GLASTRY COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Mission Statement

"To support, guide and equip each young person to reach their full potential as learners, their aspirations as individuals, and to be happy, resilient and successful in life."

Enrich, Empower, Excel

Enrich through Learning   *Empower to Succeed*   *Excel in Life*

Rationale:
The Governors and staff of Glastry 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. 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 pupils will achieve their full potential and be happy members of the school community if they attend school each day. All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance.

In December 2016, the Department of Education published an 'Improving Pupil Attendance Strategy' which has the theme of 'MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT'. It clearly outlines that maximising levels of pupil attendance is fundamental in giving our children and young people the best start in life.

The strategy identifies four key themes that underpin a successful approach to managing pupil attendance. School leadership, early intervention, tailored support and collaboration and engagement – and our college policy reflects this.

Aims:
Through the establishment of a caring framework as a Rights Respecting School we aim to foster positive attitudes towards education and encourage 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'.* In light of this our focus is:

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils in Glastry College
- To promote good attendance through positive home school relationships
- To recognise good attendance with awards, postcards of congratulation, certificates, and special assemblies
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/carers and pupils, in achieving good attendance
- To promote and develop effective working relationships with the College Education Welfare Officer.

The School's Expectations on Attendance:
To ensure regular attendance and punctuality, Glastry College has the following expectations from pupils and parents:

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 – 9.25 am
- To attend all classes required by their timetable
- To never leave school premises during the day without permission
- To keep a record of attendance in their Homework Diary
- To bring in a note from their parent/carer on the day of their return explaining the period of absence if no contact has been made with the College
- To catch up on all work missed during their absence
- To undertake detention if they neglect any of these responsibilities.

Role of Parent/Guardian
Parents have a legal requirement to ensure that each child of compulsory school age receives full-time education and that they attend school regularly. Positive support from parent and a willingness to engage with the College (and other support bodies if necessary) will make a significant contribution towards your children maximising their attendance at school and realising their full educational potential.

Parents should:
- Value the importance of a good education
- Support the school's policy regarding attendance, non-attendance, punctuality and truancy
- Ensure that their child is in school every day and on time
- Contact the office on their child's first day of absence
- Provide a signed note explaining any absence on the day of their child's return
- Provide information to the school if their child will be absent for a prolonged period of time
- Collect work from the school if their child is off for a prolonged period of time
- Take holidays during holiday time and not to book family holidays during term time
- Arrange dental/medical appointments out of school time
- Contact the Year Head or Pastoral Vice Principal if their child is reluctant to attend school

Role of the College
By reviewing and setting school attendance and targets:
- To record and monitor attendance and punctuality in a consistent way in line with DE guidance (Department of Education Circular 2017/15)
- To develop strategies to encourage good attendance
- To use sanctions which will deter absences and truancy
- To check attendance every lesson
- To operate the School's Truancy Call service for unauthorized absences;
- To contact parents/carers to discuss any attendance concerns (Group Tutor, Head of Year, Pastoral Vice Principal)
- To alert the Education Welfare Officer in the case of on-going absences
- To issue a detention for being truant from school (Head of Year)
- To maintain and check a record of requests for time out of school for appointments
- To provide work for the pupil if he/she will be off for a prolonged period of time (not including unauthorised holidays)
- To provide information on request for a pupil's attendance record to employers and other educational establishments.

Role of the Year Head
- Monitor attendance and punctuality
- Use positive incentives to encourage pupils to improve/maintain good attendance
- Work closely with Parents, Education Welfare Office, Group Tutors and the Pastoral Vice Principal
- Interview individual pupils/parents regarding attendance when and where necessary.
- To organise detention for those pupils who are persistently late, or who truant school.

Role of the Education Welfare Service

The Education Authority, through the Education Welfare Service, has a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their child'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.

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:

Code	Reason
/\	Present: / = A.M. \ = P.M.
A	Artistic Endeavour
B	Bereavement
C	Suspended
F	Family Holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
L	Late
M	Medical/Dental Appointments
N	No Reason Yet Provided for Absence
O	Other Exceptional Circumstances
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
V	Educational Visit
W	Work Experience
Y	Exceptional Closure
1	AEP (EA)
2	Home/Hospital Tuition (EA)

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 Head and SLT. The class teacher will record an **N** code in Lesson Monitor. The **Head of Year** 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, for example, truancy, shopping or absences which have not been properly explained.

