

# St. Mary's Primary School, Killyleagh



*“Learning Today for a Better Tomorrow”*

## **Pupil Attendance Policy**

Policy reviewed by staff – Sept 2024

Policy presented to parents for consultation – Oct 2024

Policy reviewed and ratified by Governors-

Signature of Chair \_\_\_\_\_

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.

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

### **Mission Statement**

In St. Mary's Primary School, staff aim to create a caring environment, where children feel safe and secure, where they know they are valued as individuals and have a high self-esteem. Our vision is based on our school motto '*Learning today for a better tomorrow.*'

### **Aims**

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Saint Mary's.
2. To develop a framework 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.

### **Rational**

This policy sets shared expectations about attendance in St Mary's P.S. with an understanding that pupils, staff, and parents all have their part to play. We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance within a framework of agreed roles and responsibilities. This policy has been created in accordance with [DE Circular 2024/13 attendance guidance & absence recording by schools](#) and reflects the **DE Improving Pupil Attendance Strategy: Miss School=Miss Out, Give your child a helping hand, try and stop me**. All pupils, parents and staff have been consulted on the content of this policy.

### **Role of the School**

The principal 'Mrs Martin' at St Mary's Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention and inform Mrs Hagan the Designated Teacher for Child Protection as well.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is a standing agenda item at each meeting.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of 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 which can be found at the following link:

[Summary of Attendance Codes on C2K -August 2024](#)

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

### **Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents/guardians have a legal duty 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's/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence via the following methods of communication:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Methods of Communication</b>
Nurture Early Years	Mrs Hagan	via Seesaw
Nurture Key Stage One	Miss Morrison/Miss Lyons	Via Seesaw
P1 & P2	Mrs Black	via Seesaw
P3 & P4	Miss King	via Seesaw
P5	Mrs Martin / Mrs Mc Crory	via Seesaw
P6 & P7	Mr Morgan	via Seesaw

Parents may telephone the School Secretary Mrs Williams or contact the school via email on [dwilliams601@c2kni.net](mailto:dwilliams601@c2kni.net)

This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to 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.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 8:55 in the morning and at 12:40 in the afternoon for registration and the beginning of classes. 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 Mrs Martin 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 a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

### **Absence Procedures**

In St Mary's Primary School parents should notify the school of a child's absence as soon as possible. If this is via email or phone call to the office this will be passed on to the class teacher when possible. Parents are encouraged to send a Seesaw message to the teacher. The teacher will mark the attendance register accordingly using attendance codes as advised in Circular 2024/13. If a pupil has been absent from school, a note from a parent/guardian must be provided via the agreed methods to the class teacher as outlined in page 3 of this policy.

If a pupil is attending medical appointments, please also provide a scan or photographic copy advising of this via the agreed methods of communication. Attendance is marked daily in morning and afternoon sessions, so it is important that any absences are recorded.

### **Family holidays during Term Time**

St Mary's Primary School discourages holidays and outings 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. (Extended Leave Application - See Appendix)

### **Procedures for Managing Non-Attendance**

The attendance of pupils will be monitored by class teachers and SLT of the school. When a child's attendance reaches 90%, the class teacher will make a phone call home to discuss pupil attendance

with the parent. If the pupil's attendance continues to drop, the principal will make a phone call home to discuss the issue with the parent.

Incentives will also be in place e.g. certificates to celebrate attendance on a yearly basis and an attendance cup awarded on Prize Day for the pupils with greatest attendance.

### **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 children'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.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

St Mary's Primary School's Safeguarding Team will annually review the Attendance Policy. The policy's effectiveness will be evaluated in the event of a change of legislation, training or following an incident.

<b>Amended</b>	<b>September 2024</b>	Reflect guidance from DENI. <a href="https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202413-attendance-guidance-absence-recording-by-schools-2024/13">https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-202413-attendance-guidance-absence-recording-by-schools-2024/13</a> Attendance guidance and absence recording by schools. Reflect guidance from nidirect. <a href="https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/try-and-stop-me">https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/try-and-stop-me</a> <a href="https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/miss-school-miss-out">https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/miss-school-miss-out</a> <a href="https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/give-your-child-helping-hand">https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/give-your-child-helping-hand</a>
<b>Reviewed by Staff</b>	<b>October 2024</b>	
<b>Date Ratified by BOG:</b>		
<b>Date of next review:</b>		

Signature - Principal:	Mrs F. Martin
Signature - Chair, Board of Governors:	Mrs C. Clark
Date:	

# Appendix

## ABSENCE NOTIFICATION FORM

**Please Note - This form must be completed for each period of pupil absence and returned to the school immediately.**

Name of Pupil	
Class / Teacher Name	
Date(s) of Absence.	
Reason	
Signed (Parent / Guardian)	
Date	

*Please click below to view an online editable absence note.*

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h7fXf5jggMXBbRFDep6ASCaM9J3rJlt/view?usp=sharing>

## Extended Leave Application



DENI Ref:	4033036	
School Name:	St Mary's Primary School, Killyleagh	
Pupil(s) Name:		
Proposed start date of Extended Leave		
Proposed end date of Extended Leave		
Reason for Extended Leave Have you given due consideration to the following: <i>(Please ensure all considerations have been documented and kept)</i>	Safeguarding concerns/child protection issues	yes / not applicable.
	Any SEN issues	yes / not applicable
	EA Services involved	yes / not applicable
	Provision of education whilst away	yes / not applicable
	Previous requests for extended leave	yes / not applicable. (if so, provide date of last approval)
Name of parent / guardian:		
Relationship to pupil(s):		
Mobile:		
Email address:		
Approval granted:	Yes / No	
Extended Leave Start Date:		
Extended Leave End Date:		
Reason for decision:		
Signature of Principal/SLT		
Signature of Parent:		
Designated staff contact:		
Phone:		
Email address:		

**A copy of this form is provided to the pupil's parent / guardian and a copy is kept on the pupil's file.**

*(All data contained on this form will be stored in accordance with GDPR)*