



Stranmillis Primary School

Attendance Policy

1. 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. At Stranmillis Primary School we will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Stranmillis Primary School provides the children in our care with a quality education that caters for their individual needs, supported by highly professional and motivated staff in pleasant and well-resourced surroundings. We believe that all the members of our school community are unique and special individuals. Our school will nurture all these individuals in their life-long journey to achieve their full and unique potential. The members of our school community will be empowered to take ownership of their role as citizens of the local and global communities. We will celebrate our self-worth, appreciate our individual talents and achievements and strive to understand and empathise with others. We will embrace diversity and individual difference and demonstrate, through our daily practice and procedures, respect for all. We will accept our responsibility to ensure that our vision is transparent in all that we do.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Stranmillis 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 Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal at Stranmillis Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

The Board of Governors provides support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.

Teaching staff monitor regularly the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of each day.

To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2013/13

Stranmillis Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. (*Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986*)

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. 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. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded 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 Stranmillis Primary School has a duty to ensure that they 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.

Family holidays during Term Time

Stranmillis 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. Teachers will not provide work for the children to complete while on holiday.

In exceptional circumstances, eg- the death of a close relative abroad, the following may be made available:

- Reading
- Spellings
- Homework
- A list of the topics the child may miss during his/her absence.

It is not possible to send home the work that will be missed in class since this is only helpful in the context of the directly taught lessons.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

At Stranmillis Primary School we take pupil absences seriously. The Principal will review whole school and individual attendance rates on a regular basis.

If a child's attendance falls below an acceptable level the Principal will:

- discuss the absences with the class teacher to determine if there are any extenuating circumstances; and
- arrange a meeting with the child's parents to discuss the level of absenteeism, the importance of good attendance and the procedures that will follow if the attendance does not improve.

If there is no improvement, then the child will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Education Welfare Service

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

Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.