

ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL
MAGHERY



ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIFIED BY THE BOG OF ST MARY'S MAGHERY 25TH APRIL 2023

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 school 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, and 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.

AIMS

- To maximise attendance and punctuality of all children
- Maintain attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues at or above 95%
- 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 and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) 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 of St Mary's Maghery

The responsibility for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents. Under Article 45 of the Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986 ('the 1986 Order') "it is the duty of parents who have a child of compulsory school age to ensure their child receives efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and to any special educational needs they may have."

Paragraph 3 (1) of Schedule 13 to the 1986 Order states that it is the duty of a parent of a registered pupil of a school to secure their regular attendance at school. As a parent you are legally responsible for making this happen.

Under Part 111 of Schedule 13 to the 1986 Order, if a child or young person who is registered at a school does not attend regularly, a parent can receive a fine not exceeding £1000 in court (for each child). An Education Supervision Order (ESO) could also be made by a court under Article 55 of the Children (NI) Order 1995. (*Taken from DENI School Attendance Matter – A Parent's Guide*)

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 of their child's absence with a phone-call
- Inform the school by phone-call or note in the morning time when planning to take the children out of school early (in the afternoon if an emergency)
- Avoid taking family holidays during term time
- Work in partnership with the school
- Be honest to staff about absences and lack of punctuality
- Talk to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Responsibilities of the School

BOG will:

- Be kept abreast of pupil attendance/punctuality through consultation with the School Principal, and will advise accordingly regarding concerns about pupil attendance/lack of punctuality
- Be responsible for and monitor the school Attendance Policy

Staff will

- Ensure its registration system is accurate and consistently used by staff
- Analyse data regularly and identify the actions that need to be taken
- 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

The School Secretary will:

- Collate and record registration and attendance information
- Keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for poor over-all attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and /or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and report concerns to the Principal

The Educational Welfare Service will:

- Monitors registers on a termly basis
- 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 and the allocated codes provided by SIMS to collect, store and monitor all aspects of pupil attendance. Both morning and afternoon sessions of attendance are recorded.
- 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

Definitions:

Authorised Absence:

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent informs the school to explain the absence, a bereavement, medical or dental appointment. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence:

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. E.g a family holiday, artistic endeavours, no reason provided for absence, late after registration is closed.

Lateness

- Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at 9.20 will be considered as being late
- Lateness is monitored and action will be 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

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 or punctuality is identified, the parent is informed of the school's concern.
- *Step 2:* Where no improvement has been made, the EWO will be informed and will seek to meet parents regarding attendance

Appendix 1 (taken from DENI School Attendance Matters – A Parent’s Guide)

<i>100% attendance</i>	<i>0 days missed</i>	<i>Excellent</i>
<i>95% attendance</i>	<i>9 days of Absence – 1 week and 4 days of Learning missed</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>
<i>90% attendance</i>	<i>19 days of absence – 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed</i>	<i>Poor</i>
<i>85% attendance</i>	<i>28 days of absence – 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed</i>	<i>Very poor</i>
<i>80% attendance</i>	<i>38 days of absence – 7 weeks and 3 days of learning missed</i>	<i>Unacceptable</i>
<i>75% attendance</i>	<i>46 days of absence – 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed</i>	<i>Unacceptable</i>

Reviewed by staff April 2023

Ratified by the BOG: 25th April 2023

Signed: Mr Jimmy McKee (Chair of the BOG).....

Miss Rita Robinson (Principal).....