ATTENDANCE POLICY

St. Ninian's High School   Scoill Ard Noo Ninian

*"**Empowering** our students to be self-motivated and confident young people who have **respect** for others and clear **aspiration** for their future success"*

Aims and Purpose

Regular school attendance is essential if students are to achieve their full potential. St Ninian's High School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling students to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. The school values all students and we will work with families to identify the reasons for unsatisfactory attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. This Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying and the Ready to Learn Policy.

General Principles

The Education Act 2001 and the Education (Registration of Pupils) Regulations 2004 clearly set out that *"it is the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise"* and both the School and the Department of Education, Sport & Culture (DESC) are required to enforce this duty. It should be noted in this connection that "parent", as defined in the Education Act 2001, includes any person who has parental responsibility for a child and any person with whom a child is living and who has care of the child.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Students are expected to be registered twice a day for attendance (as well as during each lesson). The two attendance registers happen in the morning (8.40am) and immediately after lunch during period 5 (1.45pm). Students are expected to maintain a minimum 98% attendance throughout the school year. Students who drop to or below 90% will be regarded as a persistent absentee.

Attendance and absence at St Ninian's High School

Categorising absence

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the Head Teacher of Head of Lower School and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Parents must advise the school by telephone, via the website, or email by 8:30 am on the day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. The e-mail address for absences is snhsstudentabsences@sch.im . If the absence is planned, parents can also use the slips at the rear of the student planner to inform tutors in advance of the absence. Tutors will pass the slips to the office who will record the reason for the absence on the register.

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Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness: Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to allow the Head to authorise absence where appropriate. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students must attend school for part of the day. Parents may be asked to show the appointment card to school.

Holiday: Only the Head Teacher or Head of Lower School can authorise absence for holidays. An extended absence for holidays will inevitably have an adverse effect on student progress and achievement and this is particularly more important during Years 9, 10 and 11. Teachers will not set work for students on holiday in school time. It is strongly recommended by the Department of Education, Sport and Culture (DESC) and the School that students are not taken out of school for holidays during term time.

Other Authorised Circumstances: This relates to where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, e.g. serious family illness or bereavement.

Excluded: Formal suspension from school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home in line with the DESC Suspension Policy.

Parents who need to take their child out of school during term time due to exceptional circumstances must send a written request to the Head Teacher or Head of Lower School. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

Late Arrival to school

Registration begins at 8.40am, and students arriving <u>after this time</u> when the register has been completed and saved will be marked as present but arriving late (L). Registration will end at 9.10am. On arrival after 9:10am, students must immediately report to Reception and sign in to ensure that we can be responsible for them whilst they are in school.

Persistent lateness will be identified as a concern and will be followed up initially by the Tutor.

Roles and Responsibilities

St Ninian's High School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community. As such,

The School will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents.

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- Regularly review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through regular reporting at Pastoral meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the DESC as required and on time.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions for poor attendance.
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance. For example, good teaching and learning experiences that encourage students to attend and achieve.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and are able to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response where appropriate to improve attendance and support students and their families.

Parents will be asked to:

- Talk to their child about school and education.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences.
- Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school; take every opportunity to become involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, independent study, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before.
- Avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in extreme circumstances.

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Subject Teachers will:

- Ensure that the register is taken promptly at the start of each lesson.
- When a pupil arrives after the register has been completed, mark them as late (L).
- Report concerns around persistent lesson lateness to the form tutor

Form Tutors will:

- ·Ensure that the register is taken promptly at the start of the day.
- Record any pupil arriving after the register has been taken as late (L)
- Be responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality on a day to day basis using the data provided to them.
- Be expected to discuss any attendance or punctuality concerns with individual members of their tutor group and suggest appropriate supportive strategies
- Ensure that any concerns are also discussed with parents or guardians
- Refer any persistent attendance or punctuality concerns to their Pastoral Leader.

Pastoral Leaders will:

- Ensure that attendance and punctuality are regularly discussed in year team meetings and that all tutors are aware of their responsibilities.
- Follow up on persistent attendance and punctuality concerns when there is evidence that the form tutor interventions have not been successful.
- Implement supportive strategies in order to raise attendance after discussion with parents/guardians.
- ·Share information with the Education Welfare Team at the DESC where attendance falls below 90%
- Make formal referrals to the Education Welfare Team at the DESC where a child's attendance falls below 80%, detailing any supportive strategies and interventions that have already been implemented.

Using Attendance Data

Students' attendance data will be monitored and information may be shared with the DESC and other agencies if a student's attendance is a cause for concern. Print-outs of pupils' attendance records must not be supplied to anyone other than a Parent/Guardian or an authorised DESC officer without the approval of the DESC. The Student Support Team will provide Form Tutors and Pastoral Leaders with regular attendance for each student on a weekly basis.

Support Systems

School recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, long term illness. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. We also recognise that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, and

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looked after children. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and students

- Attendance/punctuality report cards

- Referrals to outside agencies

- Referral to Student Support for Attendance Intervention Programme

- Student Voice activities

- PSHE curriculum time

- Reward systems

- Time limited part time time-tables

- Additional support from the Progress Zone where appropriate

- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, or when attendance falls below 80%, St Ninian's High School will make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Team at the DESC.

Policy Issued	October 2019
Review Date	October 2020
Person responsible	Deputy Head Teacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead