

# Attendance Policy

## New-Bridge Integrated College



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| <b>Date Ratified by BoG:</b><br><br>2018 | <b>Review Date:</b><br><br>2021 |
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### **Rationale:**

The Governors and staff of New-Bridge Integrated College are committed to providing a full and effective education for all our pupils to ensure they achieve their full potential in all that they do. At New-Bridge, we work together to engender in our pupils positive attitudes and behaviours based on respect for self and others. We will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. Academic success in school is interdependent with good attendance and we believe our pupils will achieve their full potential and be happy members of the school community if they attend school each day. Pupils, parents and teachers work together to maintain high standards of attendance. Our school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an Attendance Policy within which staff, pupils, parents and the Education Welfare Service can work together in partnership. All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance.

DE's Policy for School Improvement '***Every School a Good School***' April 2009; states that every school should ensure that '***...a culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists – with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability***'. This policy emphasises the important link between good attendance and academic success. All staff have responsibility for pupil attendance in school. The Pastoral Co-ordinator, Mr D Kane, Year Co-ordinators, Ms Johnston (6<sup>th</sup> Form Supervisor), Mrs

Canniford (Pastoral Secretary), and Form Tutors liaise with home and other agencies about pupil's attendance when appropriate.

Our College Attendance Policy is set in the context of the DENI 'Miss School = Miss Out: a Strategy for Improving School Attendance':

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/consultations/de/A%20Strategy%20for%20Improving%20Pupil%20Attendance.pdf>

At New-Bridge we are committed to improving attendance through a holistic approach. We are pro-active in our use of effective strategies for those struggling with attendance. At New-Bridge we aim to achieve this through the following key elements:

- Leadership committed to prioritizing attendance
- Effective early intervention
- Appropriate support for our pupils (and parents)
- Effective collaboration and engagement

### **Aims:**

At New-Bridge we aim to foster positive attitudes towards education and encourage our pupils to value the importance of good attendance and punctuality in line with Article 29 of UNCRC '***The role of education is to encourage children to reach their potential***', and within the guidelines of 'Miss School = Miss Out';

- To improve the overall attendance of our pupils;
- To maximize the attendance rate for our pupils so that they are in school being educated and supported to reach their full potential
- To promote good attendance through positive parental engagement;
- To recognise good attendance with award certificates, KS3 treats and KS4 / 6<sup>th</sup> Form Attendance lottery;

- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils;
- To promote and develop effective working relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

### **The School's Expectations on Attendance:**

To ensure regular attendance and punctuality, New-Bridge has the following expectations from all our stakeholders:

#### **Role of Pupil**

Every pupil has a duty to ensure that they attend school every day and are punctual.

- To be in school each day and to be on time – 9.00 a.m.
- Any pupil arriving to school late must sign in at the office with Mrs Canniford, explaining why they are late (6<sup>th</sup> Form must sign in with their Form Tutor or Ms Johnston in Study)
- To attend all classes required on their timetable
- To never leave school during the day without permission
- To bring in a note from her parent/guardian on the day of return explaining the period of absence
- To catch up on all work missed during absence
- To tell their Form Tutor (or another trusted adult) / parents about anything that is affecting their attendance and attainment at school, including reporting bullying

#### **Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

***'Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs she may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise'.***

**(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)**

- To be aware of their legal responsibilities for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance
- To value the importance of a good education
- To comply with the school's Pupil Attendance Policy and procedures and support their child to obey the rules regarding attendance, non-attendance and punctuality
- To provide a reason immediately each time their child does not attend school and advise the school on issues such as medical appointments, which should not normally result in a full-day absence; provide a signed note explaining any absence on the day of their son/daughter's return to school; as far as possible, arrange dental/medical appointments out of school time
- Take an active interest in their child's education and promote the benefits of regular attendance; ensure that their son/daughter is in school every day and on time
- Support all school staff in their efforts to control difficult or challenging behaviour
- Not book holidays during term time
- To contact the school if their son/daughter is expected to be absent
- To provide information to the school if their son/daughter will be absent for a prolonged period of time
- To make the necessary arrangements to collect work from the school if their son/daughter is off for a prolonged period of time
- To contact the relevant Year Head, if their son/daughter is reluctant to attend school

### **Role of the School**

- Promote the importance of school attendance and the link between attendance and achievement.
- Remind parents of the potential sanctions for failure to meet their responsibilities.
- Consult with the learners about their views of the appropriateness of the curriculum and the effectiveness of the teaching to engage the learner.
- Have in place forms of pupil participation to help children and young people to participate in making decisions that affect them including curriculum choices.

