



St. Malachy's College

# Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy (2023)

# Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## 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 Malachy's College will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and punctuality and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

## Aims

1. To maintain and, where necessary improve, the overall attendance and punctuality of pupils at St Malachy's College.
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/carers and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

## Roles and Responsibilities

The College sets attendance targets within the School Development Plan and 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. The College will utilise the data from c2k Lesson Monitor system and in particular the Percentage Absence reports and the Absence Tier Reports. ParentApp will be used as the main communication channel for making parents aware of attendance and punctuality.

The Principal at St Malachy's College has overall responsibility for school attendance. The Vice Principal (Pastoral Care) has overall responsibility for the management and monitoring of attendance and punctuality. The Heads of School have responsibility for the management and monitoring of attendance

and punctuality in their section of the school. Each Head of Year will manage and monitor attendance and punctuality in their Year Group and each Form Tutor will monitor attendance and punctuality in his/ her class. (*Appendix 4 Roles and Responsibilities Chart*). In each lesson, subject teachers are responsible for recording attendance.

### The subject teacher will:

- regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded during each lesson (SIMS Lesson Monitor) and will promptly report any unauthorised absence to the Form Tutor or Head of Year

(Continued overleaf)

## Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

### **The Form Tutor will:**

- regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions
- update reasons provided for absence on SIMs using the procedures outlined by the College Attendance Officer
- contact parents/ carers if a note is not provided or if absence is causing concern and record any relevant contact on SIMs (Tier 1b)
- keep all absence notes/ emails and have them available if required
- discuss attendance targets with pupils as part of mentoring sessions
- pass any concerns on to the Head of Year particularly if attendance is under 95%
- monitor punctuality and, issue a detention for 5 lates. If there are pastoral/ SEN concerns, the issuing of the DT will be discussed with the HOY or Learning Support Co-ordinator
- contact parents if punctuality is a concern and record contact on SIMs.

### **The Head of Year will:**

- take responsibility for support and intervention for pupils whose attendance is below 95% (Tier 1a/1b) and has not improved with intervention from the Form Tutor
- liaise with the Form Tutor and parents/ carers if a pupil is ill and work needs to be provided
- offer pastoral support to pupils if there are pastoral reasons for poor attendance and punctuality
- contact and meet with parents if attendance and/or punctuality are a concern and record this contact on SIMs
- agree strategies with pupils/ parents to help improve attendance and/or punctuality
- issue a Head of Year detention for 10 lates unless there are valid pastoral/ SEN reasons

- implement agreed procedures for celebrating good attendance
- Liaise with College Matron to ensure "Return to School" meetings take place in cases of long term medical absence.

### **The Head of School will:**

- set attendance targets for each Year Group in their section as part of the SDP and monitor and review the targets
- the HOS Senior School will liaise with partner schools regarding attendance and punctuality for pupils in shared classes
- in conjunction with the Head of Year, offer pastoral support to pupils if there are pastoral reasons for poor attendance and punctuality
- contact parents, as required, (using the Attendance Letter Appendix 1 and include a copy of DENI, SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS A Parent's Guide: Appendix 2) (Tier 2). Where relevant, appropriate information will be sent regarding the number of lessons missed in specific subjects
- meet with parents if attendance and/or punctuality remain a concern after intervention by the Head of Year and where attendance is below 90%
- agree strategies with pupils/ parents to help improve attendance and/or punctuality drawing up Attendance Plans as required (Appendix 3)
- attend meetings with the EWO if a pupil in their section has been referred
- ensure that attendance and punctuality is addressed during Parental Information Sessions at the start of each academic year
- implement agreed procedures for celebrating good attendance in line with the merit/reward system in the Positive Behaviour Policy
- Liaise with parents regarding punctuality if latecoming remains an issue.

