

Policy on Attendance

Introductory statement

We, the staff of St Brigid's school recognise the benefits of good attendance at school. We saw the need for a review of our existing policy and to develop a whole school approach to improving attendance levels. This policy was updated by the whole staff at a staff meeting in June 2011 in collaboration with the Board of Management.

Rationale

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management and staff wishes to comply with legislation, such as:
 - The Education Act, 1998
 - The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Board of Management and staff wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

St Brigid's school, Drumcong endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. 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
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

Content

Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) of each class on a daily basis. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book). The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register), together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address and Parents' Names etc).

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 9.40am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day unless prior notice is given to the teacher. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the school and kept on file. 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 (See Appendix 1)

The class teacher keeps a copy of a **School Attendance** sheet for each pupil. At the end of each quarter term, the number of absences are recorded and sent home for the attention of

parents/guardians and to be signed. Staff remain vigilant so that students at 'risk' can be easily identified. A meeting between parents, teacher and Principal may be set up, if deemed necessary.

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

The school must inform Túsla, 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

St Brigid's School, Drumcong 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.

St Brigid's School, Drumcong, homework policy, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, clearly outlines the school's expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June. 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.

St Brigid's School, Drumcong awards a trophy to pupils who have full attendance, and certificates for near full attendance (1 or 2 absences) during the school year. At the end of December, March and June, full attendance is highlighted and commended.

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's policy on Equality of Access and Participation.

Communication:

With other Schools

- When a child transfers from St Brigid's School, to another school, the school's records on attendance and academic progress will be forwarded on receipt of notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers to St Brigid's School confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought.
- Relevant records of pupils transferring to St Brigid's School to a Post-Primary school will be forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

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

With Parents

The School informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act 2000. This information is also disseminated regularly through school circulars. Parents of new entrants are informed on enrolment.

Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day'.

Section 21 of the act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

In such cases 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) may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the Túsla four times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted – not more than six weeks following the end of the school year - detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

Success Criteria

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

- Improved attendance levels
- Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Positive feedback from parents.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance. The Principal / Secretary make returns to Túsla.

Ratification and review

This policy was reviewed in June 2016 and ratified by the Board of Management on _____ . It replaces the existing policy and is implemented forthwith.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, BoM

Date: _____

Review Date: End of School year 2018 or as necessary.

Communication: This policy is available on the school's website. It is also available on request from the Principal / secretary.