

Student Attendance Policy

Summary:

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.

Strangford Integrated College will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each student will feel valued and secure.

Policy Number: 2023/27

Revision: 2

Previous: 2021/27

Board of Governors

Submission for Ratification:
September 2023

Chairperson:



Principal:



This policy replaces any previous policies and is valid from:
1st September 2023

To be reviewed & updated by:
By 1st September 2025.



STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

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.

Strangford Integrated College will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Strangford Integrated College offers students of different abilities, religions and cultural backgrounds, the opportunity to be educated together in a caring, trusting and inclusive community, which seeks to maximise their full potential and celebrate their achievements.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Strangford Integrated College.
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 students.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal at Strangford Integrated College has overall responsibility for school attendance; Attendance Coordinator and class teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his/her attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of students by ensuring that attendance is recorded accurately at the beginning of the school day at registration sessions and at the beginning of each lesson. The Attendance Coordinator will provide the Principal with a regular weekly report highlighting any issues with the taking of accurate registers. In the first instance, the Attendance Coordinator will inform staff of incomplete or inaccurate registers to amend daily. The Principal will follow up on this with individual teachers by writing to each teacher with three missing or inaccurate registers across a two week period. After three letters have been issued, the staff member will be invited to meet with the Principal to discuss any issues with taking their register. In the case of a substitute teacher, the office staff will take responsibility for ensuring a paper register is input into Sims as soon as possible.

At Strangford Integrated College, morning registration will close at 10.30 a.m. after which time pupils will be marked absent for the morning session unless permission has been obtained from the Principal. After this time pupils are still required to sign in at the office to register their presence.

To enable our 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:

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

Strangford Integrated College is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual

attendance.

Role of the Form Teacher

It is essential that a reason is recorded for all absences. If not, the computer regards these as unauthorised absences which are then shown as truancy. The form teacher should contact the parent or guardian on the third day of absence if they have not received a message from home.

Registration begins at 9:05am. Pupils who arrive after 9:10am are late and should be recorded late by the form teacher on SIMS (teachers will use their professional discretion if a school bus arrives late). Pupils who arrive in school after 9.20am should report to the office to sign in.

Heads of Year will receive an email from the Attendance Coordinator on a monthly basis highlighting students with attendance below 90%. If there is concern about the attendance of any pupil, the form teacher should contact the parents/guardians. If the problem with attendance persists, the form teacher should pass this to the Year Head in following the chain of command.

Role of Parent

Parents have a legal duty¹ 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 student's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the student returns to school or a phone call on the day of absence. 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.

Students are expected to be in school at 9.05am 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, Head of Year or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

¹ *Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986*

Role of Students

Each student at Strangford Integrated College must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your form teacher when you return.

Absence Procedures

All Parents/Guardians are required to contact the school on the first day of absence by a telephone call and a written letter or email on the child's return to school which provides a clear reason for any

absence.

Absences during term time

Missing school (either face to face or virtual learning at home) at any time is detrimental to a child's education, therefore family holidays or other appointments e.g. doctor or dentist should be arranged, where possible, outside school hours. Strangford Integrated College strongly discourages holidays during term time as this can have a significant impact on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time, which have not been agreed, will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Contact with home by the Form Teacher where the pattern of non-attendance is observed. The Head of Year links with the EWO where attendance falls below 85%.

Education Welfare Service (EWS)

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

If a student'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.