Positive Measures to Encourage Good Attendance
- Class registers will be completed accurately by staff at the beginning of each lesson
- Attendance will be closely monitored by Year Heads, Group Tutors and Pastoral Vice Principal
- Termly draws take place for very good attendance in each Year Group – Gift Vouchers and Certificates
- Text messages of congratulations are sent to parents for pupils who have very good attendance
- A letter from the Year Head is sent to parents if a pupil's attendance is between 85% and 90%
- A review meeting is carried out with the Year Head, Pastoral Vice Principal and pupil, if attendance falls between 85% and 90%
- Regular reviews are carried out and meetings with parents are arranged where necessary
- A very good attendance record will merit a positive and supportive reference to future employers and other educational establishments.

Punctuality/Lateness
Glastry College places a great deal of importance on the need for all pupils to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. Any pupil who arrives late to school **must** immediately go to the Reception Office and sign-in.

Pupils who come to school late on a regular basis in any one week (without a valid reason) will be given a lunchtime detention by their Year Head. If the lateness continues the pupil's Year Head will contact the parent/guardian to alert them to lateness. If the late-coming continues the pupil will be placed in after-school detention.

Responding to Non-Attendance and Lateness
- If no phone call or letter is received from a parent explaining an absence the automated 'Truancy Call' will be activated and will continue contacting the parents until the call is answered or a parent phones the school.
- **In cases of continued non-attendance or lateness the Education Welfare Officer will be alerted by the Year Head or Pastoral Vice Principal and home visits will follow**.

Leaving School During the Day
If a pupil needs to leave school during the day due to illness or other genuine reason, they must report to their Year Head. The Year Head will then decide whether permission to go home should be granted. All pupils who are going home during the day **must** be collected from school by a parent/guardian, or other relative, and sign out at Reception.

Any pupil who leaves the school premises without carrying out the above procedures will be deemed to be 'truanting' school. The following procedures will follow:

- Parents will be informed that their child is out of school without permission
- The pupil will have a follow-up meeting with their Year Head
- The pupil will receive a detention

Pupils are **NOT** allowed to text parents to come and collect them during the day. The Year Head, School Nurse, Vice Principal or Principal 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.**

For safety and security reasons a pupil must:
- During Registration, present a note from their Parent/Guardian to their Group Tutor or Year Head and show their appointment card or note from parent if they have a medical/dental appointment which cannot be arranged after school. The Group Tutor will sign the note and record a code **M** in Lesson Monitor and add a red flag with the details.
- The note should contain:
    - The date and time of appointment
    - The pupil's full name and Registration Group
    - A contact telephone number
    - Pupils should keep a record of these requests in their Homework Diary
- The parent/carer must collect their child from Reception
- **Pupils are encouraged to return to College after the medical or dental appointment.**

Telephone requests – In an emergency a parent may phone the school requesting that their child be allowed out of school. Such calls will be checked before permission is given.

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 him/her falling behind in their studies. Family holidays during term-time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances: e.g. 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 College policy that work will not be provided to the pupil if they are on holiday during term time.

'MISS SCHOOL = MISS OUT"
90% attendance sounds good and most parents would be very pleased if their child achieved this in a test. However, this equates to 19 days of absence;
3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed, and is deemed as poor by the Dept. of Education.

Use of External/Support Agencies:
We acknowledge the importance of a range of external support agencies in promoting and supporting good attendance within the College but also the importance of ensuring that such agencies adhere to the values and ethos of our College.

Current external / support agencies include:
- EWO Service
- Social Services
- School Counsellors
- School Age Mums (SAM)
- PSNI
- EOTAS
- Behaviour Support Team
- Ardmore

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 and Safeguarding Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- RSE Policy
- SEN & Inclusion Policy

Dissemination of the Policy:

Pastoral Policies are shared annually with Year 8 parents and are available on the school's website.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

The Pastoral Care Team are responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the Attendance Policy. Mrs K Harris, Vice Principal, will revise the policy and procedures in light of any further DE guidance and legislation as necessary and review it bi-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.