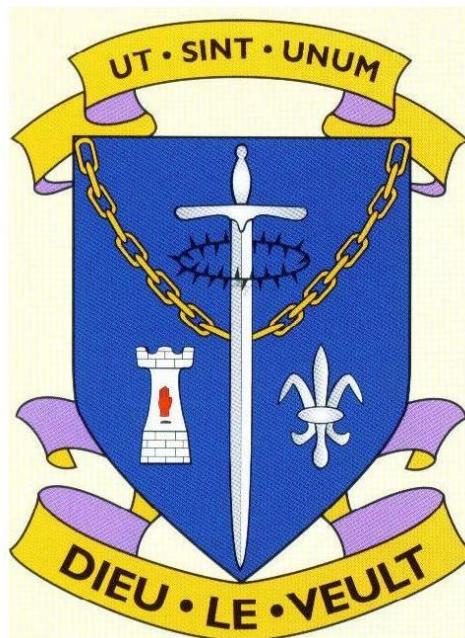


# ***St Louis Grammar School Kilkeel***

## **Attendance Policy**



*Date of Policy: September 2019  
Reviewed by: C.King September 2025  
Date of Review: September 2027*

St Louis values the commitment shown in the achievement of a good attendance record. St Louis Grammar, in keeping with our school vision, is committed to ensuring that all pupils achieve their academic potential and are prepared for the world of work. We

acknowledge the correlation between good attendance and high academic achievement as well as pupil self-esteem. The school places great importance on attendance and punctuality.

## **AIMS**

This policy will:

- accord priority and value to attendance and punctuality, and ensure that specific strategies are in place to promote this;
- ensure compliance with all relevant statutory requirements (particularly with regard to the maintenance of attendance registers and setting of targets);
- ensure that clear attendance information is communicated to parents/guardians (parents/guardians should be specifically reminded of their legal responsibility to ensure their children's regular and punctual attendance);
- collect and make effective use of attendance data to monitor progress/trends and set targets for improvement – for individual students, classes, year groups and the whole school;
- provide clear guidance to members of staff on the practice of registration and on related issues such as the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- recognise the crucial importance of early intervention and the provision of appropriate strategies;
- make provision for first-day-of-absence notification to parents/guardians
- identify a range of both proactive and reactive strategies to promote attendance and address absenteeism, especially in respect of persistent absenteeism;
- establish effective networks for working with other involved agencies and services;
- establish procedures for re-integrating long-term absentees and students who may, for specific reasons, have been on a reduced timetable; and
- help to sustain an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance, addressing potential school-based causes of poor attendance.

- To inform pupils and parents when attendance is becoming a cause for concern i.e. less than 95% and set targets and offer supports for improvement such as
- To inform EWO when attendance falls less than 85% and in collaboration with him/her, to offer help and support to the pupil to ensure a return to full attendance.

## **DEFINITIONS**

There are legal requirements upon schools to:

- maintain attendance registers in accordance with the relevant regulations;
- record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness accurately;
- distinguish clearly between absence which is authorised and absence which is unauthorised according to criteria laid down by the Department of Education. (Schools should remind parents/guardians that it is the decision of the Principal as to whether or not an absence will be authorised.);
- submit termly absence returns through school census and publish information relating to levels of attendance and absence and include details of these in the school's Prospectus and Report to the Board of Governors; and
- set annual targets to reduce absence and submit these targets in accordance with the relevant regulations.

## **PUNCTUALITY**

- Punctuality is essential to good time management. The school day begins at 9am and ends at 3.20pm. Each student is expected to remain in school for the duration of the school day.
- Students should be in school at 9am when the bell rings. Registration takes place at 9am each morning in classrooms by the Class Tutor. Students arriving after 9am will be marked 'late' by the Class Tutor. Any student who arrives later than 9.10 a.m. must report to their tutor to be marked present. The Class tutor will issue a lunchtime detention for three lates.
- **Throughout the school day, students are expected to arrive to class promptly, when a student is late, this is recorded by the class teacher.**

- Students who become ill during the school day will be sent to the school nurse. If it is necessary for a student to go home, the school will make direct contact with the parent/guardian to make the necessary arrangements. Mrs O'Hare, the Student Welfare Officer, will also inform the Year Head and the office who will record this on SIMS. No student may go home without following this procedure and without obtaining permission from a relevant member of staff.

