



CLUSTER ATTENDANCE POLICY

Polisi Presenoldeb y Clwster

MARY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
and
PARTNER PRIMARY SCHOOLS

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL,
CANTON

ST PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL,
GRANGETOWN

ST CUTHBERT'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, THE BAY

ST FRANCIS PRIMARY SCHOOL, ELY

Mary Immaculate Cluster Attendance Policy

1. Introduction and aims

1.1 The success of a child at school is likely to be affected negatively if their attendance is below 95%. Those who do not attend regularly will certainly fall behind in their learning, leading to a failure to reach their full potential. As a school, we seek to provide a Catholic environment in which all young people can flourish as a member of a happy, caring and safe community. It is our goal that all pupils attend school regularly and on time, making the most of all the opportunities available to them.

1.2 Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated very seriously. Every case is, however, different and we will always try to support families to improve attendance and punctuality. This Attendance Policy is designed to help teachers, parents and pupils understand their rights, responsibilities and roles when it comes to school attendance. By working in partnership, it is our hope that every pupil achieves over 95% attendance.

1.3 The Mary Immaculate cluster of schools aims to:

- Give attendance and punctuality the highest priority;
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities to ensure consistency and rigour;
- Provide support, advice and guidance to families;
- Use attendance data systematically to evaluate success;
- Use rewards to celebrate good attendance;
- Use sanctions sensitively, when necessary;
- Work in partnership with the SAOs at Mary Immaculate to liaise with families and refer to the Education Welfare Service, as required; and
- Support pupils returning to school after significant periods of absence.

2. Rights, responsibilities and roles

2.1 The Mary Immaculate Cluster has its basis in Article 28 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). We believe that all young people have the right to education, based on equality of opportunity, and that the school, in partnership with parents and other parties, must take measures to encourage regular school attendance and reduce rates of absenteeism.

2.2 Mary Immaculate's cluster schools are required under The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010, to take attendance registers twice a day; at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

2.3 Parents are required under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that their child receives effective full-time education.

2.4 Cardiff Local Authority is required under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that a child for whom they are responsible is receiving suitable education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.5 The Mary Immaculate's Cluster Attendance Policy is written to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and in the understanding of life based on the Catholic faith.

2.6 Mary Immaculate's cluster schools aim to work in partnership with young people, parents and families so that pupils can benefit from the educational opportunities provided for them at school. Key members of staff include:

- Mrs Eleanor Jones (Education Welfare Officer)
- Mrs A Wilson (Deputy Head/Safeguarding Officer with responsibility for Attendance at Mary Immaculate High School)
- Mrs Karen McLean (Cluster SAO)
- Mrs Katie Lambert Senior SAO
- Mrs Karen Morgan (St Mary's Primary School)
- Mrs N Davies (St Patrick's Primary School)
- Mrs L Jones (St Francis' Primary School)
- Mrs B. Brooks (HT) (St Cuthbert's Primary School)

2.7 This framework operates in conjunction with Cardiff Local Authority's 'Five Step System of Attendance Management'.

3. Procedures

Registration procedures

3.1 To ensure accuracy and consistency, all pupils are registered either manually or electronically via the Capita School Information Management System (SIMS).

3.2 Pupils are registered every lesson at Mary Immaculate and every session in Partner Primary Schools.

3.3 Teachers, Cover Supervisors and Supply Teachers are informed of all registration procedures and comply with them.

3.4 In instances of lateness, the absent (N) mark is altered to the late (L) mark. The degree of lateness will be recorded using the appropriate procedures.

Categorisation of absence

3.5 The following codes, as set out by the Welsh Government 2010, are used by the Cluster:

/	Present
N/O	Absent
L	Late
B	Educated off-site
D	Dual-registered
P	Approved sporting activity
V	Educational visit
J	Interview
W	Work experience
C	Other authorised circumstance
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)

H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
M	Medical appointment
S	Study leave
E	Excluded
R	Religious observance
T	Traveller absence
○	Other unauthorised circumstance
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
U	Late (after registration closed)

Where pupils are not required to attend school the additional codes X, Y, Z and # may be used.

Procedures for absence and lateness

3.7 Parents are asked to contact the school by telephone on the first day of their child's absence. Designated staff in each school monitor telephone calls each morning and First Day Response procedures are triggered.

3.8 Should the school be unable to ascertain the reason for absence, a letter will be sent to parents seeking explanation.

Authorisation of absence

3.9 Absences may only be approved by authorised representatives of the school. Mary Immaculate's cluster schools exercise caution in the authorisation of absence and parents must seek to provide the school with a full picture of the reasons leading to their child's absence.

3.10 The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010 give schools discretionary power to grant leave for the purpose of a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child from school for a holiday and, in law, have to apply for permission from the school in advance. Holidays during term time will not normally be authorised.

