

# STEWARTSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL'S



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Term 2 2023

## **CONTENTS**

Introduction

Aims

Role of the school

Rewarding good attendance and punctuality

Strategies for promoting good attendance

Strategies to tackle absenteeism

Role of the Parent / guardian

Role of the pupils

Family holidays during Term Time

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Education Welfare Service

Evaluation

## **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.

Stewartstown PS will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

This policy has been revised in accordance with DE circular 2017/15 and considering the DE Improving Pupil Attendance Strategy: Miss School = Miss Out.

## **Aims**

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Stewartstown 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.

## **School Routines**

In Stewartstown Primary we wish every child to have a positive and orderly start to their school day. Maintaining excellent attendance and coming to school on time helps to ensure routines are well established and our pupils can make good progress. To ensure the above we have a clear set of school routines which we expect all parents and pupils to follow:

- Pupils may enter the school from 8.45am- at this time members of staff are on duty and can ensure appropriate supervision.
- Morning Minding Club is available daily from 8am for £1 per child per day. Pupils must be booked in before attending.
- The school day starts at 9.00am- we expect all children to be in class at this time
- Any child arriving to school after 9.00am is late
- A child arriving to school after 9.00am will need to come to the main school entrance.

## **Role of the School**

The Principal Ms Bolton, at Stewartstown Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to their attention.

The Principal will take immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to them.

The school will recognise and reward good attendance and will provide the parents with a termly summary of their child's attendance.

## **Rewarding Good Attendance & Punctuality**

We believe that it is important that pupils realise that good attendance and punctuality is acknowledged.

All pupils who have 100% attendance in a term will receive a certificate of attendance which can form part of their Record of Achievement.

Where pupils make a significant improvement in these areas, or achieve individual targets agreed by the school and family, they will receive a certificate of achievement.

Certificates will be presented in assembly.

## **Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance**

Stewartstown Primary School is renowned for its very good quality of pastoral, academic and extra-curricular provision. Associated with this are other key strategies which the school applies to help promote good attendance:

- Positive school ethos and culture;
- Implementation of this attendance policy and target setting;
- Effective recording and monitoring of attendance;
- Additional support for poor attendees;
- Strong relationship with staff and parents/guardians;
- Links with the wider community;
- Collaboration with EWO.

## **Strategies Used to Tackle Absenteeism:**

- Positive relationships between staff and pupils;
- Positive relationship with home;
- Extra-Curricular activities;
- Supportive atmosphere;
- Referral to EWO.

The Board of Governors provide 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 regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

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

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

Stewartstown 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:

*Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full-time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs she/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 at 9:00am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on the child's attendance record.

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

From time-to-time children may need to be absent from school for other reasons such as Medical Appointments. Such absences usually only take up part of the school day. School should be informed of such absences in writing in advance, and children should be brought into school for morning registration and back to school after the appointment.

Every effort, however, should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Every day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning

100% Attendance	0 days missed	Excellent
95-99% Attendance	See above for details	Very Good- Good
95% Attendance	9 days of absence 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning lost	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 days of absence 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 days of absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning	Unacceptable

**The Tables shows the DENI Guidance, School Attendance Matters- A Parent's Guide**

## Family Holidays During Term Time

Stewartstown 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.

Parents / Carers should inform the school in writing if they are going on holiday during term time. Although we cannot authorise this absence, we appreciate the courtesy.

## Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial.

Lateness to school causes disruption to both the individual who is late, and to the pupils in their class.

Lateness can cause unnecessary anxiety and stress to the child, having to walk in late to a class that is already underway.

Arriving late to class means that they have missed out on important teachings or instructions from the class teacher.

If a child arrives late, they will be recorded as 'late after registers have closed'. **This DOES affect their attendance record as they are deemed not in attendance for the full school day.**

It is paramount that all pupils arrive to school on time before 9am.

