

School Policy on Attendance and Participation

The aims of the attendance policy

- To encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- To identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- To ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- To develop, through the role of HSCL, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- To identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance,

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - HSCL
 - The Board of Management
 - The National Education Welfare Board.

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly. Parents must let the school know if their child is absent and the reason why. The HSCL will visit parents if their child/children have been absent for more than 10 unexplained. At twenty unexplained absent days, the teacher will inform the HSCL and the 'School Care Team'. The HSCL will notify the N.E.W.B.

Punctuality

School commences at (8.50) a.m. and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than (9.00) a.m. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The HSCL will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late.

Guidance for Parents

Section [(21) (9)] of the Act states that: "a pupil's absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved". The school principal cannot authorise a child's absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for pupils' absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child's absence is not received by the school.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notifying the School if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- Working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems;
- Making sure their children understand that parents support/approve of school attendance;
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- Encouraging them to participate in school activities.
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc.), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
- Notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Pupils

- Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
- Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
- Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

A strategy for promoting good school attendance

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Skills guidelines.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.

- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the HSCL and the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.
- School will promote the '*School is Cool*' initiative as an endeavour to promote full attendance on a week-by-week basis.
 - At the end of each week a '*school is cool*' raffle ticket is given to children who have not missed a day that week. At the end of the month a '*school is cool*' is held and three children from each room win a prize/ homework pass.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
 - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
 - Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
- Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal and the HSCL of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- When the child has missed 10 days, the class teacher will inform the HSCL, who will then visit the home with a view to discuss the absences and the importance of attendance.

Record/Communication

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed.

Participation

The school endeavours to ensure that all children fully participate in all activities of school life and, where possible, actively encourage pupils to pursue extra-curricular activities.

To this end, the school will meet/ assist parents that may be experiencing difficulties, which in turn prevent their child/children from participating in any aspect of school life

For example,

- Financial assistance
- Explanation of activity and benefits thereof
- Inclusion in homework club
- Use of school ICT equipment

This policy was reviewed in January 2013 and ratified by the Board during April 2013.