

MARKETHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL



Tomorrow's Success Begins Today... 

Attendance Policy

Policy Agree Date	Review Date	Person Responsible for Review
February 2020	February 2022	Principal – Dr H McLernon

MARKETHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL – PASTORAL CARE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The pastoral care of our children is central to the aims, ethos and teaching programmes in Markethill Primary School and we are committed to developing positive and caring attitudes in our children and staff. Our Attendance Policy is part of our collective pastoral care policies.

Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to our school curriculum and reach their potential. Markethill Primary School aims to provide support to parents/guardians to ensure that all children of compulsory school age attend school regularly and maintain a pattern of good attendance throughout their school career. We believe high levels of attendance and a punctual start to the school day are important to all children. School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life.

As a school, we will encourage parents/carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that their child arrives to school and returns home safely.

Markethill Primary School 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 Markethill Primary School.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to our parents / guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Role of the School

- To provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment.
- The Principal has overall responsibility for school attendance; teachers and classroom assistants should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.
- The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as 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 sessions.
- To accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way, Markethill Primary School will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2018/12.
- Markethill Primary School will follow up on absences to ascertain the reason, ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken and identify whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- Markethill Primary School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

Role of Parent / Guardian

“Parents/guardians 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.”

1 Article 45(1) of The Education and Libraries (NI) Order 1986

- If a child is registered in school, their parent/guardian has a legal duty to ensure that they regularly attend that school.
- It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to 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 Appendix 1) which provides a clear reason for any absence. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable our school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.
- All pupils are expected to be in class by 9.10am for registration and the beginning of lessons. 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. The code **L** is used if the child is late before registration closes at 9.30am and the code **U** is used if the child is late, after registration closes. Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount that all pupils arrive at school on time.
- The school opens at 8.45am and children are supervised in the hall until 8.55am, when they proceed to their classrooms in preparation for the 9.10am start to learning. Markethill Primary School expects all children to be in class at 9.10am.
- If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher or Principal to ensure that maximum support is given to both the parents and the child.

Role of Pupils

Each pupil at Markethill Primary School should take responsibility for their own attendance, recognising the link between attendance and good learning. Our children must understand that they need to attend school punctually and regularly. If absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the class teacher on return to school.

Absence Procedures

All parents / carers are required to complete the Absence Notification Form (See Appendix 1), which provides a clear reason for any absence. This form should be used to report **all** pupil absences from school, including attendance at medical appointments for either a full day or half day.

Family Holidays during Term Time

Markethill Primary School 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

The school will continuously monitor each child's absence/late record. Each month the Principal will review all absences/lateness and the reasons given for children whose attendance falls below 85% as a cumulative percentage. It is noted if attendance/lateness is improving or deteriorating within the previous month. Following this analysis, the resulting action will involve:

1. Letter 1 sent to parents/guardians informing them that their child's attendance has fallen below 85% and unless an improvement is evident, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Office (EWO).
2. If attendance continues to persist at less than 85%, Letter 2 will be sent to parents/guardians informing them that a referral to the EWO will be made if attendance does not improve.

Examples of authorised absences include:

- Illness
- Religious observance by the religious body to which the child’s family belongs
- Absences allowed by the school such as medical appointments, exclusions, family occasions (e.g. family wedding, bereavement) and extreme family emergencies (e.g. house fires).

Examples of unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/guardians keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Unexplained absences i.e. no information given to school
- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Day trips
- Holidays during term time
- Truancy

Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service (EWS) have 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. Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

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

APPENDIX 1



**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: _____



**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: _____