- Have a Pupil Attendance Policy which is approved and endorsed by the BoG. All staff, pupils and their parents should be aware of the policy.
- Include school attendance targets in the school development plan and ensure pupil attendance is included in the agenda of every Board of Governors' meetings.
- Ensure that all absences are recorded correctly. Emphasise the need for an explanation for every absence.
- Inform all parents what information is required in respect of their child's non-attendance and when it should be provided.
- Monitor their pupils' attendance so any issues can be identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- Have clear procedures in place to identify and follow up all pupil absences and lateness. Monitor post-registration pupil absence and advise parents/ carers of post-registration absenteeism by, for example, a phone call or text message.
- Refer pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern, or falls below 85% to the EWO.
- Provide attendance information to pupils and their parents on a regular basis, and not just at formal parent/teacher interviews and end of year reports.

### **Role of the Education Welfare Service**

Education and Library Boards through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their son/daughter's education. Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance

- Disseminate best practice to schools both at a system level and individual school level.
- Establish agreed criteria for pupil referrals with schools and respond appropriately.

- Carry out termly audits of attendance and respond appropriately when whole school attendance levels are 90% or lower and/or when an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 85%.
- Use appropriate legislation to proceed with court action if this is in the best interest of the child.
- Work closely with schools, social services and other agencies to provide the necessary help to support children to maintain their education.
- Engage with parents in a positive way to improve attendance at school.
- Establish effective working relationships with appropriate external bodies, in the best interests of children

### **Role of the Vice Principal, Care & Welfare**

- Monitor attendance and punctuality
- Use positive incentives to encourage pupils to improve/maintain good attendance
- Work closely with Parents, Mr K McCaughey (Education Welfare Officer), Year Co-ordinators, Form Tutors, Care and Welfare Tutors
- Interview individual pupils/parents regarding attendance when and where necessary.

### **Monitoring Pupil Attendance - Lesson Monitor**

Staff monitor lesson attendance through the use of the computerised SIMS system 'Lesson Monitor'. This programme allows each class teacher to mark the attendance register at the beginning of each lesson using the following Coding System:

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Reason</b>              |
|-------------|----------------------------|
| <b>/ \</b>  | Present: / = A.M. \ = P.M. |
| <b>A</b>    | Artistic Endeavour         |
| <b>B</b>    | Bereavement                |
| <b>C</b>    | Suspended                  |
| <b>F</b>    | Family Holiday (agreed)    |

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| <b>I</b> | Illness  |
| <b>L</b> | Late   |
| <b>M</b> | Medical/Dental Appointments                          |
| <b>N</b> | Absent from Class without a Valid Reason - Mitching  |
| <b>O</b> | Other Exceptional Circumstances                      |
| <b>P</b> | Approved Sporting Activity                           |
| <b>R</b> | Religious Observation                                |
| <b>S</b> | Study Leave  |
| <b>V</b> | Educational Visit                                    |
| <b>W</b> | Work Experience                                      |
| <b>Y</b> | Exceptional Closure                                  |
| <b>1</b> | AEP (ELB)  |
| <b>2</b> | Home/Hospital Tuition (ELB)                          |
| <b>4</b> | Pupil Referral Unit                                  |
| <b>5</b> | Another Mainstream School (St Colman's or St Mark's) |
| <b>6</b> | Training Organisation (EF)                           |
| <b>7</b> | FE College (SRC)                                     |
| <b>8</b> | CAMHS  |

Through Lesson Monitor, teachers can check pupils' attendance from the previous lessons. If a pupil is absent from the current lesson, without a valid reason, the teacher will contact the main office and email the pupil's Year Co-ordinator. The class teacher will record an **N** code in Lesson Monitor. The Year Co-ordinator will follow up on the absence.

A pupil should only be absent from class if the reason is authorised. An authorised absence will be indicated by a comment on Lesson Monitor.

Authorised absences are recorded as a morning or afternoon away from school for an acceptable reason such as illness, bereavement, attendance at a medical or dental appointment.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. These include:

- Mitching
- Shopping
- Baby Sitting
- Term time holidays
- Absences which have not been properly explained

Form Teachers will record an S code (Study Leave) in Lesson Monitor for pupils who are doing Public Examinations in Years 11, 12, 13 and 14 during the examination period. Study Leave (Code S) will not be used for internal examinations or in advance of the commencement of the examination timetable.

### **Positive Measures to Encourage Good Attendance**

- Class registers will be completed accurately by staff at the beginning of each lesson using SIMS Lesson Monitor
- Form Tutors will monitor pupil's attendance through Lesson Monitor
- Attendance will be closely monitored by Year Co-ordinators
- At KS3 the Form Class with the highest overall attendance, and the most improved Form Class will be rewarded with a 'treat' session in the canteen.
- Monthly draws take place for 100% attendance in KS4 and 6<sup>th</sup> Form – a £10 Gift Vouchers will be presented to one Yr11/Yr12 pupil who has achieved 100% attendance for any given month, and one 6<sup>th</sup> Form pupil who has achieved 100% attendance for any given month.
- A letter from the Vice Principal Care and Welfare is sent to parents if a pupil's attendance falls between 85% and 90%
- Any pupil will attendance below 85% will be referred to the EWO: a review meeting may then be carried out with the Year Co-ordinator, EWO, parent and pupil.
- A very good attendance record will merit a positive and supportive reference to future employers and other educational establishments.



