

# ST COLUMBAN'S COLLEGE PROPOSED PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY



## Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial to raising standards in education and ensuring every child has access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

St Columban's College will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

## School's Mission Statement

- To provide a caring Christian Catholic environment, conducive to enjoyable learning, in which pupils are given opportunities to grow in confidence/self-esteem and to achieve challenging yet realistic goals.
- To make pupils aware of their own dignity and personal qualities
- To develop the ability to convey positive attitudes towards others, including people of other cultures and nations
- To provide, a broad balanced curriculum in which all pupils have the opportunity to develop and achieve positively
- To develop in pupils the attitudes, understanding and skills that will prepare them for adult life

## School Aims

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at St Columban's College
- To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils
- To promote good relations with the welfare service

## Role of the School

- The Vice-Principal with responsibility for Pastoral care will have the overall responsibility for attendance in the school. He is to keep the Principal informed of attendance matters and should liaise with the Educational Welfare Service.
- The Board of Governors will provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed on the agenda for meetings.
- Teaching staff will monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of the morning and the afternoon registration sessions.
- To enable the school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201502-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools>

St Columban's College is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

## **Role of Parent**

- Parents 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 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 09:10 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 on your child's attendance record.
- If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the form teacher or Year Head to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

## **Role of Pupils**

- Each pupil at St Columban's must attend school punctually and regularly.
- Pupils must remain on the school premises for the duration of the school day. Early absence from school is discouraged and pupils will only be permitted out of school early if they have a signed note from their parent/guardian and are collected by a parent/guardian. Absences in the afternoon are recorded and count toward a pupil's attendance record.
- 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**

- Parents/Guardians are required to notify the school with a note which provides a clear reason for any absence.
- Early absence is discouraged. A note providing a clear reason for early absence must be signed by the Principal or Vice-Principal. Pupils must be collected from school by a parent/guardian. Pupils are required to leave the note in the office and sign the 'early leaves' book. If possible pupils should return to school after the appointment.

## **Family Holidays during Term Time**

- St Columban's 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**

- If a pupil is absent, contact will be made either by telephone or text message to the parent/guardian of the absent pupil through the secretary's office.

- If contact is not made; the pupil is to bring in an note explaining clearly the reason for absence. This is required on the first day of the pupil's return and should be signed and dated by parent/guardian
- Pupils whose attendance falls into the 90-95% range will be sent a letter concerning their attendance.
- Pupils below 85% attendance will be referred to the Educational Welfare Services if appropriate.
- Attendance will be monitored daily by form teachers and monthly by year heads and the vice-principal (pastoral).

### **Education Welfare Service**

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

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85%, 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.

Signature – Principal

Date

Signature – Chair, Board of Governors

Date

*This policy will be reviewed annually*