

# SACRED HEART GRAMMAR SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### 1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every student can have full access to the school curriculum and reach her potential.

Sacred Heart Grammar School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each student will feel valued and secure. This is in keeping with the ethos and vision of the school.

### 2. Mission Statement

Sacred Heart Grammar School is committed to the provision of effective education for the students in our care and we believe that this cannot be accomplished without regular attendance. We aim to work in partnership with parents/guardians to encourage all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance at school is important for ensuring students' educational success, and it will also enable them to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

### 3. Aims

- 3.1 To improve/maintain the overall attendance of students at Sacred Heart Grammar School.
- 3.2 To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- 3.3 To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and students.
- 3.4 To promote good relationships with Education Welfare Service.

### 4. Role of the School

- 4.1 The Principal at Sacred Heart Grammar School has overall responsibility for school attendance: class teachers, Form Teachers and Year Heads should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.
- 4.2 The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an Agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.
- 4.3 Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of students by ensuring that attendance is recorded during Registration period and at the start of every period.
- 4.4 To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:  
[www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recordingpupil-absences.htm](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recordingpupil-absences.htm)
- 4.5 Sacred Heart Grammar School is committed to working with parents/guardians to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

## **5. Role of Parents/Guardians**

- 5.1 Parents/guardians 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 he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise. (Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)*
- 5.2 It is a parent's/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a student's absence on the first day of absence, indicating why the student is absent and the expected date of return. When the student returns to school a written note should be given to the Form Teacher explaining the absence and stating the date(s) of absence.
- 5.3 If an absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.
- 5.4 In the event of a student appearing reluctant to attend school, the parents/guardians should discuss the matter promptly with the relevant Form Teacher, Year Head or Principal to ensure that the school is able to provide appropriate support.

## **6. Role of Students**

- 6.1 Each student at Sacred Heart Grammar School has a duty to ensure that she attends school punctually and regularly. If a student has been absent from school, a written note from a parent/guardian must be given to the Form Teacher on the student's return. This should explain the absence, and state the date(s) of the absence.

## **7. Daily Registration Procedures**

- 7.1 Students are expected to be in school at 8.55a.m. for registration/assembly at 9.00a.m. Registers are taken between 9.00a.m. - 9.15a.m. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their daughter is punctual. Lateness is recorded on the student's attendance record.
- 7.2 Students who arrive after registration/assembly must report to reception immediately to sign the Late Attendance Book, recording their reason for being late. If a student has a planned late-coming, the Form Teacher/Year Head should be informed in advance and a \*Note to/from Parent/Guardian form completed.
- 7.3 Morning registration closes at 10.40a.m. Arrival after 9.15a.m. but before 10.40a.m. will be denoted as Attendance Code L (late) on the register – this does not affect the student's percentage attendance for the year.
- 7.4 Students who arrive after 10.40a.m. (i.e. after the close of registration) will be officially absent for the morning session and this will be denoted with the appropriate absence code on the register - this will affect a student's percentage attendance for the year.
- 7.5 Students should remain on the school premises until the end of the school day at 3.20 p.m.  
*\*(The 'Note to/from Parent/Guardian' forms can be found at the back of the Student Planner).*

## **8. Absence Procedures**

- 8.1 Parents/guardians are requested to inform the school of the reason for a student's absence on the **first** day of absence, indicating why the student is absent and the expected date of return.
- 8.2 When the student returns to school, an **\*\*Explanations for Absence** form completed by the parent/guardian should be given to the Form Teacher explaining the absence and stating the date(s) of absence. These forms are held by school as part of the student's educational records.
- 8.3 If a student's absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided by the parent/guardian to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

*\*\* (The 'Explanations for Absence' forms can be found at the back of the Student Planner).*

## **9. Appointments Procedures**

- 9.1 Students are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day without permission.
- 9.2 Requests by parents/guardians for students to leave the school premises during the school day should only be made in very exceptional circumstances. Routine medical/dental appointments should be arranged, where possible, outside school hours.
- 9.3 Permission for a student to leave the school premises during the school day at the request of a parent/guardian will only be given when a completed \*Note to/from Parent/Guardian form is presented to and signed by the Form Teacher/Year Head. Parents/guardians may receive a phone call from the school to verify that the request for their daughter to leave school is genuine.
- 9.4 Parents/guardians must notify the school of any planned medical/dental appointments at least one day prior to the appointment. This will ensure that the student will be marked present for the session (morning or afternoon) in which they are attending the appointment. If the school is not informed in advance, the student will be marked absent for the appropriate session.
- 9.5 Students leaving the school premises during the school day must sign out and leave the detachable part of the form\* at Reception. If they return on the same day, they must sign in again at Reception on returning to school.
- 9.6 Sacred Heart Grammar School reserves the right to decline to release students before school finishes at 3.20pm.

*\* (The 'Note to/from Parent/Guardian' forms can be found at the back of the Student Planner).*

## **10. Illness (while in school) Procedures**

- 10.1 A student who is ill should report immediately to any member of the school staff or to Reception.
- 10.2 If a student is ill, she should not contact parents/guardians directly by mobile phone.
- 10.3 If the nature of the illness is serious or it appears that the student would be better at home, parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to collect their daughter from school.
- 10.4 Parents/guardians are asked to ensure that contact details are accurate and that there is always someone who can be contacted by telephone in an emergency. The school should be informed of any change to contact details throughout the year.

## **11. Family Holidays during Term Time**

- 11.1 Due to the impact they have on students' learning, Sacred Heart Grammar School strongly discourages holidays during term time. Family holidays taken during term time may be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

## **12. Procedures for Managing Non-attendance**

- 12.1 Student attendance will be recorded and monitored through SIMS Lesson Monitor.
- 12.2 Student attendance will be recorded during Registration period by the Form Teacher and at the start of every period by the subject teacher.
- 12.3 The 'End of Term Report' will report the student's attendance record to parents/guardians.
- 12.4 If the school is concerned about an absence or pattern of absence of a student, contact will be made with home. This can take the form of a phone call or letter. Parents/guardians may be asked to make an appointment to speak to the Form Teacher, Year Head or Vice Principal.
- 12.5 At the end of each term letters will be sent by the School Attendance Officer to the parents/guardians of students whose attendance falls below 90% or is causing concern.

### **13. Education Welfare Service**

- 13.1 Education and Library Boards, through the Education Welfare Service (EWS), have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents/guardians meet their responsibility towards their daughter's education.
- 13.2 In the event of the attendance of a student of compulsory school age falling below 85% without appropriate mitigating circumstances, the student will be referred to EWS. The School will work with EWS and other appropriate external agencies to provide support to the student and her parents/guardians in order to improve school attendance.
- 13.3 Meetings take place on a monthly basis with EWS to monitor the attendance of students and to highlight any concerns about students.

### **14. Review and Evaluation**

This Policy will be reviewed and evaluated regularly and amended in the light of further DE guidance and/or changes to the school's procedures.