4. Intervention

4.1 Mary Immaculate's cluster schools recognise the important role that parents play in promoting good school attendance. The school therefore seeks to provide professional, quality information and advice, communicated frequently e.g. by means of newsletter, leaflets, pupil planners, parents' evenings, school reports or the school website.

4.2 Mary Immaculate's cluster schools often operate a 'late at the gates' scheme and SAOs meet with parents in an attempt to discourage lateness and identify pupils who are persistently late for school.

4.3 SAOs and other staff closely monitor post-registration attendance lists in an attempt to identify instances of truancy. In such cases, senior staff are alerted. Parents are telephoned so that action can be taken to locate missing pupils and return them to safety.

4.4 The SAOs, in collaboration with the Educational Welfare Service and South Wales Police, may conduct occasional 'truancy sweeps' in Cardiff City Centre and throughout the relevant areas of the city.

4.5 When concerns are raised by parents or staff about a pupil's school attendance, Attendance Officers will make a home visit. During the home visit they provide information and advice and seeks to support the pupil in returning to school.

4.6 When a pupil has been absent for an extended period, they are welcomed positively on their return. Appropriate staff are responsible for ensuring that, where possible, extended support is made available to the pupil, helping them to 'catch up' and move forward.

4.7 The SAOs work closely with the Mary Immaculate's cluster group of schools to ensure that good school attendance is maintained at all times. The SAOs also ensure that attendance and punctuality are given a high priority throughout the duration of pupils' compulsory education.

4.8 Excellent attendance is celebrated and certificates and rewards are given to those students achieving 100% attendance or whose attendance has improved significantly. Every school in the cluster has its own methods of rewarding positive attendance.

Hierarchy of sanctions

4.9 Mary Immaculate's cluster schools are caring schools and always seek to resolve matters of poor attendance through effective partnership working with parents. On the rare occasion that the school are unable to elicit in parents the support deemed necessary to encourage pupils to attend school, sanctions will be used. In the first instance, parents may receive letters which:

- Request reasons for their child's absence;
- Request medical evidence for their child's absence;
- Express concern about their child's absence and offer advice and support;
- Advise them about their child's lateness and ask for their help in getting their child to school on time;
- Advise them that the school has taken the decision not to authorise an absence;
- Advise them that an Attendance Officer intends to visit their home;
- Advise them of their legal responsibilities to ensure their child attends school regularly;
- Advise them that they are at risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice;
- Advise them that a referral has been made to the Educational Welfare Service.

4.10(i) In certain circumstances, the school may request that the Educational Welfare Service issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice under The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013. A warning letter will first be sent if:

- There have been 10 unauthorised sessions within one school term;
- A child has been late (after registration has closed) on 10 occasions within one school term;
- Parents/carers have failed to engage in attempts to improve attendance;
- The police have regularly found a pupil to be absent from school without an acceptable reason.

4.11(ii) A Fixed Penalty Notice will usually be issued if:

- There is one further unauthorised absence within 15 school days of a warning letter having been issued;

- An unauthorised holiday is taken during term time (*note that no warning letter will be received*).

4.12 When the school feels that, despite its best efforts to support the family, attendance is not improving, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. A referral might be made when, for example:

- A pattern of irregular attendance has developed;
- A period of entrenched non-attendance has become established;
- There is a lack of parental cooperation in ensuring a child's regular attendance; or
- A pattern of truancy is persisting.

4.13 Mary Immaculate's cluster schools will liaise with the Education Welfare Service to provide the evidence required to prosecute parents who fail, without reasonable justification, to cause their child to attend school regularly, under sections 444(1) and 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

5.1 All staff are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records for each pupil. Registration data and details of interventions and strategies are recorded using the relevant systems.

5.2 SAOs and other administrative staff produce detailed accounts pertaining to the attendance of pupils.

5.3 Attendance Officers meet regularly with relevant staff (e.g. HoY) to discuss individual cases of absenteeism, truancy or lateness with schools and across the cluster and reflect upon the effectiveness of interventions or actions to date. Decisions are taken, as appropriate, as to whether individual cases meet the criteria for referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

5.4 Attendance Officers meet with the Educational Welfare Officer as appropriate to review cases and seek support. The Educational Welfare Officer is responsible for contributing to each school's aim to improve attendance through the implementation of this Policy.

5.5 The Education Welfare Officer, with the Attendance Officers, conduct Register Audits on a regular basis as outlined by the Education Welfare Service.

5.6 Attendance data is reviewed regularly by the Senior Leadership Teams of the Mary Immaculate's cluster schools and is used to improve both the Self-Evaluation document and the School Improvement Plan.