

STRAIDBILLY PRIMARY SCHOOL



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date Ratified by Governors: March 2023

Date of Review: March 2026

Mission Statement

‘A learning community, moving forward together, embracing the full potential of all pupils and staff.’

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.

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

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Straidbilly 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 the Education Welfare Service.
5. To develop a culture that promotes regular attendance
6. To implement a system that monitors attendance/absences & acts early to address patterns of absence.

Role of the School Principal

The Principal of Straidbilly Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

Role of the Board of Governors

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

Role of Teaching Staff

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions.

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link:

www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools

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

Role of School Secretary

The school secretary will monitor and collate attendance records on a monthly basis. Attendance of **90%** or below is regarded as persistent absence and will be closely monitored by the principal. Children who are identified as falling below **90%** attendance will receive a letter from the school informing them of their need to improve attendance. The principal may invite parents for an informal meeting to offer help or advice for improving attendance. When attendance falls below **85%**, the school is obliged to bring the matter to the attention of the School's Educational Welfare Service, which will offer support in resolving the attendance issue.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents/guardians have a legal duty 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/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent's/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 either a written note or a Seesaw message 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.

At Straidbilly Primary School parents should phone the school office to inform them of any absences and provide a written note when the child returns. Parents can also send a Seesaw message to the class teacher.

Pupils are expected to be in school at **8.55am** for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness (**9.10am**) is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.

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.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Straidbilly Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note or Seesaw message from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, this must be reported to the school as soon as possible. A verbal explanation, phone call or Seesaw message will be passed on to the class teacher who will mark the attendance register accordingly using codes.

If no written explanation has been provided, parents must provide a note when the child returns to school. If no written explanation is provided, an **Absence Notification Form (Appendix 1)** will be sent home. This must be completed and sent back to the class teacher for the next school day.

Medical Appointments

As far as possible, hospital/dental appointments should be made outside of school hours to ensure no disruption to children's learning. However, if this is not possible, parents must provide a signed written note that clearly states the reason for leaving school, time of collection and planned return to school.

Pupils must, within reason, attend school before the appointment. Pupils will receive a 'present' mark for appointments made within school hours.

Prolonged Illness

If a child is absent for a prolonged period, due to illness, the school will endeavour to provide educational material and support. The principal, class teacher and parents will work together to ensure the child's learning is maintained as much as possible

Family holidays during Term

Straidbilly 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. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised. Pupils **will not** be provided with homework on these occasions.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

At Straidbilly Primary School we will work with parents and pupils to promote regular attendance. Parents can access the document '**Parents Guide to Pupil Attendance**' (**Department of Education**) which can be found at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/attendance-matters-a-parents-guide.pdf> and on our school website. This is a practical document outlining how parents can help their child to attend school regularly.

High attendance is expected from all our pupils. Attendance of **90%** or below is regarded as persistent absence and will be closely monitored by the principal. Children who are identified as falling below **90%** attendance will receive a letter from the school informing them of their need to improve attendance. The principal may invite parents for an informal meeting to offer help or advice for improving attendance. When attendance falls below **85%**, the school is obliged to bring the matter to the attention of the School's Educational Welfare Service, which will offer support in resolving the attendance issue.

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, 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.



ABSENCE NOTIFICATION FORM

Name of Pupil_____

Class / Teacher Name_____

Date(s) of Absence_____

Reason_____

Signed (Parent / Guardian)_____

Date_____

Please Note – This form must be completed for each period of pupil absence and returned to the school immediately.

