



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Schools have a duty, as set out in the Registration and Attendance of Pupils Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1974, to keep details of their pupils' attendance and have arrangements in place to address attendance issues. The Education (School Development Plans) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010 state that schools should include strategies for promoting attendance in their School Development Plan.

(DENI, Miss School = Miss Out, December 2016)

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. Fane Street Primary will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Our Vision

In Fane Street Primary School, we aim to work in partnership with parents to provide a high quality education for all, within a caring and respectful environment. We will celebrate pupils' achievements encouraging them to experiment and take risks in their learning, enabling them to become independent, life-long learners who take pride in their work.

Aims

- 1 To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Fane Street 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 Educational Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal at Fane Street Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers and non-teaching staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/her attention.

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 daily. If a child needs to leave school for an appointment in the afternoon they will then record this on the class attendance record and the secretary will then record this on the computer system.

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 2015/02:

<https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/2015-02-Attendance-Guidance-Absence-Recording-By-Schools.pdf>

Fane Street Primary 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 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 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 8.55am 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 the Vice Principal/ Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

It is important to note that non-emergency appointments should, where possible, be made outside of school hours. It is understood that this is not always possible and so, occasionally, urgent appointments will have to occur during the school day. A note requesting permission to get out of school must be sent to school. It is not normally necessary for pupils to stay off school for the whole day to attend an appointment and so we would expect parents to bring pupils into school/back to school before and after their appointment. Parents should present an appointment card to the school prior to all medical/dental appointments unless an emergency appointment has been made. It is not appropriate or permissible for children to leave school to attend a birthday party etc.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Fane Street 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.

Absence Procedures

- 1 Absence from school requires the parent/guardian to inform the school of the reason for absence. The school should be informed, in advance, of any dental/medical appointment that necessitates a child being absent from school for part or all of the day.
- 2 Where no reason for absence is forthcoming, the School office will send out a reminder note to the parent. Then it becomes the responsibility of the class teacher, to ascertain the reason for absence. This may be done by contacting the



parent/guardian by note, phone or seeing the parent/guardian when the child is being left at or collected from school. If still no reason is forthcoming, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised. If attendance is causing concern (falling below 90%), and the reasons given are unsatisfactory, this concern should be communicated to the parent.

Internal Procedures to Facilitate the Implementation of the Attendance Policy

- 1 The class attendance sheet should be completed accurately each day.
- 2 'N' marks should be investigated as soon as the child returns to school.
- 3 An 'Unexplained Absence' sheet will be issued weekly. Teachers should annotate this in light of information received about such absences.
- 4 Where no note or reason for absence is received, teachers should contact the parent to seek an explanation for the absence.
- 5 Where attendance does not improve and falls below 85%, the Principal will follow the further procedures outlined in the attendance policy.

Family Holidays during Term Time

Holidays must not be arranged during term time. Fane Street 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.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Where accumulated absence falls below 85%, the Principal will contact the parent/guardian. If attendance remains problematic, the parent/guardian will be invited to school to discuss the matter. Parents will receive a letter advising them that failure to redress this situation will result in their child's attendance being discussed with the Educational Welfare Officer which could likely result in a referral being made to this agency. Should the parent/guardian fail to respond, or if there is no improvement in the child's attendance, the matter will be referred to the E.W.O.

Educational 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 below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Rewards

Attendance Cups are awarded to classes on a monthly basis. These are for the Class with the highest attendance and the Most Improved Class for that Month. Prizes are awarded at the end of the year to children whose attendance sits at 95% or above.

NB. Fane Street Primary School participated in *The ETI Good Practice Report* which may be found at: <https://www.etini.gov.uk/news/attendance-schools-eti-good-practice-report-and-case-studies>. Our practice was commended by the Visiting Inspector.