

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Introduction:**

Changing social habits and patterns, together with the requirements of legislation and the very significant number of days lost through school absence at our school necessitated the updating of the schools attendance policy. The redrafting was a collaborative process involving staff and Board of Management.

### **Rationale:**

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy could be summarized as follows:

- a) The school is in the DEIS Programme as a Band 1 Urban school
- b) The changing fabric of society
- c) The influx of non-Irish nationals
- d) The roll of the N.E.W.B
- e) Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000
- f) Changing attitudes to education
- g) Analysis of school attendance statistics for the school year 2017/18 indicated very significant attendance issues ( 331 pupils missed 20 days or more and there were 30 pupils who had between 50 and 100 absences)

### **Aims and Objectives:**

The revised policy is geared towards

- Encouraging full attendance where possible
- Identifying pupils at risk
- Promoting a positive learning environment
- Enabling learning opportunities to be availed of
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance among all stakeholders
- Fostering an appreciation of learning

### **Compliance with School Ethos:**

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

### **School Vision Statement:**

- ❑ Our school is a happy, caring, safe and creative community where we actively seek to understand, accept and respect each individual.
- ❑ We work together to consistently create a positive environment in which all can enjoy a full and rounded learning experience.
- ❑ We are committed to providing the life skills and knowledge necessary for all in our community to achieve their full potential.

### **School Motto:**

The school motto is 'Mol an Óige'.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy.

Class teacher's record individual patterns of attendance. The roll is recorded electronically daily on Aladdin schools. Roll should be taken accurately in all classes and before 9 40 am.

The Deputy Principal has responsibility for maintaining the Leabhair Tinreamh electronically and liaising with and making returns to the National Education Welfare Board [ NEWB].

The School Completion (SCP) Co-ordinator supports pupils' participation and retention in school

The Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Co-ordinator supports pupils through working with their families

### **Policy Content:**

Recording

Individual pupil attendance is recorded on Aladdin.

All children attending and data on parents are recorded on POD. This has replaced the school Clarleabhar.

A note from parents/guardians [on absence slip or orally in Infants' classes and in Homework Journal for all other classes] is required to cover each absence.

Parents have a deadline of two days following their child's return to school to give an explanation for the absence, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unexplained.

The importance of good regular attendance will be highlighted at parent teacher meetings and at the infant induction day. Class teachers must continuously emphasise the importance of attendance, encourage and promote good attendance. They must also collaborate closely with parents and relevant school personnel to try to improve school attendance for certain pupils. Parents will also be reminded of the requirements of the NEWB, particularly the regulation relating to absences of 20 days or more per school year.

### **School Strategies:**

School attendance in our school has been adversely affected by social circumstances. Staff remain vigilant so that at-risk students are identified early. At-risk students include those who miss periods or patterns of absence without an explanation from parents/guardians. Appropriate contact takes place between school and parent/guardians either via letter, text message or note in the homework diary or phone call, when this occurs. A meeting between parents and the Deputy Principal [and/or the Principal as required] may be set up if deemed necessary. The Principal will meet the parents/guardians of pupils with more than 50 absences (largely unexplained in nature) at the beginning of the new school year, emphasising the importance of attendance and endeavouring to improve attendance for this cohort of pupils. Absences of particular concern are referred to and discussed with the E.W.O. (Education Welfare Officer) Parents/Guardians taking pupils on holidays during school time is also adversely affecting our attendance figures. The school issues a note to all parents/guardians outlining that it does not support this practice and highlighting potential implications for parents/guardians and pupils.

The school develops a yearly DEIS attendance plan. This plan is shared with all staff. It is reviewed and evaluated as part on the ongoing SSE process.

#### **Communication with other Schools**

- When a child transfers from Scoil Bhríde N.S. to another school, schools records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded when requested, on receipt of notification of the transfer and when parent/guardian has given consent for transfer of documentation.

- When a child transfers into Scoil Bhríde N.S. confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought.
- When pupils are transferring from Scoil Bhríde N.S. to a Post Primary school records will be forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment and formal requests for same from Principal of second level school.

#### **Communication with Parents**

The school informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act 2000. This information is disseminated by letters/notes, text messages, phone calls or through word of mouth. Parents of new children are informed on enrolment. Parents of new infants are informed on their induction days.

#### **Promoting Attendance**

The school promotes good attendance by

- Creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Ensuring children are happy
- Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying, etc. are identified early
- Sometimes rewarding good attendance with certificates and 'lucky dip' prizes
- Breakfast / Lunch Club / Homework Club
- Keeping parents/guardians informed of attendance patterns and rates of attendance

#### **The National Education Welfare Board**

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is informed if:

- a) A child is expelled
- b) A child is suspended for 6 days or more in any given school year
- c) A child has missed 20 days or more (without valid explanation)
- d) A child's attendance is a cause of concern

The NEWB is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through periodic reports and the Annual Report Form which are completed on-line via Aladdin and emailed to the NEWB.

#### **Evaluation:**

The success of any Attendance policy is measured through

- Attainment of targets set as part of the school DEIS Attendance Planning
- Improved attendance levels

- Happy, confident and well adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Increased teacher vigilance
- Review of attendance targets of DEIS plans.

**Implementation/Ratification and Review:**

This policy was ratified at a BOM meeting in school year 2016/17.