**ST. Mary’s Primary School**

**Derrymore**



**Attendance policy**

**September 2023**

**ST MARY’S PRIMARY SCHOOL DERRYMORE**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Your child’s education is important to us and MUST be important to you.

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum in a warm and safe environment which will enable them to reach their full potential.

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

**DENI Guidance on attendance percentages**

**Every school day counts.**

“Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning. 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 parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that’s nearly 4 school weeks!

**The school has a very good record of attendance which it aims to maintain. An overall level of 97% attendance is the target.**

**VISION**

To seek, strive, learn

Our vision is that all members of the school community are inspired and motivated to achieve their full potential.

Today’s pupils, tomorrow’s citizens.

In our school we all matter.

In our school we all belong.

In our school we all try to be the best we can be.

**MISSION**

**H**ere at St Mary’s we work together to live like Jesus;

**O**ur vision is to enrich the life of everyone that passes through our school;

**P**raising and celebrate effort and success;

**E**nsuring fairness where every child matters and fulfills their potential to become the best they can be;

**I**nviting our school, parish and locality friends to support us on our journey of faith;

**N**urturing spiritual growth through our Catholic ethos;

**G**iving each other the opportunity for development in learning, worship and serving others;

**O**ffering a safe and happy school where every person is valued;

**D**oing our best to see Jesus in one another.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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

Regular school attendance and punctuality are extremely important, as valuable learning time is lost when pupils are absent or late. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. The school’s ethos demonstrates that children feel that their presence in school is important, that they are missed when they are absent or late. The school takes appropriate action in order to promote good attendance and the overall aims of this policy.

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 2015/02 which can be found at <http://www.deni.gov.uk/circular_2015_02.pdf>

**AIMS**

* To maximise attendance of all children
* To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school
* To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents to resolve any difficulty
* To analyse attendance data regularly to inform practice and future policy amendments
* To work closely and make full use of the support from appropriate external agencies, including the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Responsibilities of Parents**

The responsibility for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents. However, where school attendance problems occur, the key to resolving these problems is engaging the child through collaborative working between the parent and the school. Parents have a responsibility in the eyes of the law “To ensure that children have an efficient education suited to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs” Education & Libraries Order 1986. Parents also have a responsibility to inform the school about their child absence.

Parents should:

* Ensure that their child attends school regularly and is punctual each day
* Ensure that their child understands the benefits of good attendance and punctuality
* Notify the school as soon as possible on the first day when their child is absent
* Avoid taking family holidays during term time
* Work in partnership with the school

The school would ask parents to phone the school on the first day of absence and inform us of the reason for their child’s absence. This phone call should be confirmed in writing when the child returns to school.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUPILS**

Each pupil at St Mary’s 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 teachers when you return.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRINCIPAL**

The overall day to day responsibility for attendance lies with the Principal being delegated the role of the Board of Governors.

The Principal will ensure that the Board of Governors has the role of determining resources and staffing to deal with attendance issues.

The Principal will ensure that the Board of Governors are informed about attendance issues and that statistical information is provided, as requirement by the Government.

The Principal will meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss pupil attendance issues.

While the Principal has overall responsibility for attendance this will be delegated to the Senior Teacher in the absence of the Principal.

The Principal will check regularly with the classroom teachers to identify pupils with irregular attendance patterns.

**ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLASSROOM TEACHER**

In managing individual pupil attendance one of the most important aspects is the effect practice of the classroom teacher.

The effective practice means:

* Developing trusting relationships with all pupils.
* Monitoring attendance e.g. marking register using SIMS, collecting absence notes and identifying pupils with irregular attendance patterns.
* Talking to individual pupils about their attendance.
* Promoting class attendance through the curriculum.
* Providing support to pupils after a long absence from school.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICE STAFF**

Office staff have an important role to play in monitoring attendance in school. The following are the roles they will undertake.

* Operating the SIMS system.
* Taking phone messages from parents when pupils are absent from school.
* Compiling list of absentees.
* Collecting registration data.

**Responsibilities of the School**

The school will:

* Ensure its registration system is accurate and consistently used by staff
* Analyse data regularly and identify the actions that need to be taken
* Follow up unexplained absences promptly
* Promote good attendance and punctuality for all
* Work in partnership with families and the Educational Welfare Service
* Set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance
* Evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy
* Provide a copy of this policy to parents

**Responsibilities of the Educational Welfare Service**

The Educational Welfare Service will:

* Monitor registers regularly
* Identify pupils/families with attendance difficulties
* Agree time-limited action which needs to be taken by the school or education welfare officer
* Provide advice and work in partnership with the school and families

**SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

The school uses Attendance Manager provided by SIMS to collect, store and monitor all aspects of pupil attendance.

* Teachers are required to take an attendance register at the beginning of the morning session
* Attendance procedures must be consistently applied by all staff across the school to ensure accuracy of data

**TYPES OF ABSENCE**

**Lateness**

* Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at 9.20am will be considered as being late
* Lateness is monitored and action taken to improve punctuality where necessary

**Illness**

* Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence
* Parents/carers should provide a written explanation on their child’s return to school
* If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Principal should be informed

**Medical/Dental Appointments**

* Absences from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as authorised absences
* Parents should inform the school in advance as much as possible
* Parents/carers are encouraged to make medical appointments out of school hours, if possible

**Holidays during term time**

* Holidays during term time are discouraged because of the detrimental effect on education. Parents are asked not to take children out of school during term time for family holidays

**MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

* Attendance is monitored regularly by the school principal.
* Teachers should inform the principal if they notice patterns of absence
* Attendance data will be discussed with the EWO as and when required
* The Governors will set an annual target for attendance and review this annually at its first meeting

**REPORTING ATTENDANCE**

**To Parents**

Parents will receive an annual report on their child’s attendance; this will accompany the end-of-year report in June.

**To the Educational Welfare Service**

When necessary, the school will contact the EWO to discuss concerns about

attendance.

**To the Board of Governors**

Attendance is an item on the agenda of each Board of Governors meeting and annual targets are reviewed at the outset of each academic year.

**IMPROVING POOR ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY**

The regular monitoring and analysis of the school’s attendance data enables patterns and trends to be identified. If there is cause for concern, the following steps are taken:

* *Step 1*: Where poor attendance (below 85%) or punctuality is identified, the parent is informed of the school’s concern by letter
* *Step 2*: Where the concern persists, the Principal will meet with the parents to discuss the reasons for the absence or punctuality difficulties and to plan for improvement
* *Step 3*: Where no improvement has been made, the EWO will be informed

The aim throughout this process is to ensure all children have the best attendance possible, with the school working in partnership with parents and taking individual circumstances into account.