

# *St Mary's Primary School*



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Date Ratified by Board of Governors: December 2021

Signed: *Gerard Smyth*

School address: 191, Derrytrasna Road

Lurgan  
Co. Armagh  
BT66 6NR

## **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. St. Mary's Primary School Derrytrasna will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each child will feel valued and secure.

## **St. Mary's Primary School Mission Statement**

*In St. Mary's our mission is to provide a Catholic education, which is person centred which promotes the dignity; self-esteem and full development of each child. We believe this will enable our children to maximise their individual potential for academic, spiritual, personal, emotional and social development. Thus preparing them for future learning and living.*

## **Aims and Objectives**

We strive to maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St. Mary's Primary School.

This policy aims to:

- Develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Provide advice, support and guidance to parents, guardians and pupils.
- Promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant statutory requirements (particularly with regard to the maintenance of attendance registers)

## **Summary of Responsibilities**

### **• Role of the School**

The Principal at St. Mary's Primary School Derrytrasna has overall responsibility for school attendance; class teachers 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 using SIMS attendance. 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 2019/14. At St. Mary's we are 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)***

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 when possible. 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 9:10am 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 recorded on each child's attendance record. If a child appears reluctant to attend school the parent should

discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both parent and child receive maximum support.

- **Role of Pupils**

Each pupil 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 teacher when you return.

## **Absence Procedures**

All parents/carers are required to complete the attached absence notification form which provides a clear reason for any absence such as:

- **Holiday**

Parent/guardians are encouraged not to take holidays during term time. If a pupil goes on a holiday during term time the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

- **Appointments**

Dental and medical appointments should be made outside school hours or during the school holidays. In the event of such an appointment having to be made during the school day it will constitute an authorised absence. Notice must be given of the appointment in writing.

- **Approved Educational Activities**

The register must record whether the pupil is present, absent or attending an approved educational activity. Attendance and all forms of absence, i.e. education elsewhere etc., should be recorded using the Absence and Attendance codes.

## Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents or guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education. If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, 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.

Before accepting a referral from a school an EWO will expect the school to have first undertaken a number of steps to address the pupil's non-attendance. These would include:

- action by the class teacher
- action by the Principal
- contact with parents

Referrals may be made when:

- a pattern of irregular attendance has developed
- a period of non-attendance has begun
- communication by the school to the parents has met with little or no response
- there is evidence of a lack of parental co-operation in ensuring a child's regular attendance
- a parent withdraws a pupil from school having expressed an intention to educate him/her otherwise than at school (Elective Home Education)
- a pupil is withdrawn from school by the parents who are moving to another area and the school does not have a confirmed destination school/provider where the child

will resume his or her education (such pupils will be treated as “children missing in education”)

- a pattern of persistent lateness has developed
- there are child protection concerns
- there are specific and identifiable welfare issues which are preventing a pupil from accessing education.

**ABSENCE NOTIFICATION FORM**

**Please Note – This form must be completed for each period of pupil absence and returned to the school immediately.**

Name of Pupil \_\_\_\_\_

Class / Teacher Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Absence \_\_\_\_\_

Reason \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Parent / Guardian) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION								
/ \	Present: / = (AM); \ = (PM)	X	Only staff should attend								
A*	Artistic Endeavour	Y*	Exceptional Closure								
B*	Bereavement	#	Holiday for all								
C	Suspended	!	No attendance required								
D	No reason provided for absence	1	Community Providers / EOTAS (organised by the EA)								
F*	Family Holiday (agreed)	2	Exceptional Teaching Arrangement / hospital								
G*	Family Holiday (not agreed)	3	Elective Home Education								
H*	Other Absence	4	Pupil Referral Unit								
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	5	Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework – EF)								
J*	Extended Leave	6	Training Organisation (under EF)								
L*	Late (before registration closed)	7	FE College (under EF)								
M*	Medical / Dental Appointments	8	Intensive Support Learning Unit								
N	No reason yet provided for absence (temporary code only)	9	CAMHS / Mental Health Support								
O*	Other Exceptional Circumstances		<b>COVID-19 SPECIFIC CODES - Please refer to DE circular 2021/16 (page numbers listed)</b>								
P*	Approved Activity	(	COVID-19 Illness Confirmed – to be used when child is sick and COVID-19 is confirmed. – Page 23								
R*	Religious Observance	)	COVID-19 Illness Suspected / Unconfirmed – to be used when child is sick and COVID-19 is suspected but unconfirmed. – Page 23								
S*	Study Leave	{	COVID-19 Self-Isolating – Vulnerable Pupil or Household member Pupil chooses not to attend school due to own underlying health conditions or due to health conditions of other family members*. If a pupil is sick, they should be recorded as such. – Page 25								
U*	Late (after registration closed)	}	COVID-19 Self-Isolating - No evidence of learning from home Pupil required to self-isolate but not learning from home / evidence not provided. – Page 25								
V*	Educational Visit / Examination	[	COVID-19 Self-Isolating & Learning from Home Pupil required to self-isolate and learning from home* – does not discount from attendance record. – Page 17								
W*	Work Experience	]	COVID-19 Learning from Home - Social Distancing Pupils are not required to attend physically at school due to social distancing rules, imposed by DE or school. E.g. pupils required to attend on certain days or for a certain number of hours per day. This decision must be informed by health professional advice. – Page 17								
<b>COLOUR CODE</b>											
			<table border="1"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #90EE90;"></td> <td>Present / Approved Educational Activity /</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #FFFF00;"></td> <td>Authorised Absence</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #FF0000;"></td> <td>Unauthorised Absence</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #ADD8E6;"></td> <td>Attendance not required</td> </tr> </table>		Present / Approved Educational Activity /		Authorised Absence		Unauthorised Absence		Attendance not required
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