*(Continued overleaf)*

## Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

### **The Attendance Officer will:**

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- Send a weekly email reminder to Tutors regarding recording of absences
- liaise with tutors and HOYs to ensure reasons for absence are recorded are completed promptly and accurately
- provide guidelines for staff on recording absences and using accurate codes
- produce monthly reports of pupils under 90% for the Vice Principal
- check that the coding in attendance reports is in line with the descriptors in DENI circular Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording By Schools –Circular 2022/07 (and any further relevant circulars)
- record lates and maintain an updated data base of pupils with lates for Form Tutors and Heads of Year
- use ParentApp (as directed by the HOY/ HOS and VP) to send out notifications to parents regarding punctuality and attendance.

### **The Learning Support Co-ordinator will:**

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- meet with parents/carers as required where there are concerns regarding the attendance and punctuality of students on the SEN Register
- liaise with External Providers to ensure continuity for students in dual registration through EOTAS

- liaise with relevant AEN (Additional Educational Needs) staff to carry out Functional Analysis with parents/ students (only with parental agreement) to identify core reasons for absence.

### **The Vice Principal will:**

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- liaise with the EWO by agreeing the Service Level Agreement, providing information on attendance statistics, refer pupils as required and attend follow-up meetings
- meet with parents/carers as required when attendance is below 85% or if there are pastoral/ Child Protection concerns (Tier 3)
- liaise with all staff concerned where an at risk pupil's attendance needs to be monitored
- liaise with parents when a request for a term-time holiday has been submitted to the Principal.

To enable the College to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Attendance Guidance & Absence Recording By Schools 2018/12 and use the Absence Tier Report system available through c2k to collate data and inform actions.

St Malachy's College is committed to working with parents to encourage regular and punctual attendance. We will use ParentApp to ensure parents have access to their son's attendance information.

## Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

### Role of Parent / Carer

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 College of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note/email 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.

For return to school following an injury where crutches are required or mobility is hindered, an appointment must be made with the College Matron or the Learning Mentor for the particular Key Stage so that a risk assessment can be conducted and support mechanisms put in place.

Pupils are expected to be in school at St Malachy's College for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on each child's attendance record.

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

### Role of Pupils

Each pupil at St Malachy's College School must attend school punctually and regularly. If pupils have been absent from school, a written note/email from a parent/carers must be provided to the Form Tutor on return. Parents/carers may email the tutor using the email address recorded as an official contact on SIMs. Tutors may, on occasion, check with a parent following an email/note.

### Leaving School during the day

Students should only leave school during the day for an essential or emergency appointment. In general, appointments should not be made during the school day. A written note/ email from the parent/ carer should be submitted to the relevant Tutor in advance of the appointment with the appointment cards or letter. The student will be issued with a permission card which should be presented at the Office when signing out. A pupil returning after an appointment should sign in on return. In the case of an emergency or unexpected appointment, the parent/ carer should telephone Reception and should pick their son up from Reception. If this is not possible, Reception staff will contact relevant staff to approve arrangements.

If a pupil feels unwell during the day, he must seek permission from a teacher to go to the College Matron. She will contact parents/ carers as required. Students must not ring or message home to ask a parent to come for them. If a student is too unwell to remain in school, the College Matron will liaise with parents to make arrangements for going home.

### Family holidays during term time

St Malachy's College 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. All requests for such absences should be forwarded to the Principal.

## Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

### Procedures for Managing Non-attendance (see Roles and Responsibilities)

- contact/ meetings with parents
- agreement of targets with parents/ pupils (see Appendices 1,2 and 3)
- monitoring and reviewing of monthly attendance reports for each year group and use of Absence Tier reports generated through SIMs
- Use of ParentApp
- pastoral support structures
- AEN support structures including referral to external agencies as appropriate
- Use of Functional Analysis as appropriate
- regular meetings with the EWO and referral to the EWO as required.

### 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.

*Appendix 1*

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Your son's attendance since \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_%. We do understand that there are times when absence is unavoidable due to illness. However, an attendance rate of 90%, equates to 19 days of absence across the school year. We would encourage students to aim for attendance of at least 98% and we would ask for your support in encouraging your son to attend school.

If there are any pastoral issues which you feel are impacting on your son's attendance, please contact his Head of Year to discuss ways that we can support him.

The enclosed leaflet produced by the Department of Education outlines the importance of regular attendance.

Yours faithfully,

Head of School



## St. Malachy's College

# Individual Attendance Plan

<b>Name</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Tutor</b>
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<b>Student's percentage attendance</b>	
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From	To	Reason for absence

Support strategies and responsibilities		
Student Individual Attendance Target	Parent/ Carer support strategies and responsibilities	College support strategies and responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>My attendance will be _____% by _____</li> <li>I will develop a good routine and be prepared for school</li> <li>I will attend mentoring sessions to discuss my attendance</li> </ul>	<p>Fostering a positive and supportive attitude towards Attendance</p> <p>Sharing in a team approach to supporting my son in improving his attendance by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring I am registered for Parent App to receive notifications about attendance</li> <li>Encouraging him to develop a good morning and evening routine</li> <li>Contacting his Tutor each morning that he is absent</li> <li>Providing absence notes or emails for any absence</li> <li>Attending meetings as required</li> </ul>	<p>In line with the College's Attendance policy, promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and punctuality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor attendance and punctuality by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions</li> <li>contact parents/ carer if a note or email is not provided</li> <li>discuss attendance targets as part of mentoring sessions</li> <li>offer pastoral support if there are pastoral reasons for poor attendance and punctuality</li> <li>meet with Parent/Carer to discuss the Attendance Plan</li> </ul>

Parental signature	Student signature	Review date





# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS **A Parent's Guide**





# WHY ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL IS SO IMPORTANT –

If a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school it is essential that they attend their school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career.

Excellent attendance at school is important to allow a child or young person to fulfil their potential.

Below are just some of the key reasons why it is so important children attend school:

- ☑ To learn.
- ☑ To have fun.
- ☑ To make new friends.
- ☑ To experience new things in life.
- ☑ To develop awareness of other cultures, religion, ethnicity and gender differences.
- ☑ To achieve.
- ☑ To gain qualifications.
- ☑ To develop new skills.
- ☑ To build confidence and self-esteem.
- ☑ To have the best possible start in life.



**Miss School -  
Miss Out!!**



## **Key Point**

Young people who regularly miss school without good reason are more likely to become isolated from their friends, to underachieve in examinations and/or become involved in anti-social behaviour.



## WHAT THE LAW SAYS –

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 age<sup>1</sup> to ensure their child receives efficient, full time education suitable to their age, aptitude, ability and to any special educational needs they may have. Such education may be provided by regular attendance at school or otherwise, for example home education.

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.

Under Part III of Schedule 13 to the 1986 Order, if a child or young person who is registered at a school does not attend regularly, a parent can receive a fine not exceeding £1,000 in court (for each child). An Education Supervision Order (ESO) could also be made by a court under Article 55 of the Children (NI) Order 1995.

### Key Point

Education is not an option – it’s compulsory.



## FAMILY HOLIDAYS –

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 will fall behind with their school work.

In each Academic Year there are only a maximum of 190 statutory school days – this allows plenty of time for holidays to be arranged outside term time.

Holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

### Key Point

Avoid taking family holidays during the school term.

1 [www.deni.gov.uk/index/schools-and-infrastructure-2/admission-and-transport/pupils-and-classes/compulsory-school-age.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/schools-and-infrastructure-2/admission-and-transport/pupils-and-classes/compulsory-school-age.htm)



## 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 truancy seriously – if your child is not attending school as you expect they may be putting themselves at risk – Who are they with? What are they doing?
- ✓ Take family holidays outside term time.
- ✓ Talk to your child about school and take an interest in their school work (including homeworks).
- ✓ 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.

**Key  
Point**

Do not be afraid to ask for help if a problem arises.



# 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.



Give your child the best start in life – every school day counts.

