



## **Attendance Policy**

This policy document was drawn up in September 2010, following discussions at a staff meeting during the school year 2009 – 2010. New Procedures will be reviewed, and if necessary, amended at the end of each school year.

### **Rationale**

The attendance at the school is generally very good, with very few pupils missing in excess of 20 days per year. Nevertheless it was agreed that a policy was needed because

- It is widely accepted that there is a direct correlation between good school attendance and achievement.
- School needs to encourage pupils and parents to value full attendance if possible.
- It is a requirement under education Welfare Act 2000.
- We wish to foster an appreciation of learning and to emphasise the importance of regular attendance.

### **Relationship to School Ethos**

We aim to provide a happy, caring and secure atmosphere where the pupils can fulfil their potential and develop their physical, spiritual, intellectual, moral, and cultural capabilities. We adopt a holistic approach to the educational development of the child and believe that good attendance is essential if they are to benefit from the teaching and learning processes in the school.

### **Aims**

- To foster an appreciation of learning.
- To raise awareness of importance of school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early.
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To promote positive attitudes to learning.
- To ensure school rules, reward systems and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner to encourage attendance.



### **Recording Attendance**

- Attendance/Non attendance will be recorded in the approved roll book in each classroom before 9.40 am each morning.
- Children on school tours and at sporting or other events organised by the school will be recorded as present.
- Non attendance will also be recorded on the attendance sheet in each classroom. The reasons for absence will be recorded on this sheet in accordance with the criteria identified by the NEWB.
- If a child has been absent from school, parents are expected to give a written explanation as requested by NEWB. These written explanations will be retained by the class teacher for the year.
- When a child has been absent for 15 days a written reminder of this fact will be sent to parents.
- The total number of absences will be recorded on each child's end of year school report.
- When a child is withdrawn during the school day parents must sign them out and state the time the child left the school. If they return during the school day they must sign them in again and state the time the child returned. There is a book in the office for this purpose.

### **Strategies to Promote Good Attendance**

Environment: The BOM strives to create a safe and secure environment where pupils and their parents feel valued and welcome. Children who are late or who are returning following a period of absence will be welcomed by the teacher. Any issues concerning poor attendance or persistent late arrival will be addressed with the parent in the absence of the child.

Early Intervention: The importance of regular attendance will be highlighted on Enrolment day for new Infants in June each year. It is also included in the School Information Booklet which is given to parents at this meeting. Every family is reminded of the importance of regular attendance and of the requirements of the NEWB in the first newsletter in September each year.

Homework / Uniform: The issue non completion of homework or lack of uniform will not be dealt with in a manner that could lead to non attendance.

Lunches: In line with the school's Healthy Eating Policy, the importance of healthy lunches is emphasised at the enrolment meeting, in the school information booklet and in the first Newsletter of the year in September. If a child forgets his/her lunch the secretary will endeavour to contact parents so the lunch can be brought to the school. If it is not possible to contact the parents a simple lunch of fruit and/or a sandwich will be provided for the child.



Assessment: If a child is absent on the day of Standardised Testing, the test will be administered on his/her return to school. If a pattern of absences develops on the days of in-class tests or assessments they will be administered on the child's return to school.

Learning Needs: The school provides a comprehensive support service to pupils experiencing learning difficulties in the areas of English and Maths. In class support is offered in the Junior end of the school. Children with Low Incidence needs are recommended for assessment by NEPS and if provided they will be assisted by resource hours. Pupils on the ASD Spectrum with a diagnosis and recommendation from Psychologist will be included in the ASD class in the school.

Self Esteem: The school implements a comprehensive SPHE programme and aims to develop self esteem in all pupils. The Walk Tall Programme, The Stay Safe Programme, The RSE Programme and Circle Time are used to develop a sense of self worth in all pupils.

Bullying: The school has a written anti-bullying policy and all incidences of reported bullying are fully investigated. Children are made aware that the school is a bully free zone and that they have a responsibility to report any incidences of bullying immediately.

Curriculum: The full primary school curriculum, as laid down by the Dept of Ed, is taught in each class, thus ensuring that all talents/strengths are recognised and valued.

Rewards: Commencing in June 2011, the BOM will acknowledge Full Attendance and Good Attendance – 5 days or less missed during the year – by presenting the children with certificates.

### **Strategies in the Event of Poor Attendance**

- At the beginning of each school year and at Enrolment Meeting for new infants, parents are made aware of the requirements of the NEWB and of the schools duty to report absences of 20 days or more during the year.
- Parents are notified in writing when a child has missed 15 days and they are reminded of the 20 day rule.
- The NEWB is informed when a child's absences has reached 20 days.
- If parents express concerns that the child's absence is related in any way to school events, they will be treated with respect and concern and the situation will be fully investigated.
- Teachers will be sensitive to children who have missed school and when endeavouring to "catch up" will not put undue pressure on the child.
- Where there is an issue concerning poor attendance, the Principal will inform the BOM.



### **Annual Reports**

- At the first BOM meeting each year, the Principal will inform the board of the level of attendance for the previous year
- When addressing the Parents Council at the beginning of each year and, if necessary, at subsequent meetings, the Principal will emphasise the importance of good attendance.

### **Transferring to another School/ Removal from the Register**

- A child's name will only be removed from the school register when the Principal has been informed in writing that he/she has been enrolled in another school or informed by the NEWB that the child is being home schooled.
- When a child is transferring to another school the parents will be given a certificate stating the child's record of attendance and absences from school, the last class the child attended and any other relevant information.
- When a child transfers from another school to this school, the parents will be asked to sign a permission slip authorising the previous school to transfer all files relating to the child's education.

### **Success Criteria**

- Fewer children are reported to the NEWB each year.
- Specific families have improved attendance.
- Clearly defined procedures for recording absences and reasons for such absences.
- Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Principal: Overall responsibility for implementation of policy, responsibility for reporting to BOM and Parents Council.
- Deputy Principal: Responsibility for School register, Annual Returns and reporting to NEWB.
- Class teacher: Responsible for creating a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom, for marking the school roll book, for recording the reasons for absence, for informing the Principal when a child has missed 15 days, for informing the Deputy when a child has missed 20 days or more.
- Parents: Responsible for ensuring the child attends regularly and punctually, for informing the school of the reasons for any absences, for signing out a child who leaves school during the day and for signing him/her in on their return, for informing their children of the need for good attendance and the adverse effects of missing school.
- Secretary: Responsible for maintaining the Sign Out/ Sign In book in the office.



- Education Welfare Officer: Responsible for following up and supporting all pupils reported for problem attendance.
- BOM: Overall responsibility for attendance in the school, and for funding the awarding of certificates for Good or Full attendance.

### **Implementation**

- Implementation will take place immediately – school year 2010-2011.