

**St Patrick's College, Banbridge**

**Ref No: 523-0076**

*A preventative approach resulting in improvement in achievement in outcomes in public examinations in a post-primary school.*

**Context:**

Saint Patrick's College is an all ability co-educational post primary school with 302 pupils, drawing pupils from urban and rural settings. The school is in its final year of the current school development plan. 37% of the current student population is entitled to free school meals.

**Intervention:**

The school uses a preventative approach when dealing with attendance issues. It educates parents and pupils about the importance of good attendance not only for a child's education but also for future employment. The strategies employed include:

- The use of key stage 3 and 4 induction evenings (which were started in 2013/14) to deliver the message of the significance of good attendance. In these meetings, the direct correlation between good attendance and GCSE success is emphasised.
- Stickers are put into homework diaries once a month to inform parents of attendance figures for their child.
- The school works closely with the Youth Service which supports with transition and addresses issues that can lead to truancy and poor attendance.
- The school's attendance policy outlines clearly the procedure for dealing with attendance.
- Attendance is always on the agenda for pastoral meetings. The pastoral manager oversees attendance within the school and communicates any attendance concerns to senior leadership.
- Form teachers have direct responsibility for overseeing attendance within their form class. A letter is sent home when a pupil's attendance drops below 95%.
- If attendance drops further below 90%, parents and pupils are invited to meet with the form teachers to discuss attendance.
- If attendance falls below 85%, a letter is sent home to inform parents that a referral has been made to the education welfare service.
- There is effective collaboration with the education welfare service and the school's pastoral manager.

- When barriers to good attendance have been identified, the school seeks support from external agencies; PPDS, gateway team (when appropriate), Family Hub, Family Works School Counselling service.
- The mentoring process is informed by analysis of performance, behaviour and attendance data.

### Impact:

Overall attendance has improved steadily since 2010/11. In 2014/15 the school's attendance equalled the NI average for all schools (93.5%) and is above the average for non-grammar schools (91.9%). There has also been a significant improvement in GCSE outcomes.

	2010-11	2014-15
Five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C	56.9%	98%
Five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C, including GCSE English and GCSE mathematics	27.6%	74%

The monthly audit of attendance and communicating this to parents in homework diaries has increased awareness of 'good' attendance. An increasing number of parents now contact the school in response to stickers in the homework diaries. Early intervention is key in overcoming barriers to good attendance. Patterns of poor attendance are now identified early and support put in place.

Parental evaluations on induction nights suggest that the presentation on attendance and performance was effective. 52% of parents attended the Key Stage 4 evening and 55% of parents attended the Key Stage 3 induction evening.