

Education Welfare Service

Every school has a link Education and Welfare Officer (EWO). Their aim is to reduce unnecessary absences from school by offering support and help to pupils, parents and schools.

A school must make a referral to Education Welfare Service when a pupils' attendance is a cause for concern or when attendance drops below 85%.

The EWO can suggest things that parents can do to help improve matters and can put parents in touch with other agencies that may be able to offer further advice and help. If the problem is of a practical nature, the EWO can also offer advice about free school meals, uniform grants and transport to school.

Family Holidays during Term Time

You can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not taking holidays during term time. Any child or young person who is absent from school due to a holiday will miss out on important learning and so may fall behind with their school work.

Family holidays taken during term time are categorised as 'unauthorised absence', even when the school has been informed by a parent. Only in exceptional circumstances can a holiday be authorised.

How Parents Can Help

- Establish a good routine in the mornings and evenings so your child is prepared for the school day ahead.
- Make sure your child goes to school regularly and follows the school rules.
- Ensure your child arrives at school on time – not late.

- Arrange dental and medical appointments outside school hours when possible.
- Always inform the school if your child is absent due to illness – this should be followed up with a written note when your child returns to school.
- Take family holidays outside term time.
- Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work (including homework).
- Attend parent evenings and school events.
- Praise and reward your child's achievements at school.
- Always support school staff in their efforts to control difficult or challenging behaviour.
- Discuss any problems or difficulties with the school – staff are there to help and will be supportive.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS –

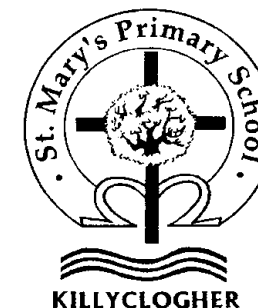
Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Attendance percentages can be misleading.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	9 Days of Absence 1 Week and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Satisfactory
90% Attendance	19 Days of Absence 3 Weeks and 4 Days of Learning Missed	Poor
85% Attendance	28 Days of Absence 5 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Very Poor
80% Attendance	38 Days of Absence 7 Weeks and 3 Days of Learning Missed	Unacceptable
75% Attendance	46 Days of Absence 9 Weeks and 1 Day of Learning Missed	Unacceptable

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that's nearly 4 school weeks.

St. Mary's Primary School, Killyclogher



School Attendance Policy

Review of Policy	March 2023
Ratification of Policy by the Board of Governors	March 2023
Next Review Date	March 2026

Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child has full access to the school curriculum and so reach their potential. St. Mary's Primary School strives to promote an ethos where each pupil feels valued and secure in a culture which encourages good attendance.

Aims

1. To maintain and improve the overall attendance of pupils at St. Mary's Primary School.
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.

Role of the School

The **Principal** of St. Mary's PS has overall responsibility for school attendance.

Teachers regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions. The Teachers of St. Mary's PS are responsible for communicating any concerns around attendance to parents and for bringing any ongoing concerns regarding individual pupil attendance to the Principal's attention.

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

Role of the Parent

St. Mary's PS is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. The school records and monitors attendance in line with Department of Education guidance.

Under Article 45 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 ("the 1986 Order"), it is the duty of parents who have a child of compulsory school age¹ 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. This applies to all children of compulsory school age who are on the roll of a school. As a parent you are legally responsible for making this happen.

Responsibility of getting your child to school on time

Pupils are expected to be in school in their classroom by the time the morning bell rings at 9.00am for the beginning of lessons. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that your child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record.

Responsibility of keeping school informed

It is a parent'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. If the absence is likely to be

prolonged, this information should be provided to the school.

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.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at St. Mary's Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Non-attendance at school may occur as a block of absence for a number of consecutive days or as persistent, regular absence, e.g. every Friday afternoon or one day per fortnight. Where attendance is a cause for concern, the following procedures will be followed:

- 1) The Class Teacher will discuss this with the parent(s) at the earliest opportunity. Any issues regarding attendance will be discussed at the annual Parent/Teacher Meeting and an Attendance Percentage will appear on the child's written Annual Report.
- 2) If individual pupil attendance continues to be an issue following the intervention of the Class Teacher, the Principal will arrange to discuss this further with parents.
- 3) When a pupils' attendance remains a cause for concern or when attendance drops below 85%, the Principal must make a referral to the Education Welfare Service.