

# Attendance Policy



Policy adopted by Board of Governors: March 2019

Policy review date: March 2021

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Chair of Board of Governors)

## **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 full potential.

St. Mary's Primary School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages excellent attendance and where each pupil will feel valued, secure and happy.

## **Aims**

The Aims of this policy are to:

1. improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St. Mary's Primary School.
2. develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. promote good relationships with Education Welfare Service.

## **Role of the School**

The principal of St. Mary's Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers/designated staff should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to 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 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 2015/02 which can be found at:

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

St. Mary's 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 he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.*

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

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/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 no later than 9.15am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children are punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on children's attendance records.

If a child appears reluctant to attend school, parents are asked to discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both the parent and child receive maximum support.

## **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at St. Mary's Primary School has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly. 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**

If a child is late to school (after 9.15am), this will be noted as a 'Late' on that morning's register. If a child will be absent from school for any period of the school day parents must provide a written note explaining the reason for the absence to the school office.

If a child is off school for any period of time, for any reason, a letter must be sent to the school office explaining the reason for his/her absence the day he /

she returns to school. On the day of absence a phone call to notify us that a child will be absent would also be appreciated.

### **Absence due to illness**

St. Mary's Primary School follows the guidance set out by the Public Health Agency on infection control in schools and other childcare settings. Parents are expected to follow the guidance below which states the period of time a child should be absent from school for when suffering from certain illnesses. Parents are also asked to contact school if his / her child is suffering from any of the illnesses below.

### **Family holiday during Term Time**

St. Mary's Primary School strongly discourages holidays during term time due to the impact this can have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

### **Illness**

#### **Period of time child should be kept off school**

Chickenpox: 5 days from onset of rash

German Measles: 6 days from onset of rash

Measles: 4 days from onset of rash

Impetigo: Until lesions are crusted and healed or 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment

Scarlet Fever: 24 hours after commencing appropriate antibiotic treatment

Diarrhoea and / or vomiting: 48 hours after last episode of diarrhoea and / or vomiting

Flu: Until recovered

Mumps: 5 days from onset of swelling

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

St. Mary's Primary School firmly believes in the importance of regular school attendance for learning and contentment at school, therefore attendance is closely monitored by the school secretary and principal.

Non-Attendance is managed in the following ways:

If an absence note has not been provided upon a child's return, the school secretary will send home a letter requesting such.

The secretary and / or class teacher(s) will notify the principal if there are any concerns with regards to attendance during the school year.

The principal will check attendance on a termly basis and write to the parents of any child whose attendance has fallen below 90% to remind them of the importance of regular attendance and to inform them of her duty to report attendance of under 85% to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer). If the child's attendance has improved by the end of the following term the principal will write to the parents and child to recognise and praise the improvement in attendance.

The principal will report all incidents of attendance below 85% to the EWO and work in conjunction with him/her, the child and the child's parents to ensure the child's attendance improves.

### **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 below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

### **Rewarding good attendance**

St. Mary's Primary School firmly believes in recognising and rewarding all achievements, and attendance is no exception. All children who achieve a year's full attendance receive a school certificate in a celebration assembly at the end of the year.

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