



Holy Family and Mossend Primary and Nursery Class

Attendance |Policy

2017 – 2018

“Make Every Day Count!”

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Introduction and background

Holy Family and Mossend Primary School recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and ensure that pupils have
- access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parents/carers annually on how their child's attendance with the annual school reports.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Celebrate perfect, very good and good attendance at prize giving.

Section 30 of the 1980 Education Act lays a duty on every parent of a child of 'school age' to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Attendance must be recorded twice a day, morning and afternoon.

Regulation 7 of The Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Amendment, Etc. Regulations 1993 requires each child's absence from school to be recorded in the school register as authorised or unauthorised, as defined by the Scottish Government.

Parent/Carer Contact Details

At the start of each school session, parents will be asked to provide contact details including at least one emergency contact number, including where possible, a number that will accept a text message. Parents are required to inform the school if these contact details change during the course of the year.

Procedures for informing the school of pupil absence

Parents and carers are asked to inform the school if a pupil is unable to attend from the start of the school day on the first day of absence.

Failure to do so will result in school staff accessing all contact numbers provided for the child and may result in the school sending a text message. In terms of child safety police will be contacted if all attempts to locate the child have been exhausted.

Parents should be asked to inform the school by letter or telephone if their child is likely to be absent for some time, and to give the child a note on his/her return to school confirming the reason for absence. Every effort should be made to avoid family holidays during term time as this both disrupts the child's education and reduces learning time. Parents/guardians should inform the school by letter of the dates before going on holiday.

Absences will be classified as authorised only in exceptional circumstances.

Such circumstances may include:

- A family holiday judged to be important to the wellbeing and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic events.

A family holiday classified under the 'authorised absence' category will not include such reasons as:

- The availability of cheap holidays
- The availability of desired accommodation

- Poor weather experience during school holidays
- Holidays which overlap the beginning or end of term
- Parental difficulty obtaining leave (except in cases where evidence is provided by the employer that it cannot accommodate leave during school holidays without serious consequences)

Family holidays with the above similar characteristics will be classified as unauthorised absence. Where the Head Teacher's prior agreement has not been sought the absence will automatically be classed as unauthorised.

Extended leave with parental consent holiday

Where most family holidays will be recorded as unauthorised absence (see above) extended leave with parental consent will not be considered the same as a family holiday. Leave in such circumstances will be authorised under circumstances such as:

- Extended overseas educational trips not organised by the school
- Short term parental placement abroad
- Family returning to its country of origin (to care for a relative, or for cultural reasons)
- Leave in relation to the children of travelling families

Exceptional domestic circumstances

Parents may request permission for such leave in writing and the school may authorise such requests under the following circumstances:

- The period immediately after an accident or illness
- A period of serious or critical illness of a close relative

- A domestic crisis which causes serious disruption to the family home causing temporary relocation

It should be emphasised that North Lanarkshire Council investigates unexplained absence, and that they have the power to write to, interview, or prosecute parents, or to refer pupils to the Reporter to the Children's Panel, if necessary.

Procedures for managing attendance

The school regards attainment of under 95% attendance to be causing concern and will monitor such attendances closely.

At the end of each month, attendance for the whole school is printed off and monitored by the Management Team. It is at this point, letters will be issued to parents/carers of pupils with absences below 95%. The school appreciate that from time to time children will be unwell and will have to be absent from school and that parents/carers may have phoned to inform the school of the absence or, indeed, sent in a letter but it is important to provide parents/carers with this information as part of our monitoring procedures.

Examples of letters issued can be located in Appendix 1 (Letter excluding holidays), Appendix 2 (Letter including holidays), Appendix 3 (Invite to school to discuss attendance patterns) & Appendix 4 (Lateness letter).

Appendix 1 (Letter 1 – excluding holidays)

Dear

As you are aware we take attendance very seriously here in Mossend PS and firmly believe there is a direct correlation between attendance and increased levels of attainment. We monitor attendance at the end of every month working in partnership with families to try to ensure all of our children are meeting North Lanarkshire Council's target of 95%.

We appreciate that from time to time your child will be unwell and will have to be absent from school. We continue to actively encourage you to telephone the school or send in a note explaining any absence.

When we monitored attendance at the end of last month we noted that your child's attendance was below North Lanarkshire Council's recommendation of 95%. We appreciate that you may have phoned to inform us of the absence or, indeed, sent us a letter but we feel it is important to share this information with you. Attached is a printout of your child's attendance from the start of the school session for you to see the actual absences.

Yours sincerely,

Depute Head Teacher

Appendix 2 (Letter 1 – including holidays)

Dear

As you are aware we take attendance very seriously here in Mossend PS and firmly believe there is a direct correlation between attendance and increased levels of attainment. We monitor attendance at the end of every month working in partnership with families to try to ensure all of our children are meeting North Lanarkshire Council's target of 95%.

We appreciate that from time to time your child will be unwell and will have to be absent from school. We continue to actively encourage you to telephone the school and send in a note explaining any absence.

When we monitored attendance at the end of last month we noted that your child's attendance was below North Lanarkshire Council's recommendation of 95%. We appreciate you may have had holidays since we started back school in August 2016 but have also noted there have been additional absences from the actual holiday dates. We understand that you may have phoned to inform us of the absence and, indeed, sent us a letter but we feel it is important to share this information with you. Attached is a printout of your child's attendance from the start of the school session for you to see the actual absences.

Yours sincerely,

Depute Head Teacher

Appendix 3 (Letter 2 – Invite to come in and discuss attendance behaviours and patterns)

Dear

As you are aware we take attendance very seriously here in Mossend PS and firmly believe there is a direct correlation between attendance and increased levels of attainment. We monitor attendance at the end of every month working in partnership with families to try to ensure all of our children are meeting North Lanarkshire Council's target of 95%.

We appreciate that from time to time your child will be unwell and will have to be absent from school. We continue to actively encourage you to telephone the school or send in a note explaining any absence.

When we monitored attendance at the end of last month we noted that your child's attendance was below North Lanarkshire Council's recommendation of 95%. Attached is a printout of your child's attendance from the start of the school session for you to see the actual absences.

As this is the second letter have had to send we would appreciate you coming in to the school on _____ at _____ to discuss how we can work together to improve your child's attendance.

Please telephone the school to confirm you will be attending the meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Depute Head Teacher

Appendix 4 (Lateness Letter)