# Pupil Attendance Roles and Responsibilities

Subject Teacher	Form Tutor	Head of Year	Head of School	Attendance Officer	Learning Support Co-ordinator	Vice Principal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded during each lesson (SIMS Lesson Monitor) and will promptly report any unauthorised absence to the Form Tutor or Head of Year</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration sessions</li> <li>update reasons provided for absence on SIMs using the procedures outlined by the College Attendance Officer</li> <li>contact parents/ carers if a note is not provided or if absence is causing concern and record any relevant contact on SIMs (Tier 1b)</li> <li>keep all absence notes/ emails and have them available if required</li> <li>discuss attendance targets with pupils as part of mentoring sessions</li> <li>pass any concerns on to the Head of Year particularly if attendance is under 95%</li> <li>monitor punctuality and, issue a detention for 5 lates. If there are pastoral/ SEN concerns, the issuing of the DT will be discussed with the HOY or Learning Support Co-ordinator</li> <li>contact parents if punctuality is a concern and record contact on SIMs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>take responsibility for support and intervention for pupils whose attendance is below 95% (Tier 1a/1b) and has not improved with intervention from the Form Tutor</li> <li>liaise with the Form Tutor and parents/ carers if a pupil is ill and work needs to be provided</li> <li>offer pastoral support to pupils if there are pastoral reasons for poor attendance and punctuality</li> <li>contact and meet with parents if attendance and/or punctuality are a concern and record this contact on SIMs</li> <li>agree strategies with pupils/ parents to help improve attendance and/or punctuality</li> <li>issue a Head of Year detention for 10 lates unless there are valid pastoral/ SEN reasons</li> <li>implement agreed procedures for celebrating good attendance</li> <li>Liaise with College Matron to ensure "Return to School" meetings take place in cases of long term medical absence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>set attendance targets for each Year Group in their section as part of the SDP and monitor and review the targets</li> <li>the HOS Senior School will liaise with partner schools regarding attendance and punctuality for pupils in shared classes</li> <li>in conjunction with the Head of Year, offer pastoral support to pupils if there are pastoral reasons for poor attendance and punctuality</li> <li>contact parents, as required, (using the Attendance Letter Appendix 1 and include a copy of DENI, SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MATTERS A Parent's Guide: Appendix 2) (Tier 2). Where relevant, appropriate information will be sent regarding the number of lessons missed in specific subjects</li> <li>meet with parents if attendance and/or punctuality remain a concern after intervention by the Head of Year and where attendance is below 90%</li> <li>agree strategies with pupils/ parents to help improve attendance and/or punctuality drawing up Attendance Plans as required (Appendix 3)</li> <li>attend meetings with the EWO if a pupil in their section has been referred</li> <li>ensure that attendance and punctuality is addressed during Parental Information Sessions at the start of each academic year</li> <li>implement agreed procedures for celebrating good attendance in line with the merit/reward system in the Positive Behaviour Policy</li> <li>Liaise with parents regarding punctuality if latecoming remains an issue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send a weekly email reminder to Tutors regarding recording of absences</li> <li>liaise with tutors and HOYs to ensure reasons for absence are recorded and completed promptly and accurately</li> <li>provide guidelines for staff on recording absences and using accurate codes</li> <li>produce monthly reports of pupils under 90% for the Vice Principal</li> <li>check that the coding in attendance reports is in line with the descriptors in DENI circular Attendance Guidance &amp; Absence Recording By Schools –Circular 2022/07 (and any further relevant circulars)</li> <li>record lates and maintain an updated data base of pupils with lates for Form Tutors and Heads of Year</li> <li>use ParentApp (as directed by the HOY/ HOS and VP) to send out notifications to parents regarding punctuality and attendance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meet with parents/ carers as required where there are concerns regarding the attendance and punctuality of students on the SEN Register</li> <li>liaise with External Providers to ensure continuity for students in dual registration through EOTAS</li> <li>liaise with relevant AEN (Additional Educational Needs) staff to carry out Functional Analysis with parents/ students (only with parental agreement) to identify core reasons for absence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>liaise with the EWO by agreeing the Service Level Agreement, providing information on attendance statistics, refer pupils as required and attend follow-up meetings</li> <li>meet with parents/ carers as required when attendance is below 85% or if there are pastoral/ Child Protection concerns (Tier 3)</li> <li>liaise with all staff concerned where an at risk pupil's attendance needs to be monitored</li> <li>liaise with parents when a request for a term-time holiday has been submitted to the Principal.</li> </ul>