

MARKETHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Tomorrow's Success Begins Today.... 

INFORMATION BOOKLET

2025 – 2026

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Tomorrow's Success Begins Today.... 

Dear Parent / Guardian

I would like to welcome you and your children back to another school year at Markethill Primary School. We extend a special welcome to our P1 children and to new pupils and parents who have joined us. We also welcome Mrs R Smyth, who will be working alongside Mrs H Smyth in P5, and Mrs Black, a new classroom assistant. We hope that you will be very happy with us at Markethill Primary School.

I wish all the staff success as we enter another busy year of activities and curriculum developments. The school looks extremely well, and I would like to thank our cleaning staff and building supervisor for their hard work over the summer in preparing the school for the new academic year.

Our school website, along with the school app and monthly newsletters will keep you updated on school activities. If there is an item you consider useful to include on the website or newsletter, please speak to one of the teachers or to myself. Each class teacher will hold a class information session the week beginning 1 September 2025. Parent-Teacher meetings will take place in October and February.

This booklet contains important information relating to child safety and welfare, as well as routines and requirements to ensure the smooth running of our school. A summary of the Child Protection procedures that the school will follow if an issue should arise is provided within this booklet. An outline of the procedure to follow should you wish to make a complaint is also provided. Please take the time to read each section for the benefit of you and your child/children and keep in a safe place for future reference.

Thank you for your co-operation in the matters outlined in this booklet. If you have any queries or require clarification on any aspect of school life, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely
Dr Helen McLernon

School Office Hours

Monday – Friday: 8.30am – 3.30pm

Mrs Freeburn's breaks are 10.35 – 10.50am and 12.30 – 1.00pm.

The School Day

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| 8.45am: | School opens and children are supervised in the playground at their designated class area. |
| 9.00am: | Children make their way to their classroom with their class teacher |
| 9.10am: | School starts |
| 10.35 – 10.50am | Morning break P1 – P4 |
| 10.55 – 11.10am: | Morning break P5 – P7 |
| 12.00 - 12.45pm: | Lunch-time – P1 – P4 |
| 12.45 - 1.30pm: | Lunch-time – P5 – P7 |
| 2.15pm: | Home-time <u>P1 - P3</u> / 3.15pm: Home-time <u>P4 - P7</u> |

Breakfast Club 8.00 – 8.45am / 123 Club 2.15 – 3.15pm & 3.15 – 4.15pm

P1 pupils will go home at lunch time (12 noon) for the first 2 weeks of September. From the Monday 15 September 2025 home-time will be 2.15pm.

Morning and Home-time

- Children should be in school by 9.10am to avoid disrupting lessons and assemblies.
- All entrances are locked at 9.10am for security reasons.
- Please do not park your car in such ways as to spoil the view of the crossing patrol person, or that may cause residents difficulty accessing their homes.
- All children must cross the road with the crossing patrol person. Encourage your child to respect and listen to the crossing patrol person as his safety depends on this.
- If anyone, other than a parent, is collecting a child **please advise the school**. To avoid upset, **please make your child aware of the arrangements**.
- Please ensure that children are collected **promptly** at 2.15pm, 3.15pm and when After School Clubs/123 Club finish (3.15pm and 4.15pm).

Attendance / Absences

- In order for a child to have full attendance, they must be in school in time for registration at 9.10 am and attend both morning and afternoon sessions.
- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and on your child's attendance record. Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class.
- Parent's/guardian's should inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This can be done by phoning the school office, emailing the class teacher or sending in a letter. Parents should use the Absence Notification Form (see school website & back of this booklet) which provides a clear reason for any absence. This should be sent into school on your child's first day of return to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the teacher to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.
- If your child must leave early, a note should be sent to the teacher detailing the time and reason.
- Parents are requested not to take children out of school on holidays during term time. If this is unavoidable, it is important that a note is sent to the class teacher prior to the holiday. Unfortunately, teachers are unable to provide holiday work.
- Pupil attendance is monitored monthly and the Education Welfare Officer liaises regularly with the school regarding concerns. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal duty to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their children's education. If a pupil's absence causes concern, and/or if their attendance falls below 85% and there is also a concern, 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.

