

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGY STATEMENT

Introduction

There is a very strong tradition of good attendance in St Colmcille's NS, The Quay. However the Board of Management, Staff and Parents/ Guardians will continue in their commitment to ensure that the whole school community is aware of the absolute necessity for regular punctual attendance at school.

Rationale

The Statement of Strategy for school attendance was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation under section 22 of the Education Welfare Act 2000
- The Board of management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

The Schools Vision and Values in relation to Attendance

St Colmcille's NS, The Quay endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. St Colmcille's NS, The Quay school hopes to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year. Our aim is to build and maintain a culture of high expectations amongst all staff and students for the student's learning, participation and attendance at school.

The aims of the attendance policy in St Colmcille's NS, The Quay are to:

1. Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
2. Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance and punctuality.
3. Share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
4. Inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Act -1989 and the Education Welfare Act - 2000
5. Identify pupils who may be at risk of developing poor school attendance records, identify the needs of the individual pupils and put in place appropriate strategies that will address the identified needs.
6. Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
7. Provide support programmes to enhance attendance

Our School's Expectations around Attendance – A Whole School Approach

Our school's attendance is > 90% and our expectations remain high. Our target will be to continue to ensure that these high attendance records are maintained and to increase them. We will continue to monitor and review our attendance and compare the school's previous year attendance data as a baseline each September when we are reviewing our attendance policy.

All members of the school community will be involved in achieving and maintaining our target. The school's Attendance Policy and Statement of Strategy for school attendance will be communicated and discussed at BOM meetings, at staff meetings and at parent/teacher meetings.

Recording, Reporting and Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the school principal and deputy principal to keep an accurate record of the students' attendance at the school and the reasons for any failure to attend. Teachers will maintain accurate class rolls and take responsibility for student absences within their classes. Late arrivals and early departures should also be recorded. The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in Aladdin on a daily basis. Individual class attendances are recorded daily in the digital Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book).

In addition, each student is registered on POD (Primary Online Database) along with details of:

- Name.
- Address.
- Date of Birth.
- PPSN.
- Nationality
- Ethnic/Cultural Background
- Religion
- Class Standard
- Teacher's Name
- If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his nonattendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the classroom teacher and the reason for absence is entered into Aladdin. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day.
- Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher.

- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal/ Deputy 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.
- Parents of pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal/Teacher during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school's concerns.
- Teachers organize a meeting with parents when their son/daughter has missed 15 days. A letter is sent home from the principal when a pupil has reached 18 days and another letter is sent home when a child has missed 20 days. This letter informs the parents that the school has informed the Education Welfare Officer in writing, that their child has missed 20 days.
- Parents/Guardians are informed in writing at the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.
- The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year or where attendance is irregular or where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

Guidance for Parents

As stated in the Code of Behaviour parents are expected to write in the school's homework journal or by letter (for pupils in the junior classes) notifying the teacher of the reason for a child's absence on the child's return to school after an absence. The teacher notes the reason for the absence in the school's admin system. Written notes of pupil's absence will be kept on file by the class teachers for the current school year. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school /class teacher will contact parents when an explanation for the child's absence is not

received by the school.

Promoting Good School Attendance

The following strategies have been put in place to help foster punctuality and good attendance:

- The school issues a certificate of Good Attendance at the end of the school year to all pupils who have had full attendance for the year.
- Affirmation of pupils who have a full attendance and punctuality record at assembly at the end of every term.
- Each pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded in the end of year school report
- We ensure that the curriculum is timetabled to facilitate a wide and varied programme to aid the reluctant school goers.

Responding to Poor Attendance

Pupils with a poor attendance record will, in so far as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve attendance.

The following strategies have been put in place to help respond to poor attendance:

- Teachers organize a meeting with parents when their son/daughter has missed 15 days. A letter is sent home from the principal when a pupil has reached 18 days and another letter is sent home when a child has missed 20 days. This letter informs the parents that the school has informed the Education Welfare Officer in writing, that their child has missed 20 days.
- Teachers will alert the principal and deputy principal if there are concerns about student absences. Parents/pupils are invited to meet with the Principal/Teacher during Parent/Teacher meetings or during a formal scheduled meeting. Principal/DP/ teacher will discuss school's concerns with parents and endeavour to find solutions to improve attendance.
- Discussing school attendance with the student (where appropriate), with a view to finding an explanation for the absence and thereby a solution
- The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June. This enables parents to plan family events and holidays around school closures, thus minimizing the chances of parents taking their children on holidays during the school term.
- The principal/deputy principal alongside the concerned teacher will organize a support programme such as sporting activities in the morning/ at lunchtime, good attendance reward system e.g.: stickers/ stars/ subject pass to improve attendance.

- Contacting Tusla's Educational Welfare Services

School Roles and Responsibilities in Relation to Attendance

1. It is the responsibility of the Principal and class teachers to implement the school's Statement of Strategy for School Attendance under the guidance of the school's B.O.M.

2. School Principal / Deputy Principal

The school Principal/ Deputy Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations
- Inform 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.
- When a pupil's name is removed from the 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.

3. Class Teacher

The Class Teacher will

- Maintain the school attendance records in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the principal of concerns he/she may have regarding the attendance of any pupils.

Monitoring of Statement of Strategy

The strategy will be monitored by:

- Teaching staff at school meetings.
- School principal and Deputy Principal
- Board of Management

Review Process

The policy will be reviewed regularly by the school Principal/ Deputy Principal and B.O.M.