Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock

Attendance Policy for Students

Policy Details

Legal Status	Adopted	Version Date	Last Review	Next Review	Responsible
Statutory	2nd June 2020	June 2020	June 2017	June 2023	Ms McCarthy

Related Documents and Location
1. School Improvement Plan
2. Child Protection/Safeguarding Policy
3. Pastoral Care Policy
4. Study Leave Policy
5. Anti-Bullying Policy
6. Educational Visits Policy
7. Special Educational Needs Policy
8. DE Circular 2019/14 (as amended) - Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording by Schools
9. DE: Miss School = Miss Out: Improving Pupil Attendance Strategy
10. DE: School Attendance Matters: A Parent's Guide

All policies are available on the College Website and Private Folders.
Department of Education (DE) - www.education-ni.gov.uk/

Contents

1.   Introduction

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 his/her potential. In keeping with our Mission Statement, Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock strives to promote a school ethos and culture which values and encourages good attendance and where each student feels safe and secure. Good attendance is consistently recognised and rewarded through the College Merit System and at annual College and Education Authority (SE Region) Award Ceremonies. To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way, the College adheres to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2019/14 (as amended). This Attendance Policy for Students also reflects guidance in Miss School = Miss Out: Improving Pupil Attendance Strategy (DE, December 2016) and the documents listed on Page 7.

2.   Aims

1. To maximise the attendance rate of students to ensure they reach their full potential and improve their life chances.
2. To improve the overall attendance of students as per the College's three-year average target in the School Improvement Plan.
3. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
4. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and students.
5. To recognise and reward good attendance.
6. To implement strategies to improve poor attendance.
7. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

3.   Role of the School

Improving attendance is an integral part of the College's School Improvement Plan. The College's Pastoral Team, which includes subject teachers, Tutors, Heads of Year, Heads of School and the Vice Principal (Pastoral), has responsibility for school attendance; the Vice Principal (Pastoral) has overall responsibility for monitoring school attendance as part of the School Improvement Plan and liaising with the Education Welfare Service. Attendance is recorded by the Tutor during Morning Registration. Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of students by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of every lesson on SIMS Lesson Monitor. The Student Secretary has particular responsibility for collating all attendance data on a daily basis and providing relevant reports to DE. She also prints off attendance lists at 9.35am every morning which are used in the event of an emergency evacuation. The Board of Governors provides support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets. School attendance is part of the Principal's report which is an agenda item at every meeting of the Board of Governors.

4.   Role of Parent/Guardian

It is widely accepted that the attitudes of parents/guardians can have a significant impact on the school attendance levels of children. The College is, therefore, committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance for all students.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

"Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise." (Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

If a student has been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the Tutor on the day the student returns, stating the reason for any absence. In the event of a student being absent for three consecutive days, it is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the College by telephone of the reason for this absence on the third day. 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.

Students are expected to be in school at 9.20am for Registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at Registration and recorded on a child's attendance record.

If a child appears reluctant to attend school, parents should discuss the matter promptly with the Tutor/Head of Year to ensure that both parents and students receive maximum support.

Parents/Guardians should be aware of the link between student attendance levels and their subsequent academic achievement. They should cooperate with and support the College's Pastoral Team if they recommend actions to address their child's poor attendance.

5.   Role of Students

Each student has a duty to ensure that he/she attends school punctually for Registration at 9.20am. He/She should attend school regularly and aim to meet or indeed exceed the College's attendance target. Every student is required to set a personal attendance target at the beginning of each academic year and track his/her attendance in the Student Planner every month. All students are required to follow the absence procedures outlined below.

6.   Absence Procedures

If a student has been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the Tutor on the day he/she returns, stating the reason for any absence. The Tutor will then enter the reason for this absence on Lesson Monitor using the Absence Codes in Appendix 2.

If a student arrives late to school, he/she must sign the Late Book outside the Student Office, write a reason for his/her absence and report to his/her Head of Year with a written note from his/her parents/guardians.

If a student has an appointment and needs to leave school early, he/she must bring a written note from his/her parents/guardians to his/her Head of Year/School at 9.30am and sign the Early Departure Book outside the Student Office before leaving the premises. If a student returns to the College after an appointment, he/she must sign the Late Book outside the Student Office to indicate that he/she has returned to school.

The Student Secretary has responsibility for printing off a list of Unexplained Absences to be placed in the tutor file every Monday.

Heads of Year are responsible for monitoring absence procedures in the respective year group and ensuring that all absences are accounted for.

7.   Every School Day Counts

Every single day a student is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning. Attendance percentages can be misleading. The College uses statements from the Department of Education table below when reporting on student attendance.

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

8.	**Family Holidays**

Family holidays should not be taken in term time due to the adverse impact they have on students' learning. Family holidays taken during term time that are not agreed will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Any leave of absence can only be agreed by the Principal and only exceptional circumstances will be considered. At least one month's notice in writing should be given to the Principal. In no case should students be absent during internal or public examinations.