- The table below provides information from DENI, 'School Attendance Matters - A Parent's Guide', on how the number of days missed impacts on attendance percentages.

| | | |
|-----------------|--|------------------|
| 100% attendance | 0 days missed | Excellent |
| 95% - 99% | | Good / Very Good |
| 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 |

Health

- If a child has been ill during the night, it is in the child's best interest to stay at home. This helps to prevent spreading illnesses to other children and staff.
- If your child has vomiting and diarrhoea it is recommended that he/she stay at home for **48 hours** after the last instance of vomiting / diarrhoea.
- Parents will be contacted if their child is ill or injured during the school day by a phone call.
- If your child requires medication during the school day, the form: *Procedure for the Administration of Medication* **must** be completed by the parent/guardian. **Please note, medication e.g. antibiotics, cough bottles etc. will not be given to your child unless this form has been completed.** These are statutory procedures that we must follow. Forms can be obtained at the school office. Please note that inhalers and all medication must be clearly labelled with your child's name.
- The issue of head lice is an ongoing one for schools. We ask parents to regularly check their child's hair and respond appropriately. The school should be informed immediately if you discover your child has head lice. We will then inform the parents of the other children in the class without naming names.
- First Aid staff: Mrs P McCool, Mr K Qua, Mrs K George, Mrs R Chapman, Miss K Todd, Mrs H Smyth, Mrs E Evans, Mrs S McKelvey, Mrs A Whiteside, Miss K Stewart and Miss J Dillon.

Morning / Lunch Breaks

- We are fully committed to promoting healthy eating within the school. We encourage healthy snacks Monday – Thursday, with Friday designated as 'Treat Day'!
- The school kitchen offers a healthy break selection of fruit, milk, scones and pancakes costing 30p each.
- All children are encouraged to bring a container of water to drink during learning sessions. No fizzy or energy drinks are permitted in school.
- Chewing gum and nuts are not permitted. We strive to be a **NUT FREE** school as this help us to protect the health and wellbeing of children and staff who have severe nut allergies. We ask that parents ensure that no nuts or products which include nuts are brought into school.
- Drinks should be in a separate bag from class books to avoid spills in school bags.
- Weather permitting, all children will go outside at break-time. Please ensure your child brings a coat to school every day, which is clearly labelled with his/her name.
- Break-time supervision is carried out by the classroom assistants and a teacher. Lunch-time supervision outside is carried out by lunch-time supervisory assistants.
- On wet days, children remain in their classrooms and are supervised by those on duty.

School Dinners

- Children can purchase dinners for the whole week or for specific days.
- School dinners cost £2.60.
- The dinner menu is available on the school website, app or a copy can be obtained from the office.
- If you require information about free school meals and assistance with uniform, please contact the Principal. Even if your child does not always take a school dinner, but is entitled to free school meals, it is important that you complete the necessary forms (available from the school office). This will help with school administration and in the provision of extra support if required.

Online Payments – Dinners, Breakfast Club and 123 Club

- Please use the online booking facility to book and pay for dinners, Breakfast Club and 123 Club on the school app. Forms can be found under the 'Forms' tab.
- School dinners can be booked for the week up until 10.00pm the Sunday night before. Please note that after the 10.00pm deadline, no further bookings can be accepted for that incoming week. If you require dinners during the week, you must contact the school office.
- Breakfast Club and 123 Club places for the week can be booked by 10.00pm the Thursday night before. Please note that after the 10.00pm deadline, no further bookings can be accepted for that incoming week. If you require a place during the week, you must contact the school office to check for availability.

Money

- Please ensure that all money is sent to school in an envelope, clearly marked with name, class, amount and purpose.

