

Lismore Comprehensive School



"Caring and Learning Together"

ATTENDANCE

POLICY

Introduction

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

Lismore Comprehensive School will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

The school's mission statement fully incorporates this:

“We, at Lismore Comprehensive School, through our Catholic ethos, promote Christian values, academic and vocational excellence, and the personal development of every pupil in a caring, happy and welcoming environment.

We are sympathetic and responsive to individual needs, aspirations and talents, and respect all members of our school and parish communities and the world in which we live.”

Aims:

Our attendance aims are:

1. To improve/maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Lismore Comprehensive School.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

Roles & Responsibilities

There are a number of roles in the school in order to maintain and improve attendance:

Role of the School

The Principal, Mrs Fiona Kane, has overall responsibility for school attendance. Mrs Dolores Foster (Pastoral Vice Principal) and Mrs Catherine Pyers (Attendance Post Holder) should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to her attention.

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring attendance is a regular agenda item at meetings.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

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 2013/13

<http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm>

Lismore Comprehensive School is committed to working with pupils, parents and EWS to encourage regular and punctual attendance.

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 he/she may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.

(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school. If the 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.

Pupils are expected to be in school at 9:10am for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child is punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on the child's attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with the Form Tutor or Year Head to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

Role of Pupils

In Lismore Comprehensive School pupils are expected to value the opportunity to engage in full time education. It is each pupil's responsibility to:

- Arrive in school on time every day appropriately dressed
- Arrive punctually and prepared to each class on their daily timetable
- Keep a record of their attendance in their Homework Diary
- Provide a written note from a parent/guardian on return to school after an absence.

Role & Responsibilities of Form Tutor and Year Head

Role of Form Tutor

In Lismore Comprehensive School the Form Tutor is responsible for:

- Developing trusting relationships with all pupils
- Monitoring attendance, e.g. marking register, collecting absence notes and identifying pupils with irregular attendance patterns [Monthly Report] and taking appropriate action
- Contacting home on the third day of absence
- Following up pupil absence notes if not received
- Discussing attendance with individual pupils
- Contact home via phone or through sending school proforma letters home when attendance falls below 90% and 85%
- Promoting link between Attendance and Achievement
- Liaising with the School Attendance Officer, Mrs Catherine Pyers, and Education Welfare Officer, Mrs Caroline Reilly, when attendance falls below 85%
- Providing support to pupils after a long absence from school

Role of Year Head

Year Heads will:

- Liaise with the Education Welfare Service about individual pupils
- Speak with pupils with irregular attendance patterns
- Discuss year group referrals with Form Tutor and Education Welfare Service
- Complete Monthly Audits on attendance, and discuss these with Education Welfare Officer, Caroline Reilly.

Role of Administration Staff

Administration staff will:

- Use the missing register notification to alert teachers to missing registers
- Enter late pupils onto the system after registration
- Enter pupils with permission out during the school day onto the system
- Run weekly unexplained absence reports for Form Tutors to complete
- Run monthly ministry of rolls reports identifying whole school attendance, Year Group and Individual Form Class attendance.

Absence Procedures

The Department of Education has issued guidelines about categorising absence as authorised or unauthorised. As a result the following codes will be used to record absences:

∧	Present	L	Late	N	No reason provided
B	Breavement	P	Sporting Activity	V	School Outing/ Trip
\$	Other school activity i.e Music Lesson/ Exam/ School Nurse/ Medical/Learning Mentor, Counselling				

Punctuality to School

All pupils are expected to arrive to school and for each class on time. In Lismore Comprehensive School lateness is strongly discouraged. Pupils are expected to be in their classrooms before 9:10am. The Form Teacher will mark the register at 9:10am. Any pupil arriving after registration should report directly to the school office where the administration staff will mark him/her 'L' on the register, unless a valid reason is provided.

