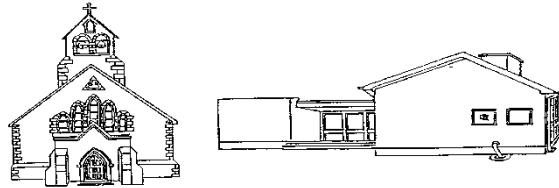


Saint Mary's Primary School



Attendance Policy

5 Aughlisnafin Road, Castlewellan, BT31 9JP

Principal: Mr. Conor Murphy Telephone: 437 78460

St Mary's Primary School Aughlisnafin

Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. Saint 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.

Engaging Hearts, Inspiring Minds, Serving Our Community

Aims

At St. Mary's Primary School we aim

- to maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St. Mary's.
- to develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- to provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
- to promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers 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 placed as an agenda at each meeting.

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

To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2021/16, which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202116-attendance-guidance-and-absence-recording-by-schools>

St. Mary's Primary school is committed to work with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent/Guardian

Parents/guardians have a legal duty (through Article 45 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.

If a child is registered in school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility 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, a phone call to the office or by emailing the 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.

Absences related to COVID 19 will be viewed in line with current advice from the PHA. If a parent requires further guidance they can check the school Letters section on the parent area of the school's website or contact the school office for clarification.

Pupils are expected to be in school for 09.00 for registration and the beginning of the classes. Pupils may arrive at school from 08.45 onwards. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Roles 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 a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return. If you have any concerns about school or are finding it difficult arriving in school on time you may discuss this with a class teacher or the school's designated teacher (Mr Higgins) or deputy designated teacher (Mrs McEvoy).

Absence Procedures

All parents/carers are required to give notification of absences which provides a clear reason for any absence. This can be communicated through email, in a letter returned with the pupil to school or via a phone call to the office.

Family holidays during Term Time

St. Mary's 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.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

The school will try to work alongside the parent to ensure their child readjusts to school. In case of regular non-attendance, the school will:

Regularly communicate with parents

Meet with the parents/guardian to suggest pathway to return.

Meet with pupils to receive their contribution.

Have rewards for attendance and attendance charts to motivate.

Develop pupil of the week focuses for attendance.

Adapt timetables to allow pupils to adjust to school life with regular revision to aim for full attendance.

Working alongside outside bodies such as RISE and EWOs to support the family in returning to school.

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their child'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.

Signature – Principal

Signature – Chair, Board of Governors

Date