



St. Finbarr's Boys' National School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Title

Attendance Strategy Statement

Introductory Statement

Regular attendance by pupils at school is key to educational attainment and success and must be actively encouraged within the school environment. Our school aims to foster a culture of regular attendance at school for all pupils – furthermore we seek to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing problems with attendance at school. Formal and informal structures are in place in our school to monitor report and evaluate patterns of on-attendance amongst pupils. The provisions of the Education Welfare Act (2000) inform and support the policy on attendance.

Rationale

Saint Finbarr's Boys' National School decided to review its attendance policy because

- It is a priority area identified by the parents/pupils/staff/others
- The existing statement is due for review and amendment
- It is a requirement under Education Welfare Act 2000
- School needs to encourage pupils to be in attendance
- The changing fabric of society
- Levels of disadvantage

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

1. St Finbarr's Boys' National School has a Catholic Ethos, promotes Irish language and culture, is caring-centred and respects different colours, creeds and intellect.
2. Every pupil is encouraged to achieve his full potential – socially, personally and intellectually – in a happy, secure learning environment.
3. The discipline in our school encourages and fosters respect and self-esteem among the pupils.

4. We endeavour to develop supportive and open communication among pupils, teachers, parents, Board of Management and the community.
5. We aim to have a staff that will continue to be committed, progressive and creative.

Aims

The school hopes to achieve by introducing this statement.

- To foster an appreciation of learning
- To raise awareness of importance of school attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of school leaving 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 that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend school
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines form NEWB

Definition of Non Attendance

We define non attendance as when a child is not in attendance when the school is open.

Monitoring School Attendance and Reporting Absences

- Roll books are kept in each class.
- The roll is called at 10.30 a.m. each morning. Numbers are recorded.
- Class Leabhar Tinrimh Laethuil every day
- Regular school attendance is actively promoted by teachers
- Pupil absence from school is monitored by class teacher and recorded by the Deputy Principal.
- Pupil's parents are contacted by phone informed after 3 days of unexplained absence.

To comply with the Education Welfare Act the following procedures will be respected

- A note/medical certificate must be sent to the class teacher explaining the reason for absence for part or whole of any school day. All absences must be accounted for.
- These notes/certificates will be kept on file as record of absences.
- Any student who is absent for more than 20 school days (irrespective of reason) will be reported to the National Education Welfare Officer.
- The Deputy Principal is informed of a child's absence, if unexplained, after 3 days.
- Children reminded of the importance of good attendance so as to achieve the maximum benefit from their education.

Roles and Responsibility

All staff members have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance and the Deputy Principal prepares returns to the NEWB. The Deputy Principal has responsibility for maintaining the Leabhair Tinrimh and contacting other schools as the need arises.

Whole school strategies to promote attendance

- **Environment:** As a school, within the classroom, we strive to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents. Late arrivals are asked to explain and encouraged to be on time. Children are welcomed warmly even when late as this is an issue to be resolved with parents.
- **Early intervention:** New mothers/fathers are informed of procedures in relation to attendance and the importance of attendance.
- **Reports:** We report the total amount of days missed in a year to parents in the end of year reports and at parent teacher meetings.
- **Parents:** We communicate the requirements of schools and of parents under the Education Welfare Act to parents on enrolment. Refer to *Don't Let Your Child Miss Out* (leaflet for parents NEWB, 2004 distributed to 2nd class) on entry to school
- **Support:** We liaise with supporting agencies including the NEWB and HSE.

Procedures in relation to the Removal from Register/Transfer from another school

The principal may only remove a pupil's name from a school register where they have been informed in writing that the child has been enrolled in another school or when the Welfare Board notifies them that the child has been registered by it as in receipt of out-of-school education.

Communication with other schools/other providers

- When a child transfers to an-other school, school's records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers into St Finbarr's Boys' National School, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought.

Strategies in event of non-attendance

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

- Parents are made aware of their statutory duties outlined in Education Welfare Act in relation to causing their children to attend school. Refer to *Don't Let Your Child Miss Out* (leaflet for parents NEWB 2004)
- Parents are made aware of the schools duties outlined in the Education Welfare Act in relation to reporting the non-attendance of a child to the Education Welfare Officer. A "school attendance notice" may be served by the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parents and the principal of the school) on any parent who they conclude is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school. This will set out the possible consequence of a successful case being taken against the parent (fine and/or imprisonment)

- If the Class Teacher has any concerns about non-attendance he/she discusses the issue with the pupil.
- The Class teacher informs the Staff Attendance officer/Principal.
- Parents are requested to contact the school for absences of 3 days or more.
- After three days of unexplained absence, Class Teacher contacts the parent/guardian to express concern. E.g. Phone call, letter.
- Increased attendance rates.

Success Criteria

The practical indicators of the success of this policy include:

- An increase in attendance levels as shown in school records
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and Education Welfare Board
- A decrease in the number of pupils recorded as having more than 20 days absent.

Implementation Date

This statement will apply from December 1st 2012.

Timetable for Review

The operation of the new statement be reviewed and if necessary, amended in December 2014 or sooner if legislation requires it,

Ratification & Communication

This statement will be made available at the school office on request.

Appendix 1

EDUCATION (WELFARE) ACT 2000

The following extracts taken from the above act are binding on all schools:

1. *The parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day.....*
2. *Where the child is absent from the school at which he or she is registered during part of the school day or more than a school day, the parent of such a child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the code of behaviour prepared by the school ... notify the principal of the school of the reasons for the child's absence*
3. *The Principal of a recognised school shall cause to be maintained in respect of each school year a record of the attendance or non-attendance of each student on each school day of each student registered at the school....*
4. *A record maintained shall specify ... where a student fails to attend, the fact of his or her failure and the reasons for such failure....*
5. *A record shall be maintained where the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during the school year is not less than 20 ...'*

The National Education Welfare Board is the national agency established to ensure that every child attends school regularly or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education.