

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:
 - o HSCL
 - o The Board of Management
 - o 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 school's Care Team discuss attendance every fortnight and monitor attendance. The principal will notify the N.E.W.B. of all absences over 20 days.

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.

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.

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.
- 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 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.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

School Attendance Monitor

The school with the support of TUSLA has appointed an attendance monitor for the school year 2014/2015. The Attendance Monitor will liaise with parents, teachers, HSCL and the principal in keeping a record of reasons for absence. From Monday 29th September 2014 whenever a pupil is absent we ask that parents either ring or text the reason for absence to the Attendance Monitor at 086-8276686. If no message of absence is received then the Attendance Monitor will ring parents to confirm the reason for absence.

Intervention Steps:

When pupil has reached **5 days absence** from school the case is discussed at the school's Care Team meeting and a letter may be sent to the relevant parents with the history of the pupil's attendance.

When a pupil has reached **10 days absence** from school if Care Team decide it is appropriate then the class teacher writes to parents asking them to make an appointment to discuss the pupil's progress & attendance.

When pupil has reached **15 days absence** from school the family will be visited by HSCL to offer support

When pupil has reached **20 days absence** from school the pupil is reported to NEWB and parents written to by principal.

Practical Steps Parents can take to improve School Attendance

AFTER SCHOOL EVERYDAY:

- Make sure that the homework is done as early as possible
- Keep the school uniform for school wear only

THE NIGHT BEFORE:

- Try and have ready: School bag, Lunch, Uniform
- Get your child to bed at a reasonable hour every night – create a routine
- Set the alarm on your mobile or alarm clock for the morning

BEFORE SCHOOL EVERY DAY:

- Get up on time in the morning so that you will not be rushing
- Don't allow your child to watch television in the morning
- Get your child to eat some breakfast every morning
- Talk positively about school
- You know your child best. Only keep your child at home if he/she is really sick.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
 - o If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - o When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - o If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - o When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
 - o 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.
- 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.

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,

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

This policy was reviewed in September 2014.