



Pupil Attendance Policy

2020-2021

Everyone in Saint Fanchea's College is committed to providing a caring environment where pupils will achieve to their full potential. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from the education provided, good attendance and punctuality are crucial. In Saint Fanchea's we will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible. We will convey to parents and pupils the importance of good attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to develop a close partnership between school, parents and the Education Welfare Service.

A whole school target for attendance has been set at **93%** and this will be reviewed at the start of each academic year. This target will be used to monitor individual and class attendance on a monthly basis. Each pupil has a personal target of **95%**.

Pupils who achieve 100% attendance for the full school year will receive a special reward and they also receive a certificate and a 100% attendance badge. At the end of each month Form teachers award points on the Behaviour Module in SIMs, as points accumulate pupils are rewarded.

Procedures

1. The Assistant Principal, Mrs Harron has overall responsibility for managing the procedures for monitoring pupil attendance across the college.
2. The Clerical Officer, Mrs Catherine Cadden will have responsibility for collating monthly attendance rates for all pupils across the college and inputting this data into a central pupil database.
3. If a pupil is absent, parents/carers are requested to contact the school (either by letter or telephone) preferably by the third day of absence to explain the circumstances. If no message has been received to explain the absence contact with the home may be made.
4. Any pupil requesting absence from school for part of a day or for a whole day or days must seek permission by bringing a note written and signed by her parent/carer giving the reason for the request. This note must be presented to the form teacher at Assembly. The form teacher will complete a permission slip and return it to the pupil. This is then presented to the Assistant Principal, Mrs

Harron, immediately after Assembly and they will countersign the slip if permission is granted.

5. Medical, dental, optical or other such appointments should where possible **not** be arranged during school hours. If an appointment cannot be arranged outside school hours it is necessary to bring in a letter from a parent/carer giving details of the date and time of the appointment (ideally 24 hours in advance) – this may be accompanied by an appointment card.
6. Any pupil who is likely to be late arriving at school for a valid reason should aim to notify the office by telephone. She must make every effort to come to school for the remainder of the school day and report to the general office on arrival. A note of explanation is required for all pupils arriving after 9.30am.
7. Holidays should not be taken during term-time. Pupils who miss school examination papers due to being on holiday will not normally be permitted to sit the examination papers on their return and teachers will not provide work for pupils who are on holiday during term-time
8. Pupils absent from school due to illness or other circumstances must bring a note written and signed by a parent/carer to explain the reason for absence. This letter should include pupil's name, class and date/s of absence. This note is given to the form teacher at Assembly on the day the pupil returns to school. Absences which are not supported by a note are considered unauthorised and may be considered as truanting.
9. Teachers may phone homes on occasions to ascertain a reason for absence
10. In situations where there are significant concerns about a pupil's attendance, a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Officer

These procedures will be followed in the vast majority of cases but there may be occasions when individual circumstances require a different approach. At all times the action taken by the school in consultation with the Education Welfare Officer will be in the best interest of the pupil.

<p>Parents should be aware of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance.</p> <p>Parents should read and adhere to the Attendance Policy and procedures in St Fanchea's College and support their children to understand and follow the rules.</p> <p>Parents should support the efforts of St Fanchea's College to prioritise school attendance.</p> <p>Parents should co-operate with and support St Fanchea's College if they recommend actions to address their child's poor attendance.</p> <p>Parents should be aware of the link between pupil attendance levels and their subsequent academic attainment.</p> <p>Legal action can be taken, where appropriate, to ensure parents fulfil their legal responsibilities to ensure their child receives an appropriate education.</p>	<p>St Fanchea's College will ensure a Pupil Attendance Policy is in place, approved by the Board of Governors.</p> <p>St Fanchea's College will ensure that all pupils and parents are aware of and understand the Attendance Policy and what it means to them.</p> <p>St Fanchea's College will include school attendance targets in the school development plan and ensure pupil attendance is on the agenda at Board of Governors' meetings.</p> <p>St Fanchea's College will promote the importance of school attendance and its link with attainment.</p> <p>St Fanchea's College will engage with pupils in relation to potential barrier to attending such as the appropriateness of the curriculum.</p> <p>St Fanchea's College will enhance the capacity of teachers and support staff to understand and support pupils with attendance problems.</p>
<p>Education Authority (Western Division)</p>	<p>Department of Education/ETI</p>
<p>The EA will provide advice and support to St Fanchea's College in their development and delivery of approaches in their management of attendance.</p> <p>The Education Welfare Service will support referred pupils and their families to stay engaged with education</p> <p>The Education Welfare Service will work in partnership with the young people, their families, schools, other education services as well as statutory and voluntary agencies.</p>	<p>The Department of Education will provide strategic direction on improving attendance.</p> <p>The Department of Education will ensure that all the Department's policies and initiatives promote regular attendance at school, whenever possible.</p> <p>The ETI will formally assess and evaluate the effectiveness of all aspects of leadership in St Fanchea's College (including the management of attendance) as part of the ETI school inspection process.</p>