### **LONG TERM ABSENCE**

- A student may be absent for a longer period of time due to illness or medical problems. If so, the relevant member of staff will liaise with parents/guardians, medical practitioners, the Educational Welfare Officer and relevant additional/special needs staff from EA to request the provision of peripatetic tutor support.

### **PARTIAL ATTENDANCE AND PHASED RETURN**

- In certain circumstances, perhaps due to a diagnosis of illness or due to recovery from surgery, a student may be unable to attend school for a full day. Through negotiation between the parent and the SLT such a student may be permitted to attend school on a partial basis only, signing in and out at reception. The student must be collected by a parent or other designated adult on leaving the building.

### **ABSENCE OF A STUDENT FOR WHOM THERE ARE CONCERNS**

- On occasions, St Louis Grammar School may arrange to make contact with parents/guardians, the Educational Welfare Officer, Social Services or otherwise should a particular student fail to arrive in the morning. Likewise, should such a student be absent due to illness, the adult responsible for their welfare is asked to make contact with the school.

### **MEDICAL/DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

- Medical appointments should be arranged outside school hours when it is possible to do so. If an unavoidable appointment takes place during the school day, a written request in the student's planner should be given to the Class Tutor in advance. Any student who misses registration for a medical or dental appointment will be marked with a code M and attendance may be affected. Doctor's and dental appointment cards may be requested should this be a frequent occurrence.

### **CARERS**

- In exceptional circumstances, St Louis Grammar School may sanction limited absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made. The Principal will set a time limit for such absences in consultation with the Senior Leadership team. Advice may be taken from EA or other appropriate agency before arriving at a decision. In such circumstances, consideration will be given to the welfare of the young person.

## **REQUESTS FOR HOLIDAYS**

- The Governors, Principal and staff request that holidays for students are organised outside of the school term. If a student goes on holiday during term time, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/guardians and students will take full responsibility for any work missed during that time.

## **APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES**

- If so approved by the Principal, absence from school due to participation in an educational activity may be recorded as an approved educational activity.

## **RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

- Applications for absence due to Religious Observance Days should be made to the Principal in writing and well in advance. The Principal will review each application reasonably and consult with the Senior Leadership Team.

## **2.12 REMOVAL OF A STUDENT FROM THE REGISTER**

- The Principal will authorise the removal of a student's name from the Register in accordance with the current regulations.

## **2.13 ATTENDANCE RECORDS AND REFERRALS**

- Attendance and all forms of absence are recorded using the Attendance and Absence codes required by the Department of Education (Appendix 2)
- St Louis Grammar School works with Educational Welfare Officers (EWO) drawn from a range of Education Authority areas. Queries linked to poor attendance are channelled via the Year Head to the Head of Pastoral Care and then to the relevant EWO.

- Although the majority of referrals made to the Education Welfare Service are on the basis of non-attendance, some are occasionally taken in relation to child protection concerns, transport or school-age employment issues.
- Before accepting a referral from a school, the Education Welfare Service will expect the school to have undertaken a number of steps to address the student's non-attendance. These may include:
  - action by the class teacher/class tutor;
  - action by the Year Head; and
  - contact with parents/guardians by telephone or letter.
  - Meeting to be arranged with the Year Head and parent.
- A referral will be made to the EWO in the following circumstances:
  - (i) there is concern about an erratic pattern of absence;
  - (ii) there is concern about a poor attendance record;
  - (iii) a pattern of persistent lateness has developed;
  - (iv) communication by the school to the parents/guardians has met with little or no response;
  - (v) there is evidence of a lack of parental co-operation in ensuring a student's regular attendance;
  - (vi) a pattern of post-registration truancy is persisting despite the school's efforts to prevent it;
  - (vii) there is concern about the reason(s) for absence;
  - (viii) a parent withdraws a student from school having expressed an intention to educate him/her otherwise than at school (Elective Home Education);
  - (ix) a student is withdrawn from school by the parents/guardians who are moving to another area and the school does not have a confirmed destination/school provider where the student will resume his/her education (such students will be treated as 'students missing education');
  - (x) there are specific and identifiable welfare issues which are preventing a student from accessing education.
- Parents/guardians are always informed and permission initially sought if a referral is being made to the Educational Welfare Service. If permission is not given but concerns persist the referral may still proceed.

