

St. Mary's P.S. Draperstown



PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed	May 2023
To be Reviewed	May 2026

Introduction

“Learning, Caring and Sharing Together”

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. Mary's P.S. Draperstown will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

Aims

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at St. Mary's PS Draperstown.
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 continue with our strong working relationships with Lynn Dinsmore, our Education Welfare Officer, and the Education Welfare Service in general.

Role of the School

At St. Mary's P.S. Draperstown, Ms Coyle has overall responsibility for school attendance; teaching staff bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.

The Board of Governors provides 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 registration 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: Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording by Schools – Updated Circular 2021/16, which can be found at the following link: [Update to 2021 16 - Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording By Schools.pdf \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/Update%20to%202021%2016%20-%20Attendance%20Guidance%20&%20Absence%20Recording%20By%20Schools.pdf)

St. Mary's P.S. Draperstown is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. Ms Coyle will contact parents if concerns arise.

Role of Parent Parents

Parents 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 has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school. 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 or a message on Seesaw. 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 be in school at 9.00 am for registration and the beginning of classes. 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. 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.

Parents can access additional information regarding attendance at the following link.

[School Attendance | Department of Education \(education-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/school-attendance)

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at St. Mary's 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 on return to school.

Absence Procedures:

- Parents/Guardians should contact the school by telephone or Seesaw to inform staff if your child is going to be absent.
- On return to school, Parents/Guardians are required to complete the attached absence notification form which provides a clear reason for any absence.

Family holidays during Term Time

St. Mary's PS discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

Procedures for Managing Non-attendance

Staff regularly monitor attendance within their class. They inform Ms. Coyle if there is a concern. If attendance falls below 90%, and there is not a valid reason for absence, parents are contacted to clarify, discuss, and support.

If attendance is falling below 90% and there is no valid reason, parents will receive a letter of concern.

The Education Welfare Service has 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 Education Welfare Service, if appropriate. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.