## **Punctuality/Lateness**

New-Bridge Integrated College places a great deal of importance on the need for all our pupils to be punctual and to arrive to school on time. It makes for a good start to the school day and does not interrupt the learning and teaching in the classroom. Any pupil who arrives late to school **must** immediately go to the Office to be registered as late.

For any pupils who come to school late on a regular basis in any one week (without a valid reason) the Form Tutor will contact their parent/guardian to alert them to lateness and if the lateness continues, the parent/guardian will be invited for a meeting with the Year Co-ordinator.

## **Responding to Non-Attendance and Lateness**

- If no phone call or letter is received from a parent explaining an absence a text message will be sent via the 'text local' service.
- **In cases of continued non-attendance or lateness the Education Welfare Officer will be alerted by the Year Co-ordinator and home visits may follow.**

## **Leaving School During the Day**

If a pupil needs to leave school during the day due to illness or other genuine reason, he/she must report submit a note to their Form Tutor at morning Registration. All pupils who are going home during the day **must** be collected from school by a parent/guardian or other relative. **The parent/guardian must enter the school and sign their child out of school with Mrs Canniford (Pastoral Secretary)**

Any pupil who leaves the school premises without carrying out the above procedures will be deemed to be 'absent from school without permission'. The Class Teacher will record a code **N** on Lesson Monitor and will make a phone call to the main office. The following procedures will follow:

- Parents will be informed that their son/daughter is out of school without permission
- The pupil will have a follow-up meeting with their Year Co-ordinator
- The pupil will receive an after-school detention

- If this is a regular occurrence, the Education Welfare Officer will be involved.

Pupils are **NOT** allowed to text parents to come and collect them during the day. The relevant Year Co-ordinator or Head of School are the only people authorised to give a pupil permission to leave school during the school day.

## **Appointments**

**Advance notice of appointments should be given and appointment cards must be presented.**

### **For safety and security reasons a pupil must:**

- During Registration, present a note from her Parent/Guardian to her Form Teacher or Year Tutor and show her appointment card if she has a medical/dental/other appointment which cannot be arranged after school. The Form Teacher will sign the note which will then be sent to the Office for filing. The Pastoral Secretary will record a code **M** in Lesson Monitor.
- The note should contain:
  - The date and time of appointment
  - The pupil's full name
  - Form class
  - A contact telephone number
  - Parent's may make use of the templates available in the back of the pupil Yearbook for contacting school or explaining absences
- The parent/guardian must collect their son/daughter from the Office and sign their child out with the Pastoral Secretary. Pupils are encouraged to return to school after the medical or dental appointment.

**Telephone requests** – In an emergency a parent may phone the school requesting that their son/daughter be allowed out of school. Such calls will be checked before permission is given and the parents will be asked to collect their daughter from the Office to sign their child out.

### **Parental Request for a Family Holiday During Term-Time**

Parents are requested **NOT** to book a family holiday during term-time. It is recognised that the pupil's learning would be disrupted and it can result in falling behind in studies.

Family holidays during term-time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances:

- The holiday is important for the well-being and cohesion of the family unit following a serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic event (Code **F** will be recorded on Lesson Monitor)

### **All requests for a holiday during term-time must be submitted in writing to the Principal.**

It is our policy that it is not possible to provide the pupil with work during the period she will be on holiday. However, on the pupil's return to school, teachers will provide them with the work that they have missed. The pupil will be encouraged to work hard and to complete the additional work at home.

### **Use of External/Support Agencies:**

We acknowledge the importance of a range of external support agencies in promoting and supporting Good Attendance within the school but also the importance of ensuring that such agencies adhere to the values and ethos of our school.

Current external / support agencies include:

- EWO Service
- Social Services
- School Counsellors
- School Age Mothers (SAM)
- PSNI
- EOTAS
- Training for Business Programme (STEPS and VEP)
- Behaviour Support Team
- CAPS and YPP

**Related School Policies:**

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and as such should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pastoral Care Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- SEN Policy

**Dissemination of the Policy:**

Some Pastoral Policies are available on the College Website and can be sent from the Office on request.

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:**

The Vice Principal for Care, Welfare & Learning is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of The Attendance Policy. Mrs Harbinson will revise the policy and procedures in light of any further DE guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. This will be done in consultation with governors, staff, pupils, parents and the Education Welfare Service. On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of this policy.

## **APPENDIX A**

Pupil **'Miss School = Miss Out'** Leaflet available at:

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Miss%20School%20%3D%20Miss%20Out%20Leaflet.pdf>

**'Miss School = Miss Out' – ask for Help** (Post Primary)

[https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Miss-School-Miss-Out-Ask-for-help-%20%28Post%20Primary%29\\_0.pdf](https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/education/Miss-School-Miss-Out-Ask-for-help-%20%28Post%20Primary%29_0.pdf)