



St Mary's High School
Downpatrick

Principal: Ms R McLaughlin



Celebrating 60 Years of
Education

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Key Messages

The school's motto of Every Child Matters aims to highlight all aspects of development to include Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Social and Cultural. This includes being equipped with all the skills and Knowledge necessary for life long learning.

Full attendance and punctuality are necessary if all students are to be properly equipped with the skills, qualities and qualifications needed to make a meaningful contribution to society. There is a strong link between good attendance and success and it is our aim in St Mary's to encourage this at all times.

As a Rights Respecting School we are aware that **Articles 28 and 29** underpin the view that all students have a Right to Education and to the Goals of Education. With this in mind full attendance is vital to 'develop every child's personality, talents and abilities'

Aims

- To promote strategies and initiatives to encourage and reward good attendance
- To put in place procedures and sanctions for all in dealing with poor attendance
- To monitor attendance and ensure prompt intervention strategies are carried out to achieve optimum attendance levels

To realise these aims a partnership between the pastoral team, the parents, students and the Educational Welfare Service must exist to ensure that each child attends regularly and feels confident in doing so.

The school aims to reach a target of 93% across the school in the forth coming year.

Attendance must be given a high priority in the school. All communication must highlight its importance. This must be done in Form class time, and assemblies etc. This expectation must be emphasised and shared with parents whenever possible.

Role of Pupil

- All pupils should arrive promptly in school each day before 8.55am in preparation for registration at 9am
- Students arriving into their designated Form room between 9am and 9.15am must speak directly to the form teacher and explain their lateness. Those arriving after 9.15am must sign the late book in the office
- Students should make their way from class to class in an orderly fashion with the body of their class to avoid tardiness to the next class
- Pupils should be aware of their own % attendance and the importance of good attendance in general. They should know their own performance from month to month and take responsibility for the number of days absent from school

Role of Parent/Guardian

- Ensure their child is in school each day
- Communicate any absence to the office staff before 9am by phone
- Respond to any text message or e mail regarding the reason for their daughter's absence
- Provide a written reason for their daughter's absence immediately their child returns to school. This letter must include pupil's name, dates of absence and reason for absence
- Communicates with HOY regarding any issues which may result in poor attendance

Role of Form Teacher

- Ensure the roll is marked accurately during registration as well as in subject classes
- Full attendance should be viewed as an expectation of all pupils
- Inform pupils of their % attendance monthly and number of days absent
- Record the number of days 'lost learning' per month in their Student Planner

- Liaise with HOY in relation to absences-the awareness of emerging patterns, single random days off on a weekly basis.
- Communicate with pupils in relation to attendance on a daily basis.

Role of the Head of Year

- Implement the Attendance Policy.
- Set targets for all classes and review at end of each month.
- To communicate with parents by letter when attendance drops below 95%.
- Liaise with parents face to face to encourage their daughter's attendance from an early stage. Attendance must always be on the agenda for all student/teacher interviews and meetings with parents
- Analyse individual's attendance as well as having an over view of a whole year group's performance
- Attendance should be an agenda item for all pastoral meetings.
- Discuss and formulate strategies for improvement and monitoring of attendance.
- To develop, implement and monitor a Reward system which would include those who have high attendance rates
- Refer pupils to EWO following meeting with parents if attendance does not improve within two weeks
- Meet with the EWO on a monthly basis to discuss all referrals and those on the Borderline
- Produce a guide for parents in relation to the need for full attendance as laid down by the Department of Education

Role of Office Staff

- File any absence notes brought in to school.
- Manage the daily texting service to the parents of absent students
- Generate monthly data for HOYs
- Prepare individual attendance data for intervention meetings with parents

Procedures

Procedure
HOYs and FTs monitor attendance monthly and communicate with Director of Pastoral Care to any concerns
Parents of absent students are texted daily asking for an explanation for the absence All students are expected to bring in an absence note on their return to school
Letters are sent to parents alerting them to below 95%
Letters sent alerting parents to below 90%-2 nd letter. HOY will communicate at this stage with parents by phone or a meeting in school HOYs to communicate with parent before referrals are made. This Below 85% letter will be sent at this stage there may be EWO involvement depending on EWO/HOY judgement. may be done by phone or meeting in school
HOY/EWO meet on a monthly basis to discuss those students below 85% and ascertain the strategies which could be used to encourage improvement
Attendance is always an item on the weekly Pastoral meeting

Monitoring of Attendance

The monitoring of individual pupil attendance will be a major role of both Form teacher and Head of year. The Form teacher is in the unique position of having daily contact with the students and can see trends developing. Support can be put into place at an early stage.

Strategies for improving attendance should be discussed regularly at Pastoral team meetings and good practice shared.

Exit procedures

Parents are expected to ensure their child is in school every day. If a parent needs to take her daughter from the premises for a medical appointment which cannot be made outside of school hours, they must sign the child out and ensure they return as soon as possible.

Celebration of good attendance

It is vital that pupils who are good attendees or who are punctual or who have had improved attendance are rewarded accordingly and are given incentives to acknowledge improvements in both attendance and timekeeping

Criteria	Reward
Full attendance on a monthly basis	Rewards for excellent monthly attendance are presented across all key stages There will be a build-up of rewards depending on the number of months excellent attendance is recorded for each student. These vary from certificates/messages home/Breakfast etc. Excellent attendance across the year is celebrated by the presentation of an enamel badge.
Those whose attendance has improved over a period of time	Students who are involved with the Attendance Support Officer and who show improvement are rewarded on a monthly basis

Review of Policy

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Pastoral team and amendments made.