



Attendance and Punctuality Policy with Guidance for Parents and Carers

Introduction:

Good Parents want their children to get on well in life. Nowadays, it is more important than ever to have a good education if you want opportunities in adult life. Children's chances of a successful future are affected by not attending school regularly

Guidance

This Guidance takes account of the need to ensure that children are supported in getting the most out of school life

AIM

To promote a whole community approach to improving attendance and punctuality

By giving clear guidelines to parents

By ensuring that schools reward good attendance and punctuality

By providing support in the form of Learning Mentors and School Attendance Officers, Parent Mentors, School Nurses and School Governors

By encouraging a 'first day' response to absence or lateness and follow up action where necessary

By encouraging the wider community to support the promotion of attendance campaigns

PRINCIPLES

The Attendance and Punctuality Guidance has as its main focus:

Administrative aspect of good attendance and punctuality

Impact on a child's learning

Social consequences of non-attendance and poor punctuality

Legal consequences of non-attendance

Practical Advice

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

OUTSTANDING	100%
EXCELLENT	96+%
AVERAGE	94.8%
POOR	85-90% (NHLC Caseworker Intervention)
VERY POOR	Below 85% (LA Caseworker Intervention)

The Law:

By law, all children of school age (between 5 and 16) must receive a proper full time education.

Parents are primarily responsible for making sure that children are educated. If your child is registered at St Columba's, it is essential that they attend regularly.

Parents are partners with school in the education of their children.

As a parent or carer you are responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly and on time.



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If your child fails to attend school regularly the Local Authority, who are charged with monitoring attendance may have to consider legal action.

Holidays

Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for holidays during term time.

The St. Columba's policy is to authorise up to 5 days off in the second half of the summer term if your child's attendance is 95% or higher for the previous twelve months.

N.B. No holidays will be authorised for Year 6 pupils between January and the end of Key Stage 2 testing week.

What to do if your child is absent

'Forging links between home and school is crucial'

As a parent or carer it is your responsibility to notify your school immediately of their absence.

If you need to take your child out of school please discuss the reasons with the Learning Mentor well in advance.

Please seek advice and support from school if you are encountering difficulties getting your child to attend. The Learning Mentor can help with this.

Please explain to school beforehand if you know your child is going to be absent.

'Schools can only sanction a child's absence where there is a genuine reason'

Absences

Authorised Absence.

If a child cannot attend school because they are genuinely ill, then the absence will be treated as authorised. We ask that you please contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

The school has a responsibility to know that all its pupils are safe and will try to contact you if we do not hear from you.

Family Bereavements.

Requests for leave of absence for pupils to attend family funerals will always be approved as authorised absence.

Parents are asked to agree with the Headteacher how long the child will be off school. Please note that experience tells us that children generally cope better with bereavement if their routines are not disturbed and they continue to attend school.

Medical/Dental Appointments:

Pupils who are absent from school because of medical or dental appointments will get a medical mark for that session. Any subsequent absences after that session will be classed as authorised illness.

Please inform us, preferably in writing, or by showing the relevant appointment card.



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When possible try to arrange appointments either at end of the day.

Pupils who have an appointment during school time must be collected by a responsible adult.

Pupils will not be allowed out of school by themselves.

Unauthorised Absences.

Where no reason for an absence is given, or a child is kept off school for any reason other than an illness or authorised absence, as discussed prior to being off with the school then an unauthorised absence will be recorded.

Frequent unauthorised absences will severely disrupt your child's learning.

If we are concerned that a child is frequently absent, we will make every effort to contact the family to discuss our worries before the School Attendance Service take action.

Prolonged periods of unauthorised absence can lead to the school having to inform the Police and Social Services and require your child to be placed on the missing children's list.

Education Welfare Officer.

The LA employs Education Welfare Officers to monitor school attendance and to help parents if there are problems getting a child to school.

Our EWO visits the school every two weeks to check attendance and discuss any concerns.

The children may attend attendance groups with the Learning Mentor and EWO. If your child is not attending school regularly the EWO may visit you at home to discuss any concerns.

When children have persistent low attendance and all other ways to improve attendance have failed the School Attendance Service will then always press for prosecution which may lead to an appearance in court and a heavy fine.

The EWO can be contacted via school if you would like help with your child's attendance.

Registers.

Registering pupils is the main way we can be sure that all children, both in school and absent are safe. This means that class registration has to be accurate. To assist the teachers in registration it is important that the pupils are punctual for school. Pupils should be on the playground at **8.50am** ready for the bell at **8.55am**.

Lateness:

Pupils who arrive in school after 9.30am will be marked as absent after registration.

If pupils miss registration altogether and fail to provide an adequate reason (a note, personal contact, or telephone contact from the parents/guardians) then they will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the session.



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If pupils are persistently late for school, parents will be notified and asked to improve the situation. If there is a problem, please tell the school. If a solution cannot be found it may be necessary to seek the help of the Education Welfare Officer. (EWO)

Rewards

We aim to encourage punctuality and good attendance.

We have an Awards Assembly each week. Certificates are awarded to the Infant and Junior classes with the best attendance.

Certificates are awarded at the end of each term to those children who have achieved full attendance and at the end of the year for a full year's attendance.

Effect of absence on your child's learning

'Research shows that children who are absent from school do less well than those attending regularly and punctually'

'It's very difficult to *make friends* and *do well* at school if you don't attend or are late all the time'

Any absence can be damaging to a child's learning and confidence.

New work is often introduced in the first sessions of the day.

It is difficult to keep up with school work if children do not attend regularly.

Being absent from school can lead to children missing out on all sorts of different activities.

Children who are absent from school on a regular basis may develop a negative approach to education.

Being late can be very disruptive to your child, the teacher and other children in their class.

It is difficult to develop and maintain friendships if your child is absent from school on a regular basis.

Young people may be at risk of being drawn into anti-social behaviour if absent from school.

Practical Advice

'Stop and think! Does my child need to be absent from school?'

If you suspect your child is missing school or is unhappy contact the school Learning Mentor immediately.

Make sure your child understands that you don't approve of them missing school.

Make sure your child arrives at school on time and ready to learn.

Ask them about their day, and ask about any activities coming up.

Remember always notify school if you know your child will need to be absent.

On your child's return to school arrange to speak to the Class Teacher about any learning that has been missed to help them get back on track

'If your child is an hour late for school every day they miss 190 hours of school...the same as missing 8 ½ weeks of education across the year!'

'Punctuality matters'