**St. Mary’s Primary School**

**Rathfriland**



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**PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY.**

 March 2024

**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.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child’s:

* Attainment in school.
* Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships.
* Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.

In St. Mary’s Primary School, we will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

**Mission Statement.**

St Mary’s Primary School is a Catholic school committed to the education of the whole child. We endeavour to create a happy and secure environment, unlocking the full potential of all individuals, thereby developing confident and independent learners.

**Aims**.

1. To improve/ maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St. Mary’s Primary School.
2. To develop a frame work 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.

**Explanation of percentage attendance.**

Each child’s attendance can be summarised as:

**100% - Excellent**- This will help all aspects of a child’s progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

**95%+ - Good**- Strive to build on this and make every effort to reach the 100% target.

**90-94%- Average** – Strive to build on this and make every effort to reach the 95%+ target.

**86-89% - Poor**- Absence is now beginning to affect attainment and progress at school. Work with the school urgently to improve the situation.

**BELOW 85%- Unacceptable**. Absence is causing **SERIOUS CONCERN**. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child’s learning. The school will write to parents notifying them once their child has reached this level of attendance.

**The Role of the School.**

The Principal, Miss McConville, has overall responsibility for school attendance. Teachers will 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 on the agenda at each meeting.

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

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 2017/15.

http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools

St. Mary’s Primary School is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

**Role of Parent.**

1. Parents have a legal duty (Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) order 1986) 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.
2. If a child is registered in school, their parent has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.
3. It is a parent’s responsibility to inform the school of the reason for their child’s absence, with a written note/email when he/she returns to school. This note/email must be produced within 5 days of the pupil’s return. If an absence is likely to be prolonged, it is important to inform the school by phone and to provide a written note when the child returns to school, explaining the reason for the absence.
4. Pupils are expected to be in school at 8.55 a.m. for registration. Registration closes at 9.10 a.m. If a child presents after this, it is recorded as an unauthorised absence for the duration of the morning session. Obviously, this will impact on your child’s overall percentage attendance. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on to your child’s attendance record.
5. If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Miss McConville to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

**Role of Pupils.**

Each pupil at St. Mary’s Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If you have been absent from school, a written note from your parent/ guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

**Absence Procedures.**

Medical Appointments:

* Every effort should be made to make medical appointments outside school hours.
* If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
* If a child has a medical appointment at the beginning of the school day, prior notice must be given, to ensure that the child is not marked absent. The time the child returns to school will be noted on the register.
* If it is an emergency appointment, then the parent/ guardian may inform the school by phone.

Family Holidays.

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. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised. **Work will not be provided for pupils whilst on holiday.**

**Procedures for Managing Non-Attendance.**

* Parents are reminded of attendance at the beginning of each year.
* Parents return a note explaining their child’s absence.
* If a note is not presented after 5 days, a **D** code is recorded which denotes an unauthorised absence.
* Staff will monitor attendance through the SIMS system.
* If a class teacher has a concern, they will speak informally to parents.
* If there are further concerns about attendance staff will speak to the Principal.
* Principal/staff will consult and work with parents for an agreed period to try and resolve any issues.
* If this is unsuccessful a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer.

**Educational Welfare Service.**

The Education Authority, through the Education Welfare Service, has a legal duty to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children’s education.

The Education Welfare Service will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

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

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of the Board of Governors)

Date: March 2024