



November
2015

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy Date: November 2015
Review Date: As required

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.

Sullivan Upper 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 maintain/improve the overall attendance of pupils at Sullivan Upper.
- 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.

ROLE OF PARENT

Parents have a legal duty [(Article 45(1) of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986] 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 8.50 am 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 on their child's attendance record.

If a pupil appears reluctant to attend school the matter should be discussed promptly with the Form Teacher or Year Head.

ROLE OF PUPILS

Each pupil at Sullivan must attend school regularly and punctually, and to be punctual for each class they attend in the course of the school day. If a pupil has been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the Form Teacher on return to school.

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ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

The Board of Governors provides support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets.

The Vice-Principal (Pastoral) has overall responsibility for school attendance. Staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.

Staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded through Lesson Monitor.

In order to record accurately and monitor attendance in a consistent way the school adheres to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm

Sullivan is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE

The Education 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.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

- 1 A warning bell rings at 8.45 am and Morning Registration is between 8.50 am and 9.00 am.
- 2 Pupils' attendance is recorded using Lesson Monitor in SIMS.net by the Form Teacher. Attendance for every lesson is recorded by the teacher at the start of the lesson.
- 3 Pupils arriving in school late must report to the school office so that their arrival can be recorded and no pupil may leave the school buildings or grounds in the course of the day without specific permission (eg permission to go home for lunch).

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Parents are asked to assist the school in a number of ways.

- (a) When a pupil has been absent and then returns to school he/she is required to **bring a note** from his/her parents on the day of his/her return explaining why he/she was away from school. Notes should be addressed to the Form Teacher and sent in a sealed envelope.
- (b) On the **first day of a pupil's absence** the parents should contact the school office with a brief explanation.

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- (c) **Requests for pupils to be absent** should be sent as far ahead of the event as possible and should be addressed to the Form Teacher. Parents are asked to arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours if they possibly can. Notes requesting permission to be absent should state the time at which the pupil will have to leave school and, where appropriate, the time at which he/she will return.
- (d) **Family holidays during term-time** - Sullivan discourages holidays during term-time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Parents are asked not to take their children on holiday during term-time. It is difficult for children to catch up what they miss, even after a few days' absence. It is also difficult for the school to do its best for the pupils if they miss more classes than they need to. Controlled Assessment/coursework and practical assessment, for example, must fit into a tight schedule, and changes in our arrangements cannot be made to accommodate additional holidays. Family holidays taken during term-time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.
- (e) Please note that **if the school organises for pupils to be absent during the course of the day** on an approved educational visit, then the pupil will be marked present using the appropriate code on their registration certificate. However, if parents remove children from school, then the pupil will be marked absent.
- (f) No pupil is permitted to leave the school buildings or grounds during the course of the school day unless he or she has formal permission to do.

If a pupil is absent 3 or more days and there has been no explanation, contact will be made with the Parent/Guardian.

The school reserves the right to use any of the disciplinary sanctions (as outlined in the Positive Behaviour Policy) when responding to poor attendance and/or poor punctuality. Poor attendance/punctuality may preclude holding positions of responsibility within the school (such as prefectship) and may lead to loss of privileges. The school reserves the right to withdraw a pupil with poor attendance (below 90%) from school trips or other activities. Attendance and punctuality concerns may also be mentioned on references from the school.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

- A record of each pupil's attendance is kept. Attendance record is included on pupils' Statement of Results and Annual Report.
- The Department of Education considers attendance below 90% as poor (see **Appendix 1**)
- When issues over attendance become evident the Head of Year will contact home.
- Attendance letters (for those with very poor attendance below 85%) are sent every half-term. Depending on the level of absence, an appointment may be requested to meet with a parent/guardian in person.

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- When attendance drops below 85%, the school is obliged to discuss attendance with the Education Welfare Service, and may need to make a formal referral.
- To enable the 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.

MONITORING PUNCTUALITY

- A record of each pupil's punctuality is kept. Punctuality record is included on pupils' Statement of Results and Annual Report.
- When a pattern of lateness presents, the Year Head will be in contact with home and may request a meeting with the parents to discuss.
- Those who are persistently late for registration [ie more than 4 times in a calendar month] will be dealt with under the Positive Behaviour Policy.

MONITORING CLASS ATTENDANCE

- The school records and monitors class attendance through SIMS Lesson Monitor.

LONG-TERM ABSENCE

- In the case of longer periods of absence the Vice-Principal (Pastoral) works closely with the Education Welfare Service.
- When a pupil has an illness/injury that means they will be away from school for a longer absence, the school will do what it can to support the pupil, including sending material/work home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- For continued long-term absence, the school will contact Educational Welfare Services to discuss the possibility of tuition outside of school.

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APPENDIX 1

DENI GUIDANCE ON ABSENCE FIGURES

The Department of Education has provided guidance to parents and schools regarding attendance statistics in a leaflet entitled:

'School Attendance Matters – A Parent's Guide'

<https://www.deni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/de/attendance-matters-a-parents-guide.pdf>



EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS –

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

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that's nearly 4 school weeks.



Give your child the best start in life – every school day counts.