

FRANCISCAN PRIMARY SCHOOL & CHILDREN'S CENTRE

School Attendance Policy

Our vision is to provide an education of the highest quality within the context and understanding of shared values; care, consideration, cooperation, honesty, responsibility, respect and openness. Overall as a school we endorse UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and this is at the heart of our school ethos: rights and respect in all relationships, whether between children or children and adults. We aim to empower children to engage in collaborative decision making and develop positive relationships on all levels across the school community.

This policy has been developed for use by school staff and officers in the Education Welfare Service to ensure best possible attendance outcomes for all pupils at the school. It is also intended to provide clear structures for attendance practice and to provide guidance for Governors, Parents / Carers and pupils.

The school staff and governors of Franciscan Primary School, alongside the LA, believe that it is essential for all pupils to attend school regularly and avoid any absence. Any loss of time at school can adversely affect a child's attainment and all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly and on each day the school is open to pupils;
- Arrive at registration;
- Attend all the required lessons and engage with the education being provided;
- Arrive at school appropriately prepared for the day;
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher any problems that might deter them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;

- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school each day punctually and properly prepared for the school day;
- Contact the school whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend school, on the first day of absence, and send a note on return to school;
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- Monitor every pupil's attendance
- Contact parents as soon as possible on the first day of absence where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes giving a reason for the absence and the likely date of return and enter on the computer
- Emphasise the importance of good attendance and take positive steps to encourage it;
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- Refer irregular or concerning patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service;
- Meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

Holidays

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. **No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.** As previously stated absence from school (whatever the reason) can adversely affect a child's ability to benefit fully from their educational opportunities and to keep up with programmes of study.

The Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having considered:

- The child's record of attendance;
- That the holiday does not exceed the maximum of ten school days in any one year (unless it is felt that the experience would be of beneficial educational value to the child or it is an exceptional circumstance);
- The time of the holiday, ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any important examinations/assessments.

Encouraging Good Attendance

Franciscan Primary School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By celebrating good and improved attendance via class awards and certificates
- Publishing class attendance and punctuality in school newsletter every week
- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;

- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill;
- By requiring pupils to regularly record their own attendance and punctuality;
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 11am the school will endeavour to contact them that day. If the family are not on the telephone, a letter will be sent. If there are concerns a same day home visit may be made.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If, by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers or invite them into school to discuss their concerns. The school will tell parents/carers that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.
- The EWS will make repeated efforts to contact the parent/carer and establish why the pupil is not attending school. If the problem is quickly resolved and the pupil returns to school, or if a legitimate reason is provided for the absence, the EWS will continue to monitor the situation. If problems appear to be ongoing an Education Welfare Officer will be allocated to work with the family.
- The Education Welfare Officer will make arrangements to meet with the parent/carer, at home, in school or at the Town Hall, to discuss the reasons for the pupil's non-attendance. The EWO will support and advise the parent/carer and the school, with a view to resolving any difficulties and improving the pupil's attendance. SAP meetings with EWO, attendance officer and Senco are arranged several times a year to support families.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWO can result in further or legal
- action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school they inform Franciscan School staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- The address of the new school;
- The new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. If a parent / carer appears to have removed their child from school or the child has completely stopped attending without providing the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

School Organisation

In order for the School's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff will make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving consistent messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

Head Teacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- Agree a whole school attendance policy;
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- Ensure that key staff have time-tabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with the EWS and appropriate access to attendance data;
- Consult and liaise closely with the EWO on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay;
- Work in close collaboration with the EWO during their termly/half termly register analysis;
- Institute an attendance award scheme with assemblies, certificates and rewards;
- Ensure that attendance percentages/graphs are displayed around the school and to set whole school attendance targets;
- Monitor and evaluate attendance with the EWO.
- Hold School Attendance Panels where appropriate, in liaison with the school EWO

Phase Leaders to:

- Reinforce good practice at year group meetings;
- Share the class teacher concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the Education Welfare Officer.

Class Teachers to:

- Complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily;
- Follow up any unexplained non-attendance where appropriate
- Record all reasons for absences in the register;
- Inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance/ deputy head teacher of concerns;
- Monitor pupils whose attendance is of concern to ensure immediate follow up of any further absences from school or individual lessons
- Discuss absences with a pupil on their return to school to ascertain the reason behind the absence and minimise the likelihood of further absence
- Be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and report these concerns as soon as possible to the deputy head teacher