Notes

- If you have a message for the teacher, we would appreciate that you send in a note or use the Seesaw or Google Classroom platforms.
- A note should be provided if your child is not participating in PE, needs to leave school early, arrives late or has had a period of absence.
- Regularly check your child's bag for notes from the teacher or school to you. Most correspondence from the school is now sent via the school app or the Seesaw and Google Classroom apps.

Homework

- Homework is an accepted practice in school.
- All homework should be signed by a parent.
- Any incomplete homework should be accompanied by an explanatory note. Children who have not completed homework may be asked to finish this at break-time or at another time during the day.

Appointments

- If you have a concern or need to speak with the Principal or a teacher, an appointment should be made via phone, note or email. Meetings will be arranged as quickly as possible.
- If you need to see a teacher before the start of school, please report to the school office or Principal.
- All adults, including parents, **must** report to the school office. No-one should proceed to the classroom areas without first making contact with the secretary or the Principal.

Breakfast Club and 123 Club

- The Early Bird Club is open from 8.00 – 8.45am and costs £2.00 (includes breakfast & supervision).
- The 123 Club operates every day. Payment is £3.00 per hour (2.15 - 3.15pm / 3.15 – 4.15pm).
- Early Bird and 123 Club booking should be made via the school app.

Essential Information

- The school **must be informed immediately** of any change in contact names, addresses, telephone numbers, email or mobile phone numbers.
- In accordance with Child Protection Procedures, we need to be informed immediately if there is any change in home circumstances.

School Uniform

Children should always wear full school uniform. PE uniform is only to be worn on PE or swimming days.

ALL ITEMS OF CLOTHING, INCLUDING SCHOOL TIE AND FOOTWEAR (SHOES AND TRAINERS), SHOULD BE LABELLED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.

YEARS 1 - 3

BOYS

- ✓ Grey trousers
- ✓ Red school crested sweatshirt
- ✓ Navy crested polo shirt
- ✓ Plain black/grey socks
- ✓ Black school shoes

GIRLS

- ✓ Grey skirt / pinafore / trousers
- ✓ Red school crested sweatshirt
- ✓ Navy crested polo shirt
- ✓ Plain white socks / plain red tights
- ✓ Black school shoes

SUMMER UNIFORM – OPTIONAL

BOYS

- ✓ Grey knee length school shorts
- ✓ Red school crested sweatshirt
- ✓ Navy crested polo shirt
- ✓ Plain black/grey socks
- ✓ Black school shoes

GIRLS

- ✓ Red gingham dress
- ✓ Red school crested sweatshirt or red cardigan
- ✓ Plain white knee high / ankle socks
- ✓ Black school shoes

YEARS 4 - 7

BOYS

- ✓ Grey trousers
- ✓ White shirt
- ✓ School tie
- ✓ Grey jumper with crest
- ✓ Plain black/grey socks
- ✓ Black school shoes

GIRLS

- ✓ Grey Skirt / pinafore / trousers
- ✓ White shirt
- ✓ School tie
- ✓ Grey jumper with crest / grey cardigan with crest
- ✓ Plain white socks / plain red tights
- ✓ Black school shoes

SUMMER UNIFORM – OPTIONAL

BOYS

- ✓ Grey knee length school shorts
- ✓ White shirt (can be short sleeved)
- ✓ School tie
- ✓ Grey jumper with crest
- ✓ Plain black/grey socks
- ✓ Black school shoes

GIRLS

- ✓ Red gingham dress, red or grey cardigan **or**
- ✓ White blouse (can be short sleeved) and skirt / pinafore, school tie, grey cardigan with crest
- ✓ Plain white knee high / ankle socks
- ✓ Black school shoes

- **Please note**: no variation to the school uniform is permitted. No coloured shoes or trainers are to be worn as part of the school uniform. In light of health and safety, shoes with raised heels or open toes are not allowed.