The Form Tutor will review the late marks on a weekly basis, and the following action will be taken:

- When a child is late on a regular basis, the Year Head will discuss the matter with the child and contact the parents
- When a pupil is persistently late, the Form Tutor will monitor their lateness with a punctuality check
- If there is no improvement, school sanctions will be applied

Family holidays during Term Time

Lismore Comprehensive School discourages holidays during term time due to the negative impact they can have on pupils' learning. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. The onus is on the pupil to catch up on any work they have missed on return to school.

Leaving School Premises during the School Day

If a pupil needs to leave the school during the day, they may only do so by showing their Form Tutor a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian. Pupils will not be allowed to leave school unless this is signed by the Form Tutor or Year Head. Any student who leaves the school premises without carrying out the above procedures will be deemed to be truanting.

- Parents will be informed that their child is out of school without permission
- Pupil will receive one long detention

Medical Appointments

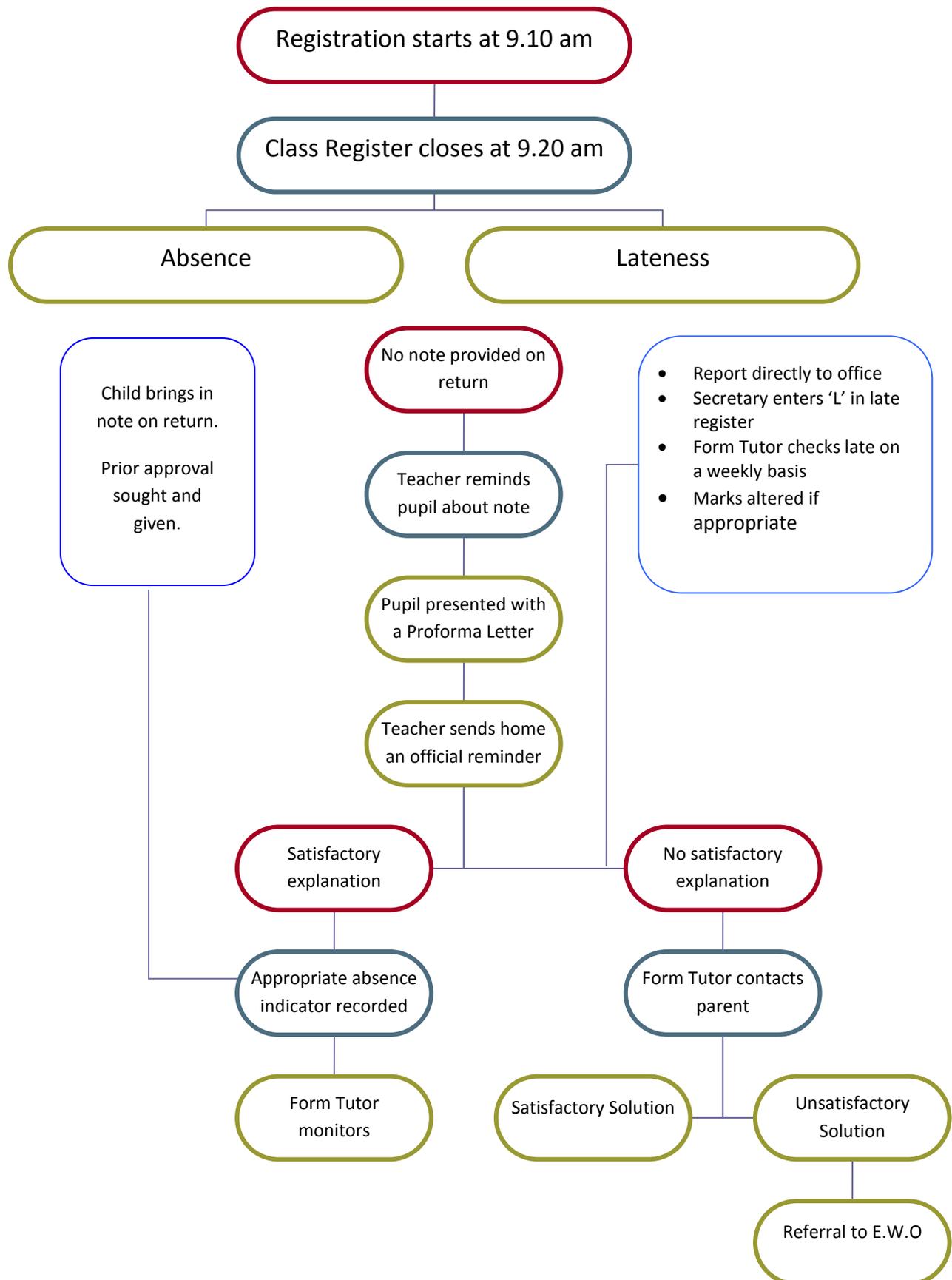
Where possible medical appointments should be made for after school. If class is missed this will be recorded as 'M' in Lesson Monitor.