Indicators of School Leadership committed to prioritising attendance

St Fanchea's College has an attendance policy that is documented and accessible for all parents and pupils. This policy reflects each school's duty to keep details of their pupil's attendance and have arrangements in place to address attendance issues.

The attendance policy contains challenging targets which are also part of the School Development Plan. These targets should be monitored regularly at Board of Governors' meetings.

The Senior Leadership Team are proactive in implementing a range of strategies to improve attendance at a whole school level or in their targeting of additional support measures for those struggling with regular attendance including curriculum adjustments or personal education plans.

A clear commitment exists within the Senior Leadership Team to the promotion of regular attendance and to communicate the impact of non-attendance at all appropriate opportunities to staff, pupils and parents.

The Senior Leadership Team are able to identify if areas of its school policies and practices may be impacting adversely on pupil attendance and take action to reduce the impact.

Attendance is a consideration when determining school improvement plans and resource allocations from within delegated school budgets.

All staff understand their role in managing and improving attendance.

The Senior Leadership Team will monitor, evaluate and improve the management of attendance in St Fanchea's College on an ongoing basis. They will understand that circumstances within a school evolve over time and approaches to attendance management need to change to take this into account.

The importance of the link between a pupil's attendance and their potential future attainment is promoted with parents.

The Senior Leadership Team is flexible in how they manage cases of poor attendance taking account of all relevant factors both in the pupil's school life and home life.

Early Intervention - Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/Pupils	Schools
Parents should be aware of the aim of schools in preventing the establishment of long-term patterns of poor attendance through early intervention.	St Fanchea's College will robustly follow up on all pupil absences and lateness. Monitor post-registration pupil absence and advise parents

<p>Parents should let the school know of any issues that may impact upon attendance as early as possible.</p> <p>Parents should recognise the role that can be played by parents of young children in helping their children to shape a constructive attitude towards school attendance.</p> <p>Parents should be supportive of the school's efforts to develop positive patterns of attendance amongst pupils from an early age.</p> <p>Parents should understand the need for a positive mind-set on attendance to be developed in pupils from an early age.</p>	<p>of issues by, for example, a phone call or text message.</p> <p>St Fanchea's College ensure there are systems in place to monitor and analyse attendance patterns at an individual pupil, pupil group and whole school level prior to their entrenchment.</p> <p>St Fanchea's College has an attendance policy that documents how the school will apply the principles of early intervention into their work to promote and support the maximisation of pupil attendance.</p> <p>St Fanchea's College has flexible processes in place to enable support to be provided to pupils with poor levels of attendance at an early enough stage to "nip it in the bud".</p> <p>St Fanchea's College will proactively promote the value of school attendance to pupils in their earliest years, particularly in order to establish good attendance practices.</p> <p>St Fanchea's College will take action to react, where appropriate, to changes in a pupil's circumstances that may impact upon their attendance such as a domestic crisis.</p>
Education Authority (Western Division)	Department of Education/ETI
<p>The EA will provide advice to schools on how to identify and address cases of poor attendance at an early stage, prior to the entrenchment of poor attendance practices.</p> <p>The EA will provide effective support as soon as possible in cases referred to the Education Welfare Service.</p> <p>The EA will promote the benefits of early intervention through their engagement with schools.</p>	<p>The Department should work in partnership with the Education Authority to provide clear up to date guidance to schools in respect of early intervention.</p> <p>The ETI should ensure that attendance continues to be examined as part of all ETI inspections and that any concerns are clearly identified in order that appropriate action may be taken.</p> <p>The Department should work with the Education Authority to ensure the importance and value of attendance is communicated at an early stage and that there is active and regular engagement between schools, parents and pupils.</p> <p>The Department should work with the Education Authority to consider awareness raising activities particularly aimed at primary pupils and their parents.</p>

Addendum to Attendance Policy COVID-19 (2020-2021)

During the reopening period it is vitally important that Parents/Carers follow the guidance set out by the school in respect of illness and absence. Please refer to

Reopening Guidance for Schools 13.8.20 below and Circular 2020/08- Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording by Schools.

