

# STEWARTSTOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL'S



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

April 2014

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## **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.

*Stewartstown PS* 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 Stewartstown 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 Education Welfare Service.

## **Role of the School**

The Principals, Mr Marlin and Ms Bolton, at *Stewartstown Primary School* have overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to their attention.

The Principals will take immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to them. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody, other than the Principals, without the consent of the student or his/her parents). The school will recognise and reward good attendance and will provide the parents with an annual summary of their child's attendance.

## **Rewarding Good Attendance & Punctuality**

We believe that it is important that pupils realise that good attendance and punctuality is acknowledged.

All pupils who have 100% attendance in a term 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 receive a certificate of achievement. Certificates will be presented in assembly.

## **Strategies for promoting good attendance**

Stewartstown Primary School is renowned for its very good quality of pastoral, academic and extra-curricular provision. Associated with this are other key strategies which the school applies to help promote good attendance:

- Positive school ethos and culture;
- Implementation of this attendance policy and target setting;
- Effective recording and monitoring of attendance;
- Additional support for poor attendees;
- Strong relationship with staff and parents/guardians;
- Links with the wider community;
- Collaboration with EWO.

## **Strategies used to tackle absenteeism:**

- Positive relationships between staff and pupils;
- Positive relationship with home;
- Extra-Curricular activities;
- Supportive atmosphere;
- Referral to EWO.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.

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

To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2013/13

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

*Stewartstown Primary School* is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

## **Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

*Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs she/he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.*

## **(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)**

It is a parent/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 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 9:10am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on the child's attendance record.

If a child appears reluctant to attend school that child's parents should be encouraged to discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both parent(s) and child receive maximum support.

## **Role of Pupils**

At Stewartstown Primary School we encourage children to take increasing responsibility for themselves.

### **We expect the following from all our pupils:**

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

## **Family holidays during Term Time**

*Stewartstown 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.

## **Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

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

Where the class teacher has concerns about the level or pattern of a pupil's attendance they are discussed with the Principals. Where deemed appropriate the Principals will manage the absenteeism using the following procedures:

1. Contact the family and arrange an appointment to discuss the issue in order to agree a strategy for improving attendance.
2. Should such contact fail to resolve the issue the school may refer the matter to the Educational Welfare Service for additional direction and support.
3. As a normal rule any pupil whose attendance falls below 85% during the school year will be investigated by the Educational Welfare Service.

## **Education Welfare Service**

Education and Library Boards through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education

Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls, as previously mentioned, below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

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

## EVALUATION

**The effectiveness of this policy and our procedures in monitoring and improving attendance levels is evaluated in a number of ways:**

1. Parents are given a summary of their child's attendance as part of the End of Year Report.
2. The Governing Body monitor the effectiveness of this policy through Principal's reports on attendance at Governing Body meetings.
3. The annual attendance figures are published in the Governors Annual Report to Parents.
4. An officer from the Education Welfare Service regularly monitors attendance levels on a whole school and individual basis.
5. SELB receive information on pupil attendance as part of the annual audit.
6. The Department of Education monitor the school's attendance statistics as part of the Annual School Census.

This Attendance Policy has been prepared in consultation with the full school staff and adopted by the Board of Governors of Stewartstown Primary School at a meeting held on.....

Signature – Principal

Signature – Chair, Board of Governors