- Following referral, the EWO will liaise with the parents/guardians, student and school staff (and external agencies, if relevant) to address the problem and agree a strategy to improve the situation.

## **ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **GOVERNORS**

The Board of Governors will:

- approve the Policy, consider future proposed changes to the Attendance Policy and, when agreed, approve the ratified Policy; and
- receive reports on attendance from the Principal.

### **PRINCIPAL**

The Principal, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team and members of the Pastoral Team, will:

- set attendance targets in accordance with the School Development Plan and target-setting processes;
- monitor progress;
- ensure that strategies to promote and implement the Attendance Policy throughout the school are in place;
- determine whether to authorise any proposed absences requested by parents/guardians, or absences which have occurred for which no request was made;
- notify parents/guardians as appropriate that if a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly, his/her parents/guardians commit an offence;
- liaise with EA regarding persistent absentees;
- make a report with statistics to the Board of Governors.

### **HEAD OF PASTORAL CARE**

The Head of Pastoral Care will:

- oversee the work of Heads of Year, ensuring that the correct procedures are followed;
- enter into a Partnership Agreement with the Educational Welfare Service and meet with the EWO at agreed(Monthly) intervals;

- authorise referrals to the Educational Welfare Service when appropriate; and
- ensure targets are being monitored.

### **The Head of Year**

The Heads of Year will:

- in collaboration with Class Tutors and the Office staff, identify poor attenders (90% or below) or those who might otherwise be at risk;
- identify ad hoc absences or unusual patterns or trends and follow up on the same;
- monitor Class Tutors to ensure that all student absences are noted and that reasons for absences have been received from parents/guardians;
- make checks on the efficiency of the registering;
- make checks on reasons for absence
- ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with;
- contact parents/guardians regarding student absences via letters generated by the administrative staff (and, when considered appropriate and necessary, by telephone or interview);
- make reports to the SLMT on the efficiency of the system, required training needs and upon students who are giving cause for concern;
- Ensure that tutors make contact to a parent/guardian on the third day of a student's absence; and
- Implement informal attendance incentive schemes which recognise student's attendance achievements e.g. provide attendance figures for Pastoral Boards to recognise full attendance at Awards' Ceremonies and record good attendance as achievements on the Behavioural Management App.
- assumes a key role in monitoring and dealing with all aspects of attendance related matters;
- generally monitors and evaluate the work of Form Tutors in promoting attendance;

- effectively liaises with members of the Senior Leadership Team on attendance related matters;
- ensures that up-to-date attendance data is regularly available;
- meets regularly when appropriate with the Education Welfare Officer and other external agencies
- Provide a monthly audit with actions taken by school for the Head of Pastoral Care and EWO
- publishes year groups attendance on a monthly basis on year group notice board.
- Through student voice be aware of any barriers to attendance and be responsive to the pastoral needs through the PD programme
- If a student's attendance is less than 95%, the Year head will send a letter home detailing the attendance figures.
- If a student's attendance is below 90%, the Year Head will invite the parent/guardian for interview.
- If a student's attendance is below 85%, a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Officer.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

The Administrative Staff will:

- in collaboration with Class Tutors, Year Heads and the SLMT, identify poor attenders (85% or below) or those who might otherwise be at risk;
- make checks on the efficiency of the registering and alert the relevant Year Head when required;
- ensure that registers are completed and up-to-date at the end of each term;
- make checks on absence notes;
- generate Absence Letters and record the outcomes; and
- when made aware that a student has been absent for three consecutive days, liaise with the Year Head to arrange a phone call to the parent.

