



St Mary's Primary School Aughnacloy



PUPIL 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.

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

We in St Mary's Primary School Aughnacloy provide a caring, supportive and safe environment, where each child is valued for his or her unique talents and abilities, and in which all our young people can learn and develop to their full potential. Pupils are actively engaged in a flexible, purposeful curriculum which explicitly builds their confidence as resilient learners with equal emphasis on wellbeing, knowledge, understanding and skills. Through our shared school ethos, we encourage our children to protect what is good, to change that which requires changing and to appreciate the beauty in our world. Respect for ALL life is paramount and lies at the core of our efforts to develop an appreciation of and belief in God's love.

The successful implementation of this policy depends upon children, parents and staff working in Partnership.

Aims:

1. To maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St Mary's Primary School, Aughnacloy.
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 the School :

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance; (teachers/designated staff) should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to his attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and

targets and ensuring it is a standing agenda item at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions. Staff should:

- Record pupils' attendance daily for both the morning and afternoon session in accordance with the school's guidance
- To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way, we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2025/09, which can be found at the following link: [Circular 2025/09 - Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording By Schools](#)]
- If a pupil arrives after registration, record him/her as late on the Register.
- Request Absence Notes (if online absence form hasn't been completed) and ensure that all documentation is noted and stored appropriately.
- If there is a concern the matter will be reported to the Principal who regularly collects attendance data and shares it with the school's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

Role of Parent/Guardian

St Mary's Primary School, Aughnacloy is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Parents/guardians have a legal duty 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/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

Parents/Guardians should:

- Inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This can be completed via Absence Form on St Mary's Primary School app; found in the Parent Area.
- In circumstances whereby the school app cannot be accessed, it's the parent/guardians responsibility to phone the school office 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 9am in the morning for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child is punctual.
- Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record. Parents use an electronic system if their child arrives to school late or leaves early.
- If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.
- St Mary's Primary School wish to highlight some of the advertising campaigns and key messages that the Department has published:
 - Give your child a helping hand
 - Miss School Miss Out
 - Try and Stop Me

Role of Pupils

- Each pupil at St Mary's Primary School should make every effort to attend school regularly and to arrive at school on time.
- Following an absence from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return. Alternatively, parents/guardians can complete this via the Absence Form on St Mary's Primary School app. This can be found in the Parent Area.
- Pupils should bring a note from their parent/guardian in advance of any planned absence, including appointments.
- Never leave school at any time during the school day without permission.

St Mary's Primary School is committed to promoting regular attendance and recognises that effective procedures for reporting and monitoring absence are essential for safeguarding, pupil wellbeing and continuity of learning. We will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2025/09, which can be found at the following link: [Circular 2025/09 - Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording By Schools](#)]

Family holidays during Term Time

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

Procedures for Managing Non -attendance

St Mary's Primary School will manage non-attendance through early identification, effective communication with parents, and a graduated response which prioritises safeguarding and pupil wellbeing. Unexplained absences will be followed up on the first day. Persistent absence will be addressed through school-based interventions and, where necessary, referral to the Education Welfare Service in line with DE Circular 2025/09.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal duty to make sure that parents/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. The EWO regularly visits the school to check pupil attendance. During these meetings with the Principal acceptable attendance thresholds, individual targets for attendance and follow up action for both the school and the EWO are identified. If a child's attendance is cause for concern, the EWO may recommend that contact is made with the parents/guardians to ascertain the reason. The Principal, Senior Teachers or class teacher may speak to the pupil and parent or guardian and offer support, if necessary. Sometimes, it is necessary to send information in writing detailing unexplained absences and the child's level of attendance. EWO may contact the family or visit, if deemed appropriate. If the level of attendance does not improve over a period of time, a formal referral may have to be made to the EWO.

The School Day

- School starts officially at 9.00am. The children must arrive between 8.45am and 9.00am. Parents/guardians are informed that their children must not be left at school before 8.45am as supervision is not available. The school cannot take responsibility for children left outside the school building before this time.
- It is vitally important that all of the pupils arrive on time. If a child is late, he/she may become anxious or embarrassed. He/she may miss an important part of the class routine or work.

- Parents/guardians are advised to ensure that their children are collected on time at the end of the school day. The collection arrangements are detailed below:
 1. P 1 & P 2 pupils must be collected from the front gate at 2.00pm sharp.
 2. P4 - P7 must be collected via the children's access gate at 3.00pm sharp.
 3. P3 children will go home at 2pm in Term 1 and 3pm from Term 2 onwards.

Punctuality is just as important in the afternoon as well as the mornings. Children who are not collected on time may become anxious. Moreover, staff are not available to supervise pupils after home times. Any changes to collection arrangements require a note or a phonecall from the parent. Please act in accordance with our Child Protection Policy by advising the school if someone not listed on the Data Capture Sheet will be collecting your child.

Arrangements for Dealing with Pupils who are Ill

- Parents are asked to refrain from sending ill children to school as we are not able to provide proper medical care to a child who is too ill to be in class. If a child takes ill during the school day, the parent/guardian or someone nominated by them, will be contacted and asked to take the child home.
- In the case of an asthma attack, allergic reaction or any situation where it appears that a child requires emergency medical treatment, the school reserves the right to telephone the Emergency Services or Health Centre.
- The school will make every effort to contact the parents or guardian at the same time but will not delay seeking medical attention if it is required in the best interests of the child.

It is vitally important that parents/guardians ensure that the school always has up to date medical information and contact numbers for this purpose.

Parents/Guardians are advised that if there is a problem which may impact on their child's attendance, it is important to inform the school. Parents/Guardians, in this situation, are asked to:

- Listen to their child's anxieties or worries.
- Be sympathetic but firm about attendance at school.
- Inform the teacher, Designated Child Protection Officer {Mrs McElroy} or Principal (Mr McCaughey).
- Allow time for help to be provided in school, if appropriate.

- If parents/guardians have problems with a child's attendance and they wish to seek support and advice on this matter outside school, they will be directed to the Education Welfare Officer in the Education Authority.

Parents are advised to take note of these arrangements carefully and to co-operate fully with the school in looking after the medical and social welfare of their children while at St. Mary's Primary School, Aughnacloy. As with all procedures we put in place this is for the benefit of your child and our goal to empower each child to fulfill their potential.

Signature – Principal *B Mc Caughy*
Signature – Chair of the Board of Governors *Jim Connor*
Date *11/2/26*