



St. Patrick's Primary, Dipton

Attendance Policy

Revision History					
Name	Ver	Reason for change	Status	Date	Review date
Mrs Lesley Sabourn Attendance Officer	2.0	Reviewed without change	Final	March 2022	To be replaced by Trust policy when available
Standards and Curriculum Committee	2.0	Reviewed – update retention of registers in line with GDPR policies	Final	March 2020	March 2022
Standards and Curriculum Committee	2.0	Reviewed – no change	Final	Dec 2017	Dec 2019
Mrs J Burgess	2.0	Reviewed with Lesley Sabourn – School Attendance Officer	Final	Oct 2016	
Standards and Curriculum Committee	1.1	Reviewed – no change necessary	Final	22/4/16	
Mike Shiels	1.1	Changed period for register to be held open	Final	04/03/14	
Mike Shiels	0.2	Following review with Jill Burgess and input from Jon Moody	Draft	18/10/13	
Mike Shiels	0.1	Initial draft for review	Draft	14/10/13	

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1 Purpose

From September 2013, the Department for Education has updated its guidance on school attendance and the use of parental responsibility measures.

The Government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
 - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
 - Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
 - Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

2 The Law

Parents/Carers need to make sure pupils attend school regularly and on time. This is required by law. Parents/Carers are breaking the law if children do not attend school and there is no good reason for missing school.

Our school and the Local Authority want to help if there is a problem. If attendance is an issue and parents/carers do not accept help and support offered, the Local Authority may issue you with a warning notice, penalty notice or ask you to attend an interview to ask you questions about whether you have broken the law.

If the case proceeds to court and a parent is found guilty of an offence, fines of up to £1,000 for a less serious offence and up to £2,500 for a more serious offence. In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.

St Patrick's has chosen not to exercise the right for the Head Teacher (or authorised Deputy) to issue penalty notices directly, but if any attendance record is a cause of concern, this information will be passed to the Attendance Officer to evaluate and take the appropriate steps.

3 Attendance Register

St Patrick's will maintain a register of attendance for all pupils. Pupils will be entered on this register from their agreed first date of attendance. Usually, this will be the first day of the school year.

All entries on the attendance register will be preserved, in line with our retention policy, for at least 10 years from the date the register ceases to be used.

Retrospective amendments to the register will not be permitted, except by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head, with full audit trail including the reason for change.

Each class will take the attendance register twice per day:

- Once at the start of the first session (a.m.)
- Once during the second session (p.m.)

For each pupil, St Patrick's will record whether they were:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Children should arrive in school for 8.55am, at the latest, although pupils are admitted into the building from 8.45 onwards (8.00 for Breakfast Club). The first register will be called at **9.00am**. For both morning and afternoon, the register will be kept open for **15** minutes after being called to record any late arrivals. Any pupil arriving during this period will be recorded as present but "Late". Any pupil arriving after the register closes will be recorded as "Absent" for that session. St Patrick's will actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival, and seek an explanation from the parent for any persistent pattern of lateness.

4 Attendance Procedures

On the first day of absence and any further absence parents/carers are asked to phone the school office before 9.30am to explain. Appointments e.g. doctor/dentist should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If children are well enough, they should come back to school following the appointment.

5 Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

6 Unauthorised Absence from School

Where absence has not been previously agreed, or the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised. This includes:

- Arrival in school after registration has closed
- Holiday not authorised by the school
- Holiday in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.
- Absent from school without authorisation
- Reason for absence not yet provided

All unexplained and unexpected absences will be followed up in a timely manner, in order to:

- Ascertain the reason;
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

Every effort will be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register will be amended, as required. If a reason cannot be established, the absence will simply be recorded as "Absent from school without authorisation". Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action, such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and a possible fixed penalty notice. This includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time.

7 Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances e.g. the nature of the event, prior attendance rates, termly assessments and whether similar requests have previously been made.

An application for leave of absence during term time must be made well in advance via a form which is available from our school office or on our school website

<http://www.dipton.durham.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2014/07/Leave-of-Absence-Form.pdf>

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DfE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of the circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstance during any period of statutory or internal assessments.

8 Help and Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important you talk to us as soon as possible. You may be asked to attend a meeting in school to talk about any issues so a plan can be put in place to help. Sometimes, school may need to involve other services as part of the support.

9 Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is vital that you keep school informed of any change of details. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and, if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a safeguarding matter.