## **CLASS TUTORS**

Class Tutors will:

- ensure that students are registered accurately and consistently;
- ensure that every absence is accounted for with a note from a parent;
- follow up cases of unaccounted for absence or unacceptable notes;
- inform the Year Head of any signs of suspected truancy;
- inform the Year Head of any possible underlying problems which may account for absences;
- inform the school office and the Year Head if a student is absent for three consecutive days; and
- employ the absence codes correctly, noting any changes to the system.

## **The Head of Department**

- regularly liaises with departmental colleagues, Form Tutors and Year Heads on attendance related matters in their subject area.
- examines the curriculum in order to develop ways of improving the quality of the classroom experience;
- develops sensitive and effective departmental re-entry strategies which welcome children back from a period of absence and offers support in the organisation of missed work;

## **CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

Classroom teachers will:

- check the attendance of students at their lessons using Lesson Monitor; and
- if concerned or suspicious regarding the absence of a student, inform the Tutor or Year Head at the earliest possible opportunity.

## **PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

- Parents/guardians can support the regular and punctual attendance of their children by ensuring that:
  - their child arrives at school on time each day;
  - their child misses school only for unavoidable or justifiable reasons such as illness or days of religious observance;
  - they notify the school as soon as possible (preferably on the first morning) of any absence;
  - they take an active interest in their child's school life and work;
  - their child completes his/her homework;
  - their child goes to bed at an appropriate time;
  - they attend parents'/guardians' evenings and other school events;
  - they do not book holidays during term time; and
  - they talk with the Year Head if they are concerned that their child may be becoming reluctant to attend school.

## **STUDENTS**

Students are required to:

- attend regularly (registering before the attendance register for that session is closed) unless ill or excused through authorised absence;
- bring an explanatory note signed by a parent on the day of return to school;
- follow procedures for leaving school due to illness; and
- make a request for any planned absences from their Class Tutor/Year Head well in advance of the event.
- Pupils should talk to a teacher or trusted adult about any worries they have about school which may affect their attendance in order that the school can take action if necessary.

## **Attendance Procedures**

### **Form Tutors**

All form tutors and pupils should be in their registration rooms at 9.00am.

Registers will be completed online via lesson monitor and submitted at 9.15am.

Tutors should call out each individual student's name and only mark present those students in front of them. Any students absent should be marked "N".

If a student arrives after registration has been submitted they must sign in with the office and report to their tutor immediately. **It is crucial that they do this.**

Patterns of lateness will be monitored. Three incidents of lateness will lead to a detention given by their tutor. If patterns of lateness persist the problem should be referred to the Year Head.

Tutors must check previous day's register for missing marks or "N", clarify with students, reasons for same and Tutors should update their records on SIMS when explanations of absence are forthcoming. Tutors should ensure that when updating the reason for absence both AM and PM must be updated. If the student has not brought in a reason for absence after five days this code must be changed to "D".

### **Subject Teachers**

Teachers will be required to register each lesson via lesson monitor.

All subject teachers are asked to complete a register for each of their classes and to monitor attendance and to emphasise to pupils the importance of good attendance.

Teachers should call out each individual student's name and only mark present those students in front of them. All students absent should be marked "N". If a student arrives after registration has been submitted, the teacher should update the SIMS record and provide reason for lateness. Teachers should record minutes late to class on SIMS. If a student fails to turn up teachers should follow the missing student protocol. Appendix 1 Any unexplained absences should be referred to the students' Year Head.

## **Medical Appointments**

It is important to keep appointments within school hours to an absolute minimum. However, we do acknowledge that this can be unavoidable from time to time and in these cases pupils are asked to bring a note to their Year Head at registration stating reason for leaving school, time of departure and estimated time of return. The note should be accompanied by the appointment card.

Once the Year Head has authorised the appointment the student will be issued with a sign out slip that must be brought to the office. If their Year Head is unavailable they should seek permission from a member of the SLMT.

On return to school the pupil must sign in at the office. The register will then be amended showing attendance for the session. Failure to return for the session will affect the overall percentage attendance for each student.

## **Absences**

All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Should an explanation for an absence not be received or should the explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised. (Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as shopping, daytrips, birthdays or any other non-essential reason.)

Parents are advised they must contact the school on the first day of any absence. A record of any such phone call or other communication will be recorded by reception and forwarded to the relevant tutor.