Section 7 - Pupil Attendance

Pupil Attendance

- We will follow the guidance on attendance for pupils who have health conditions and those who live with people with health conditions or are pregnant. It is the parents responsibility to contact the school and inform them of any medical needs /shielding and seek advice from their medical consultants to ensure it is safe to return to school.

Schools should follow latest guidance on attendance for children and young people who have health conditions, who live with people with health conditions or who are pregnant.

- Pupils who are clinically vulnerable are those with pre-existing conditions who have been advised to stringently follow the social distancing guidelines and should learn from home where possible. A small minority of pupils will fall into this category. **Parents should contact the school to discuss.**
- Pupils who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable), including those who are pregnant, can attend their education or childcare setting. **No risk assessment necessary.**
- Pupils who were previously shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable people). These restrictions eased over time and as of 1 August 2020 'shielding' has been paused. Pupils should follow the guidance of their hospital consultant or General Practitioner (GP) if in doubt and **should have an individual risk assessment** conducted.
- Pupils living with someone who was previously shielding. These restrictions eased over time and as if 1 August 2020 'shielding' has been paused. Such pupils **should have an individual risk assessment conducted.**

Pupils Who Are Clinically Vulnerable

- All schools should follow the latest guidance on attendance for children and young people who have health conditions or who live with individuals who have health conditions or are pregnant. Current guidance on these categories is published on NI Direct and by PHA here. If in doubt, specific advice should be sought from a Hospital Consultant or GP.
- In light of the Minister's statement 6th August, clarifying "that having taken account of the scientific and medical evidence, it is now appropriate for all pupils to return to school during the week commencing 31 August" we would consider attendance to be mandatory.
- There will be a small number of children where medical guidance would be to refrain from school. The school should satisfy themselves, through evidence provided by the family that the pupil is shielding due to underlying medical

conditions. If evidence is not received then an unauthorised absence should be recorded.

Pupils Who Live with Someone Who is Clinically Vulnerable

- If a child or young person lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable as above), including those who are pregnant, they can attend their education or childcare setting. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Hospital Consultant or GP of the clinically vulnerable person.

Pupils Who Were Shielding (clinically extremely vulnerable people)

- Advice with regard to shielding eased over time and as of 1 August 2020 'shielding' has been paused. Pupil should follow the guidance of their hospital consultant or GP if in doubt about school attendance.
- When planning for the return of pupils, education settings should consider the distance learning and support the needs of any pupils who are unable to return to school either all or some of the time.
- The most up-to-date guidance and list of underlying health conditions that necessitate shielding should be checked on the NI Direct website under the shielding section.

Pupils Who Are Living with Someone Who Was Shielding

- Pupils who have household members who were considered clinically extremely vulnerable (at high risk of severe illness and requiring 'shielding'). These restrictions eased over time and from 1 August 2020 'shielding' has been paused. Such children should have an individual **risk assessment conducted before the most appropriate place of care is determined.**

Pupil Who Develop Symptoms on Site

- If a pupil develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school follow the procedures set out in the flow chart in appendix 1.
- Enhanced cleaning should be carried out within any classroom in which an individual who has developed COVID-19 has been to minimize the risk of the spread of the virus. This should be clearly communicated to staff, parents and pupils to provide assurance that the environment is safe.
- It is essential that all staff follow this guidance, as by doing so staff will not only protect themselves but limit the spread of the virus to educational settings and the wider population.

Recording Attendance

- Specific guidance in respect of pupil attendance whether at school or at home can be seen in Circular DE 2020/08.
- Decisions regarding the recording of pupil attendance will be made by the Principal and SLT considering the individual circumstances of each child. It may be possible for some children to continue to learn from home due to being clinically vulnerable if they are able to provide evidence of an underlying medical condition as well as learning at home. If evidence cannot be provided in terms of either the specific medical condition or that learning is not being completed then school should record attendance as an unauthorised absence (Codes D, H or N) where appropriate.
- The registration of pupils working from home will happen once a day (rather than twice a day) for example provided that work was being completed as required. As this may be challenging to ensure, we will be relying on a combination of teacher's professional judgement and pupil's work as to whether or not pupils have engaged with learning at home.

<p style="text-align: center;">This policy will be reviewed every year</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Date of next review – September 2021</p> <p>Principal Date</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chair of the Board of Governors</p> <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Date</p>

Appendix 1

COVID-19 Management Flowchart Possible / Confirmed COVID-19 Case in School



