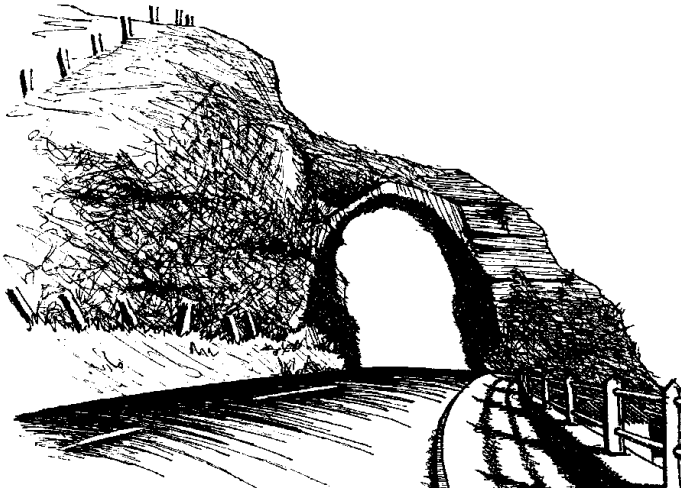


St Patrick's Primary School, Glenariff



Pupil Attendance Policy

Mr M. Dinsmore
Principal

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Chairperson of the Board of Governors

Policy Date: November, 2023
Review Date: November, 2026

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 their potential.

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

The most recent statistics available from the Department of Education show that for 2021-22, the average attendance in primary schools in Northern Ireland was 91.6%. In St Patrick's, our average attendance for that year was 94.6%, keeping us above the average attendance rates. We aim to continue to work hard to ensure our attendance is above 95% in line with government recommendations, which links greater attendance to many success factors in life including achieving greater success in exam results and building confidence and self-esteem in young people.

In St Patrick's Primary School, we follow our school mission statement in our teaching and learning day.

We are all valued.
We always do our best.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St Patrick's Primary School and reduce unauthorised absences.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance and punctuality.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and other agencies in the implementation of this policy.
5. To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the whole school community – teachers, parents and pupils.
6. To provide a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data.
7. To implement a system for rewards and sanctions to promote good attendance and the value of punctuality.

Role of the School

The Principal at St Patrick's Primary School has overall responsibility for school attendance; class teachers and/or school secretary should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to their 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.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon 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 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

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

Role of Parent

Parents/guardians have a legal duty¹ 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 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 by contacting the school secretary via phone call to on 028 2077 1619 or email info@stpatricks.glenariff.ni.sch.uk 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 arrive in school at 9.00am for registration and the beginning of lessons. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is officially recorded after 9.15am. Those children arriving after 10.00am and 1.00pm without a valid reason, will be recorded as absent for the relevant session.

If a child appears reluctant to attend school the matter should be discussed promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that both parent and child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at St Patrick's Primary School must attend school punctually and regularly. If a child has been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the class teacher when they return.

Absence Procedures

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 by contacting the school secretary via phone call to on 028 2077 1619 or email info@stpatricks.glenariff.ni.sch.uk This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school.

Family holidays during Term Time

Following Department of Education guidelines, St Patrick's Primary School discourages holidays during term time due to the significant impact they can have on pupils' learning. Parents are provided with details of the school holidays at the beginning of the year and are encouraged to plan holidays during these dates. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Children will not be given work by their teacher to complete during unauthorised holiday absences.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Where possible, medical/dental appointments should be taken out of school hours. If a child attends an appointment during school hours, they will be recorded as present providing they return to school for the remainder of the school day. Otherwise, it will be recorded as a Medical Absence.

¹ Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

Non-school Organised Events

Children who are representing the school in a competition or perhaps taking a music, dance or drama examination organised by the school will be recorded as having attended school. Absences due to attendance at non-school organised activities (drama, dance, music etc.) will be recorded as an Authorised Absence.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

- A positive reward system is used including a draw during assembly to reward all those who have achieved 100% attendance for that month. Badges will be awarded at the end of each term and 100% certificates will be rewarded at the end of the year.
- Parents will be contacted by school when there is an unexplained absence from school.
- Reminder notes are sent out to parents where a note has not been provided on the day of return.
- Percentage attendance is recorded on the pupils' report at the end of the year
- Attendances are monitored, any child whose absence gives cause for concern e.g. below 90% attendance, will be contacted by the principal prior to a contact by the Education Welfare Officer.
- Parents are encouraged to inform school in advance of planned absences, for example medical or dental appointments, either by written note to the teacher or by telephoning the school on (028) 2177 1619.
- Where a child has to leave school for a medical appointment, parents should make all reasonable efforts to ensure the child comes back into school where possible.
- Medical appointments and sporting events, particularly when this happens on a regular basis, may affect a pupil's attendance and reasonable efforts should be made to arrange these outside of school hours, with the exception of sporting events where the child is representing the school.
- In the case of persistent unexplained absences or where the attendance has dropped below 85%, the school may contact the Education Welfare Officer to seek further guidance or advice.

Education Welfare Service

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

If a pupil's absence causes concern, or if their attendance falls below 85%, 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.