## **Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

### **Procedures for Dealing with Poor Attendance of Punctuality**

Where the class teacher has concerns about the level or pattern of a pupil's attendance they are discussed with the Principal. Where deemed appropriate the Principal will manage the absenteeism using the following procedures:

1. Contact the family and arrange an appointment to discuss the issue in order to agree a strategy for improving attendance.
2. Should such contact fail to resolve the issue the school may refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Service for additional direction and support.
3. As a normal rule any pupil whose attendance falls below 85% during the school year will be investigated by the Educational Welfare Service.

### **Education Welfare Service**

Education and Library Boards through the Education Welfare Service have 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, as previously mentioned, below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

**A failure by parents to ensure their child's attendance can ultimately lead to prosecution.**

### **Evaluation**

The effectiveness of this policy and our procedures in monitoring and improving attendance levels is evaluated in a number of ways:

1. Parents are given a summary of their child's attendance as part of the End of Year Report.
2. The Governing Body monitor the effectiveness of this policy through Principal's reports on attendance at Governing Body meetings.
3. The annual attendance figures are published in the Governors Annual Report to Parents.
4. An officer from the Education Welfare Service regularly monitors attendance levels on a whole school and individual basis.
5. EA receive information on pupil attendance as part of the annual audit.
6. The Department of Education monitor the school's attendance statistics as part of the Annual School Census.

This Attendance Policy has been prepared in consultation with the full school staff and adopted by the Board of Governors of Stewartstown Primary School.

**Attendance Letter 1**

Date

ADDRESS

Dear

**Re: Name of Pupil and DOB**

Throughout the school year I am required to monitor the attendance of all pupils in our school. I am obliged by law to pass to the Education Welfare Officer the names of children whose attendance persistently falls below 85%.

At present (pupils name) attendance at school since September 20XX stands at XX%

The Education Welfare Officer has advised me to write to you to draw your attention to this matter. It is hoped with your support (pupil's name) attendance will increase in the coming weeks.

All staff here in Stewartstown Primary School are very supportive of (pupil name) and wish to see (him/her) achieve their full potential. If you would like to discuss how we can be of any further help please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Pastoral Care Leader

**Attendance Letter 2**

Date:

ADDRESS

Dear

**Re: Name of Pupil and DOB**

I wrote to you recently sharing our concerns with (pupil's name) attendance at school. Since this first review (pupil's name) attendance unfortunately has not improved. Our records show that there are XX unauthorised absences for your child.

At present (pupils name) attendance at school since September 20XX stands at XX%

Following a further review with the Education Welfare Officer I have been advised to inform you that your child has been referred to the Education Welfare Service. This is a supportive service which acts with a view to increase attendance at school enabling our pupils to reach their full potential.

All staff here in Stewartstown Primary School are very supportive of (pupil name) and wish to see (him/her) achieve their full potential. If you would like to discuss how we can be of any further help please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Principal

**Lateness Letter**

Date

ADDRESS

Dear

**Re: Name of Pupil and DOB**

It is of paramount importance that pupils arrive on time to school. By arriving late to school, pupils are missing out on important teacher instructions or lessons.

Lateness to school causes disruption to both the individual who is late, and to the pupils in their class.

Lateness can cause unnecessary anxiety and stress to the child, having to walk in late to a class that is already underway.

If a child arrives late, they will be recorded as 'late after registers have closed'. This affects their attendance record as they are deemed not in attendance for the full school day.

PUPIL NAME's attendance now stands at XX%

Since September they have missed XX days, and have been late XX mornings.

Having had spoken to you about our concerns, it appears that there has been no improvement.

Our concerns have been passed on to Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who has asked us to put in writing to you the importance of having PUPILS NAME in school on time each day. The EWO will pick up the case if improvement is not noted.

All staff here in Stewartstown Primary School are very supportive of PUPIL NAME and wish to see them reach their full potential. If you would like to discuss how we can be of any further help, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Principal