



## Pupil Attendance Policy

**CHAPEL ROAD  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **Introduction**

Chapel Road PS recognises the importance of punctual and regular attendance for all members of the school community. We are committed to maintaining high levels of attendance to ensure the most effective outcomes for all pupils.

Chapel Road PS creates a caring and happy atmosphere and as such we believe all pupils will want to attend school. Regular attendance promotes self-confidence, independence, self-discipline and a sense of responsibility for themselves. By establishing good habits at a young age our pupils will be prepared for future opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Currently our school attendance record for the year 2015/16 is 95% which is average. Our target is 96% for 2016/17.

## **THE MANAGEMENT OF ATTENDANCE**

The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 states that:

*"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable to his/her age ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."*

### **Parental/Guardian Role and Responsibilities**

**We expect the following from parents:**

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day, with all necessary items and to check that homework has been completed.
- To contact the school on the first day of their child's absence giving the reasons and expected duration of the absence.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's attendance or performance in school.
- To provide us with a note signed and dated explaining the absence on the day that the pupil returns to school. (See appendix 2-A note does not automatically ensure an authorised absence.)

### **School Role and Responsibilities**

**Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Prompt action on any problem notified to us.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- An annual summary of the child's attendance. (included on annual pupil report)

## **Governor Role and Responsibilities**

The Board of Governors has the ultimate responsibility for school attendance but on a day-to-day basis this is delegated to the Principal. The Board of Governors has a responsibility to monitor school attendance and the effectiveness of the school's Attendance Policy and Procedures. The Principal shares regular reports on attendance issues with the Governors.

## **Education Authority Role and Responsibilities**

The Education Authority through their Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents and carers meet their own responsibility towards their children's education. If they do not, the Education Authority is duty bound to use the legal processes of Court action, to uphold a parent's duty to make sure that the young people in their care receive an education.

## **MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

Registration is taken twice daily-morning and afternoon.

Attendance information is recorded electronically on the Department of Education's system. Attendance levels are also monitored on an individual and a whole school basis.

### **Registration and Punctuality**

Class begins for all pupils at 9.00 am. For this reason all pupils should aim to be in the school hall for 8.55am. Pupils who are frequently late disrupt their own education and that of others in their class.

Morning registration begins at 9.00 a.m. promptly and is completed by the class teacher. The morning register remains open until 9.15 am. Pupils who come to school after this time without prior arrangement or without approved reason will be marked absent for the morning session and this will appear as an unauthorised absence on their school record. Any pupil who is late on more than two occasions in a half term will be referred to the Principal.

Please see appendix 1 for important information on absences.

### **Rewarding Good Attendance & Punctuality**

High levels of attendance will be recognised annually with Gold, Silver & Bronze certificates. All pupils who have 100%/99% & 98% attendance will receive a certificate of attendance which can form part of their Record of Achievement.

Where pupils make a significant improvement in these areas, or achieve individual targets agreed by the school and family, they will also receive a certificate of achievement as part of our weekly Award Assembly.

Annual attendance will also be recognised with the following certificates:

100%- Gold Certificate

99%-Silver Certificate

98%-Bronze Certificate

## **Procedures for Dealing with Poor Attendance of Punctuality**

Where concerns arise about the level or pattern of a pupil's attendance the class teacher will discuss these with the Principal. Where deemed appropriate the Principal will manage the absenteeism using the following procedures:

- Contact the family and arrange an appointment to discuss the issue in order to agree a strategy for improving attendance.
- If such contact fails to resolve the issue the school has a duty to refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Service for additional direction and advice.
- Pupil whose attendance falls below 85% during the school year will be investigated by the Educational Welfare Service.

It is hoped that parents/carers, school staff and statutory authorities can work closely to overcome any problems which may affect a pupil's attendance. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, the school should be contacted to allow any issues to be quickly addressed. A reluctance to attend, leading to an absence supported by a parent, can give the impression that attendance does not matter and may lead to the development of a poor pattern of attendance.

Parents may also seek advice and direction from the Educational Welfare Service.

The local Education Welfare Office is at:

### **A failure by parents to ensure their child's attendance can ultimately lead to prosecution.**

This Attendance Policy has been prepared and agreed in consultation with the full school staff and has been adopted by the Board of Governors of Chapel Road Primary School.

Chairperson: Mr Philip Mc Daid

**This policy is monitored and evaluated for effectiveness as part of the annual review.**

**Review date June 2018**

## Important-Absences Explained

### Schools have a legal responsibility to report any pupil whose absence falls below 85%.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved activity off site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either **authorised or unauthorised**. Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents/ carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is required in writing.

#### **Authorised Absences**

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions where the school has been consulted and can approve the absence.

Examples include:

- Illness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments during school hours
- Bereavement
- Exceptional family circumstances

#### **Unauthorised Absences**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. On these occasions the school cannot approve the absence.

Examples include:

- parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- family holiday
- when no written reason is provided
- truancy
- absences which have never been properly explained
- pupils who arrive at school late after registration has closed ( marked absent for the morning session)

#### **Absence for Medical reasons**

Appointments, whenever possible, should be made out of teaching and learning time.

If an appointment has to be made during school hours, you must report to the school reception. The secretary will phone the class teacher to send you r child to reception. You must then sign your child out of school using the Record of Pupil Movement sheet. Please state clearly the reason for absence. Frequent absences for medical reasons, may require medical evidence in the form of a doctor's letter. This is especially important if attendance falls below 85%.

Pupils are expected to return to school following their appointment whenever possible.

If a pupil has a medical condition that may affect attendance and punctuality parents/guardians are asked to contact the school to discuss possible arrangements with their child's class teacher.

**Family Holidays during Term Time:**

Currently there is no legislation in Northern Ireland with regard to holidays in term time (as there is in the rest of the United Kingdom) However, if a pupil's attendance falls below 85% in a school year, we are obliged to contact the Educational Welfare Officer.

Chapel Road Primary School discourages holidays during term time due to the impact that they have on pupils' learning. Parents/guardians must contact the school, prior to booking any holiday to explain the need to remove a pupil from school during term time. The contact should be in the form of a letter addressed to the Principal.

**Some Important Attendance Figures**

**EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS -MISS SCHOOL-MISS OUT!**

Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning. 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

Appendix 2 -additional copies can be obtained from the class teacher/school office or downloaded from the school website

<b>Chapel Road PS</b> <b>Monitoring Attendance</b>		
<i>Please complete and return to class teacher following any absence from school.</i>		
<b>Pupil's Name:</b>  <b>Class:</b>	<b>Absent from:</b>  <b>To:</b>	
<b>Reason for Absence:</b>   		
<b>Parent/Guardian Signature:</b>  		
<b>Date:</b>		

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