Procedures for Managing Non Attendance

Lismore Comprehensive School has a number of procedures in place to manage non-attendance. School Attendance Proforma Letters are used by all members of staff and can be sourced in Appendix 2. Lismore Comprehensive also uses a school pro forma Absence Note to help pupils explain their reasons for absences, Appendix 3.

The flow chart on the next page illustrates procedures that are currently in place within the School.

Registration / Attendance Procedure – Lismore Comprehensive



Education Welfare Service

Education and Library Boards through the Education Welfare Service have a legal responsibility to ensure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children's education.

Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational progress. Where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will become involved. EWS will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Within Lismore, Education Welfare Officer, (EWO), Mrs Caroline Reilly can be contacted on Ext. No. 407. The EWO will be in school each Wednesday morning from 9am until 12pm in the EWO room in block 1.

In the event of any untoward occurrence or emergency, the EWO can be contacted in school or at the Divisional Education Welfare Office Tel. No. 38326801.

Within the school setting the EWO can:

1. Investigate and follow up on cases of non-school attendance.
2. Provide information about children's home circumstances and factors that may be affecting school performance and attendance.
3. Interview pupils in the identification of attendance/welfare issues.
4. Convene case planning meetings in conjunction with teaching staff, parents and pupils to develop a plan of action for dealing with absence/welfare issues.
5. Mediate between teachers and families when misunderstanding and difficulties arise.
6. Meet with Mrs Catherine Pyers on a weekly basis to discuss concerns regarding attendance and identify appropriate referral to the Education Welfare Service.
7. Meet with each Year Head on a monthly basis to discuss and identify possible referrals, share information. And complete monthly audit.
8. Meet regularly with Vice Principal to discuss attendance matters

To enable the Education Welfare Service to offer a quality service to Lismore, early detection and good communication between teaching staff and the EWO is very important.

Rewarding Good Attendance

Lismore Comprehensive School believe that good attendance and punctuality are to be encouraged at every opportunity. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend regularly and are punctual. Lismore Comprehensive currently has a whole school reward/award system to encourage regular attendance:

- Seven years unbroken attendance is recognised by the SELB on Prize Night
- Full Attendance for the full year is recognised at the Schools Annual Prize Night
- Full term attendance certificates are presented to individuals during Year Group Assemblies
- Highest Monthly Attendance Form Class Certificates for each Year Group, presented at Year Group Assemblies
- Individual Improved Attendance Certificates are presented at Year Group Assemblies
- A high level of attendance will merit a strong and supportive reference from school to future employers.

Monitoring & Reviewing Attendance in Lismore Comprehensive School

This policy has been developed following consultation with all the relevant stakeholders. The Principal, Mrs Fiona Kane, Vice Principal, Mrs Dolores Foster, and the School Attendance Officer, Mrs Catherine Pyers working in partnership with the school's Education Welfare Officer to apply the policy and ensure consistency in its application. The policy will be reviewed on a three year basis to determine the success or otherwise of the attendance strategies currently employed within the school.

School Principal Signature

Chair, Board of Governors Signature