

St. Brigid's Primary School, Tirkane / Bunscoil Naomh Bríd

# Attendance Policy

2016



## Introduction

Regular school attendance and punctuality are 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. Brigid's PS Tirkane / Bunscoil Naomh Bríd will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages attendance and where each pupil will feel valued, secure and happy.

## Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

1. Improve the overall attendance of pupils at St. Brigid's PS Tirkane / Bunscoil Naomh Bríd.
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 the Education Welfare Service.

## Role of the School

The Principal at St. Brigid's PS Tirkane / Bunscoil Naomh Bríd 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. Brigid's PS Tirkane / Bunscoil Naomh Bríd is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

## Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents/ Guardians 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/she may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.*

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

If a child is registered in a school, their parent/guardian 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 9.00 am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that children are punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on children’s attendance records. (**Reference Appendix 1)**)

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

Parents are requested to read the guidance provided by **DENI School Attendance Matters - A Parent’s Guide**. (**Reference Appendix 2**). The guidance is available on the school website in English and Irish [www.stbrigidpstirkane.com](http://www.stbrigidpstirkane.com)

**Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at St. Brigid’s PS Tirkane / Bunscoil Naomh Bríd 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 i.e. after 9.00am he/she must report to the Clerical Officer’s office before going to class. The number of minutes late will be recorded on the SIMS register.

If a child will be absent from school for any period of the school day parents/guardians must provide a copy of the appointment letter / card or a written note explaining the reason for the absence to the school office. We ask that parents make every effort to bring pupils back to school for the afternoon session if they have been out to attend e.g. a medical, dental or speech therapy appointment during the morning session.

If a child is absent from 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.

**Absence due to illness**

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

<b>Illness</b>	<b>Period of time child should be kept off school</b>
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

See also “**Guidance on Infection Control in Schools and other Childcare Settings**” on our website [www.stbrigidpsps.maghera.ni.sch.uk](http://www.stbrigidpsps.maghera.ni.sch.uk).

**Family holiday during Term Time**

St. Brigid’s PS Tirkane / Bunscoil Naomh Bríd 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. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

### Procedures for Managing Non-Attendance

St. Brigid's PS Tirkane / Bunscoil Naomh Bríd firmly believes in the importance of regular school attendance for learning and contentment at school, therefore attendance is closely monitored by the school's Clerical Officer 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's Clerical Officer will text parents on a weekly basis until it is received.
- The Clerical Officer 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/guardians 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 **under 85%** to Ms Lynn Dinsmore 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/guardians 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 her, the child and the child's parents/guardians to ensure the child's attendance improves.

### Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority (North Eastern Region) through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents / guardians 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%, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents / guardians in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

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

**APPENDIX 1**

**Explanation of the Attendance Codes used in Schools and by DENI**

<b>Registration Codes</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Statistical meaning</b>	<b>Physical Meaning</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
A	Artistic Endeavour	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
B	Bereavement	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
C	Suspended	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Did not provide a reason for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
E	Educated Off Site	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
F	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (Not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Other Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical / Dental Appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Other Exceptional Circumstances	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study Leave	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational Visit	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
X	Only Staff should attend	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Exceptional Closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
!	No Attendance Required	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
#	Holiday for all	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
*	Not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
-	All should attend / No mark recorded	No mark	No mark for session
1	AEP (ELB)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
2	Home / hospital tuition (ELB)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
3	Elective Home Education	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
4	Pupil Referral Unit	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
5	Another mainstream school (EF)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
6	Training Organisation (EF)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
7	FE College (EF)	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
8	Intensive Support Learning Unit	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
9	CAMHS	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session

APPENDIX 2

**Every School Day Counts**

Attendance percentages can be misleading.

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

***School attendance matters - a parent's guide***

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