

Scoil Naomh Bríde, Blackwater

Policy on Attendance

Introduction

This policy document was drawn up:

- To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians drew up this Policy on Attendance.

Rationale

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation, such as:
 - The Education Act, 1998
 - The statutory functions under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, which was transferred to the Educational Welfare Services (EWS) in the New Child and Family Agency, Túsla.
 - In compliance with 'Strategy for School Attendance', 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, provided they are medically fit to be in school.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Scoil Naomh Bríde endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils and the school hopes to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year.

Aims

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance, when medically fit to attend school
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning

Túsla / Educational Welfare Services

Túsla/Educational Welfare Services (EWS) was established to support attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

- The school will notify Túsla/Educational Welfare Services if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise to concern.
- If a child is sick or is absent for other good reasons, no action will be taken by the EWS.

- It there is concern about a child's attendance at school, or the reasons given, parents/guardians may be visited by an Educational Welfare Officer who will discuss the child's education.
- The officer will work with the parent/guardian and take full account of the circumstances of the child and the family before deciding what further action is necessary to ensure that the child receives his/her entitlement to an education.
- For irregular absenteeism, the teacher will inform the parents/guardians of her/his concerns about the child and seek to meet the parents/guardians to discuss the matter.
- For seriously irregular absenteeism, the Principal will contact the parent/guardians and discuss the problem with them
- For chronic absenteeism the Principal will inform Tusla/Education Welfare Officer, in writing, and notify the parents/guardians of this.

Content

Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on Aladdin on a daily basis.

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction a note/email from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher. Parents/guardians must also contact the school by phone/email if a child departs early during the school day.

If a child is absent for more than ten consecutive days, due to illness, parents/guardians may be requested to furnish a letter from doctor to this effect.

Parents/guardians are informed, in writing, on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer/Tusla, in writing, where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Scoil Naomh Bríde endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community. The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

New entrants and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction process through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards when the pupils are medically fit to attend school or if they are self-isolating.

The calendar for the coming school year is published/distributed annually in September. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's policy on Equal Opportunity and Gender Equity.

If children are reluctant to come to school, arrangements are made to ease the transition from home to school – eg. SNA greets the children, on arrival, and engages them in a variety of activities to help them to self-regulate and ‘set them up’ for the day ahead.

Communication

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Board (EWB)/Tusla personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

Transfer to Another School

Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child’s current school must notify the Principal of the child’s previous school that the child is now registered in their school.

When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil’s new school of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil’s former school and of such matters relating to the child’s educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

Success Criteria

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

- An increase in annual attendance rates/maintain good attendance rates
- Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principal and Staff to implement this policy, with the co-operation of parents/guardians, under the guidance of the school’s Board of Management.

Implementation and review

This updated/amended policy will be implemented immediately, following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents’ Association.

School Staff, BOM, Parents’ Association and general parent body were involved in the review during of this policy during March/April 2024 and agreed amendments were made accordingly.

It will be reviewed in three years’ time, unless circumstances/legislation changes in the meantime.

Ratification and communication

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde, Blackwater, on 17.1.24. Parents/Guardians may view this policy on the school website or, alternatively, at the school by appointment with the Principal.

Signed : *Olive M'Guinness* (Chairperson B.O.M.)