- We acknowledge that there may be occasions when making exceptions to the uniform policy may be necessary, such as when a pupil has sustained an injury. Parents are asked to provide a written request stating the reason for the exception to wearing the school uniform.
- All pupils are expected to have a suitable waterproof coat. This is especially important for the Autumn and Spring terms for outdoor learning activities, outdoor play, break and lunchtimes.

PE Uniform

Children can wear their PE uniform on PE and swimming days. **Please note, PE uniform is only to be worn on PE/swimming days.**

All children will change into their PE uniform when attending after school sports clubs.

YEARS 1 – 3

- ✓ Navy shorts
- ✓ Plain navy or school logo tracksuit bottoms
- ✓ White crested t-shirt
- ✓ Black plimsolls

YEARS 4 – 7

- ✓ Navy shorts / skort / plain navy or school logo tracksuit bottoms / three-quarter length navy trousers.
- ✓ Plain white polo shirt
- ✓ Red school sweatshirt or hoody
- ✓ Plain black, navy or white trainers

- Please note: red school crest hoodie is for PE only and not for purchase as an alternative to the grey jumper / cardigan.
- Coloured sweatshirts, fleeces, hoodies and football shirts are not permitted for PE or after school activities.

Jewellery

- Small stud earrings and a watch may be worn.
- Other items of jewellery such as necklaces, bracelets etc. are **not** permitted for health and safety reasons. The only exception is the wearing of medical bracelets to alert staff of a particular health condition.
- Children will be requested to remove earrings for sports and swimming activities.

Hair and Make-Up

- Long hair should be always tied back and especially during PE and swimming activities. Hair should be neat and tidy.
- Simple, plain hair accessories should be worn for those with long hair.
- Parents are asked to avoid sending children to school with hair colouring, designs / patterns cut into the hair or shaved heads. Such hair styles are not appropriate for school.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS 2025 – 2026

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| AUTUMN TERM | Bank Holiday School closed | Monday 25 August 2025 | |
| | School starts + Breakfast Club | Tuesday 26 August 2025 | P1 : 9.10am – 12 noon (1/3 P1 pupils) P2 – P3 : pupils finish at 12.50pm P4 – P7 : pupils finish at 1.00pm |
| | | Wednesday 27 August 2025 | P1 : 9.10am – 12 noon (1/3 P1 pupils) P2 – P3 : finish at 12.50pm P4 – P7 : finish at 1.00pm |
| | | Thursday 28 August 2025 | P1 : 9.10am – 12 noon (1/3 P1 pupils) P2 – P3 : finish at 12.50pm P4 – P7 : finish at 1.00pm |
| | | Friday 29 August 2025 | All P1 : 9.10am – 12 noon P2 – P3: finish at 12.50pm P4 – P7: finish at 1.00pm |
| | School closed | Monday 22 September 2025 | Staff Development Day |
| Half-Term | School finishes | Friday 24 October 2024 | P1 – P3 pupils finish at 1.50pm P4 – P7 pupils finish at 2.00pm |
| | School closed | Mon 27 October - Friday 31 October 2025 | |
| | School reopens | Monday 3 November 2025 | |
| Christmas | School finishes | Friday 19 December 2025 | P1 – P3 pupils finish at 11.30am P4 – P7 pupils finish at 11.40am |
| | School closed | Monday 22 December 2025 – Friday 2 January 2026 | |

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| SPRING TERM | School reopens | Monday 5 January 2026 | |
| Half-Term | School finishes | Tuesday 10 February 2026 | P1 – P3 pupils finish at 12.50pm P4 – P7 pupils finish at 1.00pm |
| | School closed | Wed 11 – Friday 13 February 2026 | |
| | School reopens | Monday 16 February 2026 | |
| St Patrick's Day | School closed | Tuesday 17 March 2026 | |
| Easter | School finishes | Friday 27 March 2026 | P1 – P3 pupils finish at 11.50am P4 – P7 pupils finish at 12 noon |
| | School closed | Monday 30 March - Friday 10 April 2026 | |

