

**St. Patrick's
High School**



Attendance Policy

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Mission Statement

As a Catholic School in partnership with parents and the community, the school seeks to provide children of all abilities with a secure, caring, stimulating and happy environment where high values of work, personal integrity and learning can be achieved and where all pupils are encouraged to develop their talents and character and to contribute positively to home, school, church and society.

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Good attendance is essential if students are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which equip them for life.

Our school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which students, staff, parents and the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership.

The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and pastoral staff will liaise with home and other agencies about a child's attendance when this is appropriate.

In St Patrick's High School, good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such with awards such as certificates and prizes.

The school has a statutory obligation to record daily attendance for every student. To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2017/15, which can be found at the following link:
www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/circular-201715-attendance-guidance-andabsence-recording-by-schools

THE SCHOOL'S EXPECTATIONS ON ATTENDANCE

To ensure regular attendance, punctuality and high standards of uniform, St Patrick's High School has the following expectations from pupils and parents.

Pupils:

- That they will attend school regularly;
- That they will arrive on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day;
- That they will arrive punctually to each class on their daily timetable.

Parents:

- That they encourage their children to attend school;
- That they contact the office between 8.30 and 9.3 am, whenever their child is unable to attend, or send a note explaining why their child was absent from school on the first day after the child returns to school.

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.

Pupils and parents can expect the following from St Patrick's High School

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and time keeping;
- Contact from the school when a pupil fails to attend and when no contact has been made from home within two days;
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend without good reason and when there has been a pattern of absences or an excessive number of absences or lateness;
- Immediate action on any problem notified to us, in confidence if necessary;
- Positive measure to encourage good attendance;
- A high quality education.

At the beginning of each lesson, the class teacher will use Lesson Monitor to mark the attendance. Teachers can observe if a pupil has been present during the previous lesson and absent for the current one. In this instance, the teacher will contact the Form Teacher, or send an email if phone contact is not possible.

A child should only be absent if the reason is 'unavoidable'. Every absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either 'authorised' or unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoons away from school for an acceptable reason such as illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable or for which no permission has been given. This includes:

- Shopping
- House sitting
- Absconding
- Absences which have never properly been explained.

Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not 'unavoidable'.

Attendance Letters Home- We operate a 3- Letter System to inform you if your child's attendance falls below what is expected.

Letter 1

If your child's attendance falls below 95% 'Letter 1' may be sent to you. This is to inform you that your child's attendance is below the school's target %. We will be monitoring to see an improvement in attendance.

Letter 2

If your child's attendance continues to fall 'Letter 2 ' will be sent. You will be invited to the school to discuss your child's attendance with a member of our pastoral team. These meetings are usually very beneficial and informative to parents and the school alike. At these meetings support is offered

if required and strategies are discussed to help improve attendance where applicable.

Letter 3

If your child's attendance continues to fall below 90% 'Letter 3' will be sent. This will inform you a referral to an Education Welfare Officer is being considered and a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings may be incurred by parents/guardians.

EWO Referral

If your child's attendance over a 6 -week period falls below 85%, a referral to the Educational Welfare [EWO] will occur. You will receive a letter of notification of this referral.

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.

POSITIVE MEASURES TO ENCOURAGE GOOD ATTENDANCE

- Registers will be completed accurately at the start of each day;
- The class teacher will monitor them at the beginning of each lesson;
- They will be monitored daily by Form Teachers through Lesson Monitor;
- Attendance and punctuality will be monitored by Form Teachers and communicated to parents through homework diary/letter.
- Prizes for pupils with best and most improved attendance;
- Certificates presented each half term in recognition of attendance of greater than 98%;
- Awards for pupils who have an overall attendance of 100%;
- Discussion with Year Head and Education Welfare Officer when pupil attendance falls below 85%;
- Regular reviews and meetings with parents;
- A high level of attendance will merit a strong and supportive reference from the school to future employers.

PUNCTUALITY/LATENESS

St Patrick's High School places a great deal of importance on the need to be punctual and to arrive to school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the school day but also it shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids disruption of teaching.

1: All children who arrive into school after Assembly starts at 8.50am will have their name recorded in the Late Book in the front office.

2: Any student who arrives after first class has started (9.00 am) will be required to sign the late book in the front office and be marked late on SIMS by the class teacher.

Students who accumulate 3 unauthorised incidences of lateness will be required to remain in school from 3.15pm to 4pm on the Friday following the 3rd incident to compensate for lost learning time.

When a pupil is late because of a Medical, Dental or Optical appointment he/she must sign the Late Book on arrival in school and show the appointment card or letter to the office staff who can then amend the register accordingly with a present mark.

LEAVING THE SCHOOL PREMISES DURING THE DAY

If a pupil needs to leave the school during the day, they may only do so by:

1: Showing their Form Teacher/Head of Year a letter signed by a parent/guardian. The Form Teacher/Head of Year will give the pupils an 'Early Release' slip which parents must sign when collecting the pupil from reception.

2: The office staff will update the registers accordingly. Under NO circumstances should a student leave the school without having signed out.

If a student is found to have left the premises without prior permission:

- Parents will be informed that their child is out of school without permission;
- The pupil will receive an after school detention;
- If a pupil 'absconds' for the entire day, the Education Welfare Officer will be informed and parents will be invited to school for a meeting to discuss issues raised. The pupil will receive a two day detention.