If a parent has not made contact by 9.30am Personnel in the office will send a message via GroupCall to ascertain reasons for absences. Parents can reply via SMS or phone the school and the reasons for absence can be updated.

## **Attendance Data**

A range of attendance data will be collected each half term in order to identify particular cohorts whose attendance/lateness causes concern. Heads of Year and Heads of Department will be responsible for analysing this data and reporting back to the Senior Management Team.

### **The Use of Attendance Data**

The data which can be extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the effective management of whole-school attendance matters.

Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, form/year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc);
- match attendance trends with attainment trends;
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy;
- report attendance matters to parents
- form part of any reference requested for a university application

### **Excellent/improved attendance might be acknowledged by:**

- Achievement recorded on SIMS
- certificates;
- photo-displays featuring named pupils;
- references in school newsletters/bulletins;
- regular features/presentations on an year group notice board;

- presentations at assemblies, parents' evenings, etc;
- personal congratulations from senior staff.

**Who to Acknowledge:**

- 100% attenders and other excellent attenders (over a term, a year);
- consistently good attenders;
- poor attenders who show a marked/any improvement;
- form or year groups with consistently good attendance;
- form or year groups who show a marked improvement;
- year 8 pupils who begin their secondary career with a good attendance record;
- the whole school.

**Appendix 2 Missing student protocol**

**Student missing on School Grounds during the school day**

If a student appears to be missing while she/he should be on school grounds the class teacher will:

- a) immediately check with the office to see if the child has been sent home/signed out

If they have not signed out contact Miss C. McCartan or a member of the office staff who will check the following areas:

- A) Student Welfare Officer
- B) Send a senior student to check the toilets
- C) Check with the students Year Head/tutor to see if they are aware of their location

If the student appears to be genuinely missing, office staff/C. McCartan will immediately notify a free member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

- A) A member of the SLT who is free will take overall responsibility for the further actions listed below:

- B) If none of the above staff know where the child is, the SLT member will give staff specific areas of the school to check for the missing child, including speaking to children and staff.
- C) Speak to a member of the safeguarding team to ensure there are no immediate safeguarding concerns, if there are follow procedures below:
  - a. If the child is known to Social Services a member of the safeguarding team will notify the trust.
- D) If a child is not found following a check of the school premises, either C. McCartan or a member of the SLT will contact parents to check if the child is with them and if there may be any reason the child may be hiding and finally to let them know their child is missing. A contact number will be confirmed at this point with the parent and they will be told that the authorities below will be notified. The Principal must be informed.
- E) Immediately following the notification of the parents, the local police ([tel:101](#)) will be notified with a description to the child. A photograph of the child should be printed out from SIMS together with any specific medical or other relevant details.
- F) The SLT member involved and other senior staff, as appropriate, will liaise with the police and other authorities as required. They will also liaise with the parents as directed by the policy

## Appendix 2

Summary of Attendance Codes on current C2K system (Updated July 2025)			
CODE	DESCRIPTION	CODE	DESCRIPTION
/	Present: / = (AM); \ = (PM)	S	Study Leave
A	Artistic Endeavour	U	Late (after registration closed)
B	Bereavement	V	Educational Visit / Examination
C	Suspended	W	Work Experience
D	No reason provided for absence	X	Only staff should attend
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Y	Exceptional Closure
H	Other Absence	#	Holiday for all
I1	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	!	No attendance required
I4	Illness – Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)	1	Community Providers / EOTAS (organised by the EA)
J	Extended Leave	2	Exceptional Teaching Arrangement / hospital
L	Late (before registration closed)	3	Elective Home Education
M	Medical / Dental Appointments	4	Pupil Referral Unit
N	No reason yet provided for absence (temporary code only)	5	Another mainstream school (under Entitlement Framework – EF)
O1	Other Exceptional Circumstances	6	Training Organisation (under EF)
O2	Temporary Exceptions to the Curriculum	7	FE College (under EF)
P	Approved Activity	8	Intensive Support Learning Unit
R	Religious Observance	9	CAMHS / Mental Health Support

Absence Category Colour Code

Present / Approved Educational Activity	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Attendance not required
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