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| SUMMER TERM | School reopens | Monday 13 April 2026 | |
| Bank Holiday 1 | School closed | Monday 4 May 2026 | |
| Bank Holiday 2 | School finishes | Friday 22 May 2026 | P1 – P3 pupils finish at 1.50pm P4 – P7 pupils finish at 2.00pm |
| | School closed | Monday 25 May – Friday 29 May 2026 | |
| | School reopens | Monday 1 June 2026 | |
| Summer Holidays | School closes | Tuesday 30 June 2026 | P1 – P3 pupils finish at 11.50am P4 – P7 pupils finish at 12 noon |

CHILD PROTECTION PROCEDURES – SUMMARY**Please Read Carefully**

Mrs P McCool: Designated Teacher for Child Protection
Mrs S Nicholson and Mr K Qua: Deputy Designated Teacher
Mr T Wilson (Board of Governors)
Dr H McLernon (Principal)

Schools are responsible for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all the pupils in their care. The Board of Governors and staff of Markethill Primary School take seriously their responsibilities in relation to Child Protection. All governors, staff and volunteers are aware of their role in the safeguarding of children. We are committed to providing a stimulating, caring, happy, respectful and safe environment where children can grow, learn and achieve their full potential.

We recognise that our school plays a crucial role in the prevention of harm by providing our children with good lines of communication with trusted adults, supportive friends and an ethos of protection. Our school community will put in place a preventive curriculum by:

- establishing and maintaining an ethos where children feel secure, are encouraged to talk and are listened to;
- ensuring that all children know there are adults in the school whom they can talk to if worried or in difficulty; and,
- including in the curriculum opportunities for personal and social development which equip children with the skills they need to stay safe from harm.

Our commitment to protecting the children in our care is evident by our linking of personal safety in relation to child protection into PDMU lessons, assemblies, participation in Anti-Bullying Week, our annual BLUE Day (Be Loving Unto Everyone) and Odd Socks Day. We also invite various organisations into MPS to educate our children about how to keep themselves safe (Thrive Academy, PSNI, Love for Life, Jeannie Graham). This provides the children with opportunities to understand and learn about the risks of possible abuse, recognise unwelcome and inappropriate behaviour in others and develop the confidence, skills and strategies they need to keep themselves safe.

If parents have concerns about child safety they should contact the school and speak to the child's Class Teacher and/or the Designated Teacher (Mrs P McCool). If the Designated Teacher is unavailable contact should be made with the Deputy Designated Teachers (Mr Qua, Mrs Black) or the Principal (Dr McLernon). Any further concerns can be taken up with the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. *(At any time, a parent can talk to the PSNI).*

The school, if concerned about a child's safety, will follow the guidelines set by the Department of Education for NI.

If a child makes a disclosure to a teacher or other member of staff which gives rise to concern about possible abuse, or if a member of staff has concerns about a child, the member of staff will act promptly. No promise of confidentiality can or will be made to a child or anyone else giving information about possible abuse. Information will be held in **strict confidence** and only shared with relevant members of staff and external agencies (e.g. EA, Southern Region, Child Protection Officers, Social Services, PSNI).

The Designated Teacher and Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection will, as a matter of urgency, plan a course of action and ensure that a written record is made. Any preliminary enquiries will be made carefully and sensitively.

The Designated Teacher (Mrs McCool), in consultation with the Deputy Designated Teachers (Mr Qua and Mrs Nicholson) and the Principal (Dr McLernon), will decide whether, in the best interests of the child, the matter needs to be referred to social services. If there are concerns that a child may be at risk, the school is obliged to make a referral. Unless there are concerns that a parent may be the possible abuser, the parents will be informed immediately.

All concerns about possible abuse must be reported to:

- Social Services
- EA Southern Region, Designated Child Protection Officers
- Chairperson of the Board of Governors

If information of alleged abuse is received from an outside source the same procedures will be followed.

