**St. Brigid’s Primary/Nursery School**

**Attendance Policy for Parents**

This policy is written taking account of the Department of Education Northern Ireland Circular 2019/14 requirements*.*

**Why** **is attendance important?**

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

**Department of Education Circular 2019/14 s**tates that “regular attendance at school is crucial to raising standards in education and ensuring every child has full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential”.

We expect all children on the roll to attend every day, when the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.



Poor attendance can seriously affect your child’s:

* attainment in school
* relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
* confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others

**Good attendance – what are the benefits and what are the consequences of missing a few days over the school year?**

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| **There are 180 non- school days a year****For enjoying family time, holidays, trips, visits, shopping, seeing friends, travelling and getting regular dental and optician checks**  |
| **185** | **180** | **176** | **174** | **170** | **166** | **162** | **159** |
| days of education | days of education | days of education | days of education | days of education | days of education | days of education | days of education |
| **100%** | **97.2%** | **95.1%** | **94%** | **91.8%** | **89.7%** | **87.5%** | **85.9%** |
| No absences | Approx 5 days absence per year | Approx 6 days absence per year | Approx 7 days absence a year | Approx 10 days absence per year | Approx 15 days absence per year | Approx 18 days absence per year | Approx 29 days absence per year |
| **Excellent**  | **Very Good**  | **Good**  | **Satisfactory** | **Not satisfactory**  | **Causing serious concern**  |
|  | Absence will affect attainment and progress. | Children will find it extremely difficult to keep up and are unlikely to achieve their best. |

**The average attendance in Northern Ireland 2017-18 was 94.9%. At St. Brigid’s in the same year, attendance was 91.1% Our expectation is that all children will attend school for at least 94.9% of the time (Northern Ireland average).**

**Informing School of Absence – Please telephone – or you can record this in your child’s Home Learning Diary.**

**Tel: 02871351929**

Parents are **expected** to inform the school of the reason for their child’s absence. On the first day of absence:

* + - * Record in your child’s Homework Diary.
* Phone the school. **Our new planned telephone system is set to receive absence messages; please make these on the first day of absence as early as possible and before 9.30am; so that staff in the office will pick them up.**
* Give the reason for absence and expected date of return.
* If you are unsure of a return date – please keep the school informed daily.

A message on the first day of absence is essential and if this is not received, designated staff will try to contact parents in order to ascertain the whereabouts of the child.

If no explanation of absence is given by the parent, the school will make enquiries of the parent/carer as to the reason for the child’s absence. If your child is absent without explanation for two days or more, or if the general pattern of attendance, including persistent lateness, gives cause for concern this will be referred to the Principal. Once a child’s attendance falls below 85% the Education Welfare Officer Mr Conan Murray becomes involved.



**Lateness Punctuality is an important life skill.**

**10 minutes late a day = nearly 1 hour of lessons missed each week = nearly 2 weeks of schooling each year!**

This is the equivalent of 95% attendance.

Children must be in class by 9.00am each day; the bell goes at 9.00am to ensure a prompt start. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.

The school doors will be locked at 9.10 am. Regular lateness is considered to be equally as serious as absence.

Punctuality is monitored and if lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to discuss the problem with the Class Teacher/Principal or both.

Letters will be sent to parents regarding high levels of regular lateness each month.

Referrals must be made to the Education Welfare Officer Mr Conan Murray. When attendance drops below 85% in accordance with Department of Education Circular 2019/14.

**Medical appointments**

It would be very helpful for your child’s learning if routine **optician, dentist and doctor appointments** were made out of school times, where possible.

**Absences During Term Time including Holidays**

Department of Education Requirements Circular 2019/14 **make clear that Principals should not grant any leave of absence (holidays) during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Any **application for term time absences** e.g holidays, must be made in writing to the Principal. It is usual for the Principal to discuss the application with the parent/ carer taking into consideration their child’s current attendance.

**Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

**Authorised Absence:** An absence is classified as authorised when your child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example:

* Sickness
* When participating in approved public performances (evidence will be required)
* Bereavement
* Out of class for medical reasons

If the school is satisfied that the reason for absence is exceptional, the absence will be authorised. In all other circumstances and when no explanation is received at all the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

**Unauthorised Absence:** An absence is classified as unauthorised when your child is away from school without the permission of the Principal.

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

* Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
* Absences that have never been properly explained
* Holidays not agreed
* Extended holidays taken in September or June

Unauthorised absences will be recorded on your child’s on-going Sims record.

**Procedures for Monitoring Attendance**

All instances of absence and lateness are recorded. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

**Step 1**: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home.

**Step 2**: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parent/carer.

**Step 3**: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, and the Principal.

**Step 4**: If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Officer to deal with the on-going issues and provide support.

**Good Attendance**

St. Brigid’s Primary/Nursery School will promote regular attendance by:

* Awarding a shield to the class with the highest attendance and levels of punctuality each week. They will receive 10 minutes extra play on Friday.
* Each child with 100% attendance is recognised in our End of Term Reward Assembly.
* End of year annual attendance will be recognised with a keepsake pin.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 95% - 97% attendance | 98 % to 99.9% attendance | 100% attendance |
| Bronze Star | Silver Star | Gold Star |

# ST BRIGID’S PRIMARY, NURSERY SCHOOL AND SPECIAL CLASSES

**Attendance Policy**



 Policy Reviewed Autumn 2019

 Final Draft

‘Be the Best that you can be’.

 Next Review Date Autumn 2022

 Signed ………………………………………………… Chair of Governors

 Signed…………………………………………………… Principal