

*Saint Macartan's
Primary School*



Attendance Policy

2016-17

(consultation)

Regular school attendance and punctuality is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their full potential.

Saint Macartan's Primary School is committed to maintaining high levels of attendance and punctuality and has the highest expectation for the achievement of every child.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

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 he/she 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 (9.15am) and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at the close of registration (9.25am) and recorded on your child's attendance record.

If a child needs to miss school due to a special occasion (E.g. sporting/musical/religious event) the parent should seek the school's agreement well in advance and give full details.

Parents/guardians are requested to make routine medical or dental appointments outside of school hours.

In order to encourage punctuality parents can help their child by

- Being firm about bedtimes
- Encourage them to prepare the night before, those items they will need for school the next day
- Making sure they are up in time to have breakfast and to leave the house promptly

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.

PUPIL RESPONSIBILITY

At saint Macartan's we encourage children to take increasing responsibility for their attendance and punctuality.

In most cases, our children come to school on time every day. By making sure they do, you are helping to establish a good practice for the future.

Children should

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive at school on time
- Be organised and ready for work

- Inform the class teacher about any problem that may prevent them from attending school regularly and on time
- Supply a note to explain any absence when they return to school

GOVERNORS RESPONSIBILITY

The Board of Governors has overall responsibility for pupil attendance, but on a day today basis, this responsibility is delegated to the Principal. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the schools attendance and lateness policy. The Principal reports regularly to the Governors on these matters.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY

The school should

- Make daily accurate recordings of attendance
- Analyse attendance trends monthly
- Correspond with parents if there is a concern
- Provide the Educational Welfare Officer with a printout monthly, of all children who have an attendance percentage below 88% or below
- Complete a Referral to the E.W.O. if deemed necessary
- Provide an annual attendance figure on each school report in June
- Recognise good attendance by providing 100% Attendance Certificate which can be included in a child's Record of Achievement

FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Saint Macartan's Primary School discourages holidays during term time, due to the impact they have on pupil's learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised. Schoolwork/Homework will not be provided for holidays authorised or not.

REGISTRATION

All children should be seated in school at 9.15am. Attendance information will be taken by the class teacher and recorded daily by the secretary using SIMS. A child who is late before registration closes (9.25am) will receive an L mark which, while officially recording the child as late, does not record them as being absent for the morning session, however children recorded late after registration closes (9.25am) will receive a U mark which officially records the child as late and records them as being absent for the first session.

CATAGORISING ABSENCE

Authorised Absence

Examples include:-

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical appointments
- Exceptional family circumstances (E.g. wedding or funeral)
- Representing their club/school/county/country in a particular event (E.g. sport, music etc.)

Unauthorised absence

Examples include:-

- Birthdays
- Visiting relatives
- Looking after other members of the family
- A pupil is unnecessarily kept off school
- Shopping
- Family holiday/long weekend break
- No written reason on return to school after absence

LATENESS

If a child regularly enters a class after 9.25am there is a threefold effect:

- The child becomes the centre of attention and is often embarrassed
- If a child enters the classroom after 9.25am the teacher will often have started a lesson and this has to be interrupted so the late child can be registered, have dinner ordered and have money collected. This can cause great interruption to the teacher and children who have settled already.
- The teaching and learning of all the children in the class can be adversely affected by a regular latecomer.

PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING NON ATTENDANCE

At the end of each month the school will run:

- each child's attendance report
- each classes' attendance report
- whole school attendance report

Each teacher will be asked to clearly highlight any child where there is a concern- normally where attendance falls below 90% or a regular pattern of poor attendance e.g. Mondays or Fridays

- The teacher will talk to the child or parent at this stage. Attendance may improve and no further action will follow. However, where there is persistent low attendance or a regular pattern, parents will be written to or invited to a meeting.
- If the situation remains unresolved, the school will report the case to Education and Welfare Officer

MONITORING LATENESS

As with attendance, lateness is also analysed by the class teacher and/or Principal. At the end of each month after consultation with the child's teacher a letter will be sent to the parents if the child receives 5 or more L or U marks in one month. As with monitoring attendance, a similar process will be followed if there are any concerns regarding punctuality.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Attendance percentages can be misleading

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
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 missed	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 missed	unacceptable