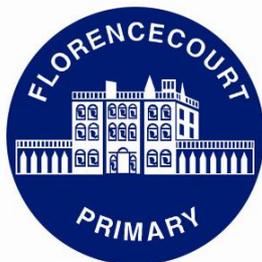


# Florencecourt Primary School



## Pupil Attendance Policy

*Shining from the inside out  
So the World might see....*

Date approved by Board of Governors: **December 2018**

Next policy review date: **December 2020** (or if circumstances alter)

Signed  (Chairperson of Board of Governors)

## **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.

Florencecourt PS will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. Statistics available from the Education Authority for NI show that for 2015-16, the average attendance in primary schools in Northern Ireland was 95.5%. In Florencecourt PS, our average attendance for that and subsequent years was above the average. We aim to work hard to ensure our attendance stays above 95% in line with government recommendations which links greater attendance to many success factors in life including achieving greater success in exam results and building confidence and self-esteem in young people.

The Pupils, Staff and Governors at Florencecourt Primary School seek to be a learning community who encourage one another to be all that they can be. To be individually and collectively a positive people who together radiate a caring, supportive and effective model of education in the communities which the school and nursery serve.

Florencecourt Primary School and Little Bridges Community Nursery aim to:

- Provide a challenging, active and fulfilling learning experience for all children to experience success in learning and to achieve the highest possible standards in academic, sporting, social, cultural, moral and spiritual terms.
- To equip and educate all children in both skills and knowledge to be confident in their abilities, to develop mastery over their own learning and to have the self-confidence to become independent learners who can express their learning in both school, home and the wider community.
- Empower children to understand how being part of our school family, contributes to a strong sense of their own belonging and identity and an understanding of how all children can contribute to our local, national and global community.
- Through the delivery of the Pre-school and Primary curriculum to equip all children with the moral, spiritual and social tools they require as they progress through further education, into adulthood and become lifelong learners.
- To build a firm foundation on which children can grow as individuals, experience success and make responsible choices for themselves. To produce children who make contributions to the society and community they are part of and will become part by their actions, character and contributions in an ever changing world.

## **Aims of Pupil Attendance Policy:**

1. To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the whole school community – teachers, parents and pupils.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance and punctuality.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To provide a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
5. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Florencecourt Primary School and reduce unauthorised absences.
6. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and other agencies in the implementation of this policy.

## **Role of the School**

The Principal at Florencecourt Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; class teachers and/or the school secretary should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to their attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item when required.

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

The Principal and staff will actively seek to reward pupils for their good attendance. This includes rewarding 100% attendance, rewarding pupils who improve their attendance rates over a set time and rewarding groups or classes for good attendance. Rewards may include specific awards including certificates, stickers or additional activities. Attendance statistics used to determine eligibility will usually be based on SIMS data although anecdotal evidence will also be considered in exceptional circumstances e.g. where a child has been hospitalised for a period due to illness yet has good levels of attendance otherwise. The system/s used will make reasonable allowance for influencing circumstances.

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2018/12, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/DE%20Circular%202018%2012%20-%20Attendance%20Guidance%20%26%20Absence%20Recording%20by%20Schools%20-%20Updated%20for%20Sept%202018.pdf>

Florencecourt Primary School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

### **Role of Parent**

Parents have a legal duty<sup>1</sup> to ensure their child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school. It is a parent'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/guardians to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on each child's attendance record.

Breakfast Club is available for pupils from 8:30am.

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 as soon as possible.

### **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at Florencecourt Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If a child has been absent from school, their parent/guardian must provide an explanation for their absence on the day of their return (see below).

### **Absence Procedures**

All parents/guardians are required to send in a written note which provides a clear reason for any absence. Alternately, an e-mail, a phone call or direct conversation with the school secretary, Principal or other member of staff should take place which explains the absence. Prompt communication is appreciated.

### **Family holidays during Term Time**

Following Education Authority (NI) guidelines, Florencecourt Primary School discourages holidays during term time due to the significant impact they can have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised. Parents can get a form to request an 'exceptional circumstances' absence from the school office. It is advised that this request is discussed with the Principal, who will then respond to the request in writing.

## Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

- It is a parent'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, email, etc (see above) 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. The school will not provide work to be carried out on unauthorised absences e.g. family holidays, unless in exceptional circumstances
- Pupils are expected to be in school by 9:00am, when registration begins. Lateness is officially recorded after registration closes. After 3 late marks, parents will be contacted regarding punctuality.
- Parents are encouraged to inform school in advance of planned absences, for example medical or dental appointments, either by written note to the teacher or by telephoning the school.
- Where a child has to leave school for a medical appointment, parents should make all reasonable efforts to ensure the child comes back in to school where possible.
- Medical appointments and other appointments, particularly when this happens on a regular basis, may affect a pupil's attendance and reasonable efforts should be made to arrange these outside of school hours.
- The school will provide termly attendance updates using a Red/Amber/Green model for simplicity to assist parents in understanding their child's level of attendance.
- Percentage attendance is recorded on the pupils' report at the end of the year.
- Attendances are monitored. Any child whose absence gives cause for concern will be contacted by the principal or by the child's class teacher. This may be in the form of a call, a meeting, a note or letter.
- In the case of persistent unexplained absences or where the attendance has dropped below 85%, the school may contact the Education Welfare Officer to seek further guidance or advice.

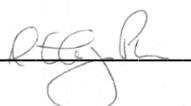
## Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

If a pupil's absence causes concern, and/or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, they will be referred to the EWS, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

<sup>1</sup> Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

Signature:  (Principal)

Signature:  (Chair, Board of Governors)

Date: 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Review Date: December 2020