



Lisnagarvey High School  
Circular No 2015/01

# LISNAGARVEY HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## **Introduction**

All children of compulsory school age have the right to an effective full time education, regardless of age, aptitude, ability and any special needs he/she may have. Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Lisnagarvey High School takes its responsibilities to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all its pupils seriously. We acknowledge that irregular attendance disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, leads to underachievement and low attainment and impedes a child's ability to develop socially within the school community.

## **Aims of the Policy**

This policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which students feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising the awareness of the importance of a differentiated and relevant curriculum.
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward students' successes and achievements.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

Full attendance should be the objective of all children. Parents should be aware of this and as a result, should immediately contact the school in the event of a necessary absence.

On return to school the pupil should bring a note of explanation so that his/her teacher can record the reason for absence on the registration system (SIMS). Absence slips are available and may be used as a convenient means of communication.

Parents/Guardians should be aware of their legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school every day.

It is worth considering that any child whose absence equates to missing one day per week will have lost in excess of one year of education by the end of their school life!

Where attendance problems exist the school operates an excellent Pastoral Care Support and Guidance Programme which parents and pupils should make use of. This includes the services of a dedicated Attendance and Liaison Officer.

## **Late Arrival**

Pupils who arrive within five minutes of the school's starting time (8.45am) may in exceptional circumstances be registered by the Class Tutor. Those who arrive more than fifteen minutes late should report to the General Office and sign the 'Late Registration Book' or be signed in by Prefects in the Entrance Hall.

## **Action**

When guidance and support do not have the desired effect a letter of concern will be sent out by Year Heads to parents to encourage pupils to improve attendance. When individual attendance falls below 85% a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Office (EWO). It should be noted that in 'worst case scenarios' a fine of up to £1000 may be imposed by courts.

In order to minimise EWO involvement action should be taken when a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (Department of Education Guidelines deem 90% as poor attendance - see table at back).

## **Pupils**

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the educational opportunities available.

### **Pupils are expected to:**

- Respect themselves and others.
- Attend school regularly.
- Arrive on time, appropriately dressed in school uniform and prepared for the school day.
- Through our effective Pastoral Care System, tell a member of staff about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly.
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel they are being bullied.
- Encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.

### **Parents/Guardians can expect that the school will:**

- Provide a good quality education for their child.
- Record their son's/daughter's attendance regularly (every lesson), accurately and efficiently; this will be done via electronic registration (SIMS).
- On the first day of absence make every reasonable effort to contact the parent when their child fails to attend school without good reason (text service).
- Deal discretely and properly with any problem notified to the school by the parent.
- Make all efforts to encourage good attendance and behaviour.
- Make contact with parents if explanation for absence has not been provided.

## **Parents**

Parents have responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. It is their legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school, and stay for every lesson after they have registered. Parents should also make sure that their children arrive on time, properly dressed in their uniform, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, Education Welfare and Social Services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

### **Parents are expected to:**

- Keep requests for their child to be absent a minimum.
- Offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably on the first day of absence.
- Ensure that their child arrives to school on time; a reason should be offered for lateness.
- Provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency telephone numbers.
- Work closely with the school and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to resolve any problems that might impede their child's attendance.

- Take annual family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time may be refused.
- Be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic times such as examinations.
- Support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.
- Inform the school in confidence about any problem which might affect their son's/daughter's attendance or behaviour.

### **Staff**

- All staff should encourage pupils to strive for full attendance and punctuality.
- Registration teachers should insist upon the receipt of notes or letters of explanation for absence when a pupil returns to school.
- Registers should be marked carefully each period.
- Appropriate codes should be marked carefully each period.
- Inaccurate marking may cause parental anger and staff embarrassment when contact is made with home.

### **Class Tutors**

- Make regular checks to ensure that there are no missing marks on registers. Year Heads may provide support in dealing with this.
- Ensure that they are aware of reasons for absence of all pupils in their registration group.
- Inform the Year Head and/or Attendance Liaison Officer of particular problems.

### **Year Heads**

- Make regular checks of attendance in their Year Group.
- Speak to pupils concerned and where possible make contact with parents. Ranges of contact letters are available from the General Office and contact telephone numbers are available on the SIMS System.
- Make referrals to Attendance Liaison Officer and EWO as necessary (<85% becomes a serious issue).
- Compile a monthly list of 100% present pupils who will receive certificates and rewards.
- Make regular checks of the 'Late Registration Book' in order to identify persistent offenders and patterns and to take appropriate action.
- Ensure correct coding of absences.

### **Attendance Officer**

- Make regular attendance/absence checks.
- Liaise with pupils and Class Tutors.
- Contact parents in support of work completed by Class Tutors and Year Heads.
- Keep the Senior Leadership Team informed of developments.
- Liaise with EWO on a regular basis.
- Keep staff informed of general attendance trends and specific problems.
- Provide support and encouragement for pupils, parents and staff whose efforts are making a positive change.

### **Senior Leadership Team**

- Be aware of attendance/absence trends.
- Provide general support for staff and pupils.
- Provide data to keep the School's Board of Governors informed.

## General Information for Parents

- All pupils should be in school in advance of the 8.45am start time.
- First period teachers will complete an electronic registration.
- Subject Teachers will ensure that all classes are registered each period.
- Text messages to parents of missing pupils will be generated when first registration is complete (Teacher 2 Parents).
- Class Tutors, Head of Departments, Senior Staff, Attendance Liaison Officer and EWO will all be involved in evaluating attendance records in order to identify poor attendance and to take appropriate action to correct problems.
- Excellent attendance will also be identified and rewarded in our 'Good Attendance Initiative Programme'.

## Good Attendance Initiative Programme

This programme is vital to the success of the school's attendance initiative. Recognition of good practice can be as effective as corrective action for poor attendance.

Year Heads in Junior School will provide a list of pupils who have achieved 100% attendance for the previous calendar month. These pupils will be recognised and rewarded in Junior Assembly.

## Communication

A range of letters is available in the general Office and Staffroom in order to facilitate communication with parents/guardians.

Year Heads are encouraged to include the Department of Education's 'Every School Day Counts' leaflet in all communication. This leaflet indicates clearly that the Department of Education considers 90% attendance to be poor.

100% Attendance	0 Days Missed	Excellent
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