SUMMARY COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES

1. Complaints Procedure – At a Glance



1.1. Time Limit

To enable complaints to be resolved, please contact the school as soon as possible. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, complaints will normally only be considered within 6 months of the date of the incident(s) about which you are complaining.

1.2. Stage One

When making a complaint, contact the school principal who will arrange for the complaint to be investigated. If the complaint is about the principal, proceed to Stage Two. The school requires complaints to be made in writing. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process.

When writing your complaint, please provide clear information and include the following:

- Your name and contact details.
- What your complaint is about – please try to be specific.
- What you have already done to try to resolve it.
- What you would like the school to do to resolve your complaint.

The principal will normally acknowledge the complaint as soon as possible but within 10 school working days. This will be a short response and you will be sent a copy of, (or a link to) the school's complaints procedure. A final response will normally be made within 20 school working days of receipt of the complaint. This response will be issued in writing and will indicate with reasons whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. If, for any reason, the consideration of a complaint takes longer to complete, you will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress. These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods. If you remain unhappy with the outcome at Stage One, the complaint may be progressed to Stage Two which is overseen by the board of governors.

1.3. Stage Two

If your complaint is about the principal or if the complaint is unresolved after Stage One, write to the chairperson of the board of governors. Where this may present difficulties, please contact the school which will make reasonable arrangements to support you with this process. The letter can be left at the school office and marked 'private and confidential'. The chairperson will convene a committee to consider the complaint. In the case of the complaint being about the principal, this committee will investigate the complaint.

Please provide clear information and include the following:

- Reason(s) why you disagree with the stage one findings.
- Any aspect in which you think that the school's complaints procedure was not fully followed.

The chairperson of the committee will normally acknowledge the complaint as soon as possible but at least within 10 school working days. A final response will normally be made within 20 school working days from date of receipt of the second letter. The response will be issued by the chairperson of the committee and will indicate, with reasons, whether the complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. If, for any reason, the review of a complaint takes longer to complete, complainants will be informed of revised time limits and kept updated on progress. These timeframes may need to be reviewed if complaints are ongoing during school holiday periods.

1.4. Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) www.nipso.org.uk

If following Stage Two you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your complaint, you can refer the matter to the Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO).

The Ombudsman provides a free, independent and impartial service for handling complaints about schools in Northern Ireland. You have the right to complain to the Ombudsman if you feel that you have been treated unfairly or have received a poor service from a school and your complaint has not been resolved to your satisfaction.

A complaint should normally be referred to NIPSO within six months of the final response from the School. The school must advise in its concluding letter that the complaint may be referred to the NIPSO if you remain dissatisfied.

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| <p>Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman Office of the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman Progressive House 33 Wellington Place Belfast BT1 6HN</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freepost: FREEPOST NIPSO • Telephone: 02890 233821 • Freephone: 0800 34 34 24 • Email: nipso@nipso.org.uk • Web: www.nipso.org.uk |
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2. What to Expect Under This Procedure

2.1. Your rights as a person making a complaint

In dealing with complaints, we will ensure:

- Fair treatment
- Courtesy
- A timely response
- Accurate advice
- Respect for privacy – complaints will be treated as confidentially as possible allowing for the possibility of consultation with other appropriate parties about the complaint; and
- Clear reasons for decisions.

2.2. Your responsibilities as a person making a complaint

When making a complaint it is important that you:

- Raise issues in a timely manner
- Treat our staff with respect and courtesy
- Provide accurate and concise information in relation to the issues raised
- Use these procedures fully and engage with them at the appropriate levels

A full copy of the Complaints Policy is available on the school website and a copy can be obtained from the school office.



**MARKETHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL
ABSENCE NOTIFICATION FORM**

Please Note: This form must be completed for each period of pupil absence, including half days, and returned to the school immediately.

Name of Pupil: _____ Class/Teacher: _____

Date(s) of Absence: _____ Date of return to school: _____

Reason: _____

Signed (Parent / Guardian): _____ Date: _____



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