

Mount Lourdes Grammar School

Ref. No: 242-0041

An holistic approach which has seen improvements in attainment arising from the implementation of a new attendance policy.

Context:

Mount Lourdes is a girls' grammar school with an enrolment of 753 in Enniskillen. Its catchment area spans County Fermanagh and part of Tyrone.

Intervention:

The senior leadership team aims to maintain student attendance above 95%, placing particular emphasis on improving attendance post-16. A proactive model of attendance management was introduced to identify and address instances of poor attendance in a systematic way.

The measures implemented include:

- A new student attendance policy which outlines clearly the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the management of attendance.
- Attendance management is included on the pastoral care action plan and is addressed at all pastoral meetings.
- The staff receive training in attendance management.
- Attendance is monitored on a daily, weekly and monthly basis by the form teacher and year head.
- Contact is made with parents following three days of absence which has strengthened home/school communication and heightened awareness of the legal and educational imperatives relating to attendance at school.
- There are termly meetings with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) which have strengthened the professional relationships involved and ensured that referrals to the Educational Welfare Service are made in a timely manner. Supports are then put in place by the EWO to help the families in question address the underlying causes of poor attendance.
- Awards for attendance are given at prize-giving day.
- The DE publication "*Every Day Counts*" is included in the student diary and as an appendix in the attendance policy.
- Letters of concern are issued to parents in November and March.

Impact:

The measures of success include:

- the beneficial impact on home-school communication;
- the improved attendance figures from 94.3% to 95.26%;
- the increased awareness of the correlation between maximum attendance at school and enhanced student welfare; and
- the performance in GCSE examinations for 7 grades at A* - B, including English and Mathematics which has improved from 63% in 2012/13 to 86% in 2014/15.

Performance in 7 grades at GCSE grades A* - C including English and Mathematics has also improved from 88% to 90% in the same period. While academic performance is influenced by a range of factors, the senior leadership is confident that the pro-active model of attendance management has been a contributory factor to the improved educational attainment.