9.	**Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

Attendance data for each individual student and tutor group is printed off by the Student Secretary at the end of each month and is monitored by Tutors, Heads of Year, Heads of School and the Vice Principal (Pastoral).

Early intervention is crucial to avoid the emergence of poor patterns of attendance and, on occasion, a student may require a form of tailored support to improve attendance. The College's Pastoral Team utilises a range of interventions to tackle particular barriers to attendance.

Students whose attendance falls below 90% will be interviewed by their Head of Year. The Head of Year will endeavour to determine the root cause of poor attendance and targets will be set for improvement. A letter (Att1) will be sent home to parents/guardians if the Head of Year deems a student has no valid reason for poor attendance. If poor attendance persists, students will be interviewed by their Head of School and a second letter (Att2) will be sent home to parents/guardians. A referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service (Att3) if attendance does not improve within an agreed timeframe.

10.	**Education Welfare Service**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service has a legal responsibility to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education. Regular attendance is an essential requirement for good educational outcomes and where attendance difficulties exist or a Year 8-12 student's attendance falls below 85%, the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents/guardians in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance. The Education Authority will take legal action, where appropriate, to ensure a child receives an appropriate education.

The Vice Principal (Pastoral) will meet with a representative from the Education Welfare Service every term.

11.	**Procedures for Monitoring and Evaluating this Policy**

The implementation and effectiveness of this policy is monitored by means of:

- Data from SIMS Lesson Monitor;
- Feedback from Student Councils;
- Discussion at Pastoral Care Meetings;
- Consultation between Heads of School and Vice Principal (Pastoral) to quantify reports of poor attendance and to monitor the impact of support given.

The Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) and Heads of School review the policy every three years to inform and support improvements in practice.

Students and parents are encouraged to contact the Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) at any time to express their views on the policy.

12. **How to Raise a Concern or Make a Complaint about the Administration of this Policy**

If you have a concern or complaint about the administration of this policy please contact Ms McCarthy, Vice Principal, in the first instance. If necessary, you may then access and follow the College's Parental Complaints Procedure which is available on the College website at www.knock.co.uk. Should you remain dissatisfied with the College's response after completing the internal complaints procedure, you can bring your complaint to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman within six months. Contact details for the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman are provided on Page 11 of the Parental Complaints Procedure.

Signed:	*Mr Leo O'Reilly*	**Date:**	*2nd June 2020*
	(Chairperson of Board of Governors)		
Signed:	*Miss Deborah McLaughlin*	**Date:**	*2nd June 2020*
	(Principal)		

Related Documents

DE Circular 2013/09 (11/04/13) - Teaching Days and Hours of Attendance

DE: School Attendance Matters: A Parent's Guide (18/04/13)

ETI: Part One: Attendance in Schools - ETI Good Practice Report (July 2016)

DE Circular 2016/22 (17/11/16) - Guidance on the Enrolment Status of Pupils, including those Subject to SEN and EOTAS Referrals, using Dual Registration

DE: Miss School = Miss Out: Improving Pupil Attendance Strategy (December 2016)

DE: Safeguarding and Child Protection - A Guide for Schools (2017)

DE Circular 2019/13 (06/10/19) - School Optional Days and Exceptional Closure Days

DE Circular 2019/14 (13/10/19) - Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording by Schools

Absence Codes: Guidance for Schools

CODE	DESCRIPTION	STATISTICAL MEANING
**/ **	Present: / = (AM): \ = (PM)	Present
A*	Artistic Endeavour	Authorised Absence
B*	Bereavement	Authorised Absence
C	Suspended	Authorised Absence
D	No reason provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
F*	Family Holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G*	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence
H*	Other Absence	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	Authorised Absence
J*	Extended Leave	Attendance not required
L*	Late (before registration closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence (temporary code only)	Unauthorised Absence
O*	Other Exceptional Circumstances	Authorised Absence
P*	Approved Activity	Approved Educational Activity
R*	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S*	Study Leave	Approved Educational Activity
U*	Late (after registration closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V*	Educational Visit/Examination	Approved Educational Activity
W*	Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity
X	Only staff should attend	Attendance not required
Y*	Exceptional Closure	Attendance not required
#	Holiday for all	Attendance not required
!*	No attendance required	Attendance not required
1	Community Providers/EOTAS (organised by the EA)	Approved Educational Activity
2	Exceptional Teaching Arrangement/hospital tuition (organised by the EA)	Approved Educational Activity
3	Elective Home Education	Attendance not required
4	Pupil Referral Unit	Approved Educational Activity
5	Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework)	Approved Educational Activity
6	Training Organisation (under Entitlement Framework)	Approved Educational Activity
7	FE College (under Entitlement Framework)	Approved Educational Activity
8	Intensive Support Learning Unit	Approved Educational Activity
9	CAMHS/Mental Health Support	Approved Educational Activity

*The use of this code is at the direction of the school.

DE Circular 2019/14 (October 2019) - Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording by Schools