseph's Primary School 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 age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational need 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 should be confirmed by using an 'absence 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 at St Patrick's and St Joseph's for registration at 9:00am and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual.

If a child appears to be reluctant to attend school the parent should discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both the parent and the child receive maximum support.

Pupils' attendance and educational achievement are inextricably linked, it is therefore important that we as a school do all we can to ensure that our pupils attend school regularly.

Please inform school by telephone or class Dojo if your child is absent.

Family Holidays during Term Time

St Patrick's and St Joseph'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.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

In accordance with attendance requirements the school register is taken twice a day, in the morning and after lunch. If a pupil is absent for a full day or for part of a day the absence has to be recorded by the school as authorised or unauthorised. It is for this reason that we require information from parents concerning any absence.

The following sets out the school's procedures:

- Children are expected to be in class by 9.00.
- Pupils who arrive after this time are recorded as being late.
- If a child has been absent parents should give a reason for the absence.
- If no reason is provided the school will contact parents/guardians.
- Parents are asked, whenever possible, to make appointments for children outside school hours. If an appointment has to be made during school hours a written note is required for this absence.
- This should be sent to the child's teacher in advance of the child being collected from school so that arrangements can be put into place for parents to collect their child from the school office.
- Good attendance is recognised and promoted through class recognition and pupil certificates during the school year.
- In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school will support and advise parents at all times to ensure pupil attendance whilst not compromising the safety of the school community.
- During any period of lockdown classwork will always be provided for the children to do at home both through Dojo and work-packs, staff would be available for contact through Dojo daily.

Further Procedures for Managing Non-Attendance

1. An annual attendance figure is included in each pupil's school report.
2. Attendance Reports are analysed each term:

Term	Period during Academic Year
1A	September-Halloween
1B	Halloween-Christmas
2A	January- February Mid-Term
2B	February Mid -Term-Easter
3	Easter-June

3. If a child falls below an attendance rate of 90% during any of the academic periods (as listed above) the parents will be contacted regarding the issue.
4. A referral will be made to Education Welfare Service (EWS) if attendance falls below a rate of 85%. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Education Welfare Service

The Educational Authority (EA)/Regional Education and Library Boards (ELBs) through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have 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.

Signed: Principal

Signed:..... Chair, Board of Governors

Date:.....