

Derryquay National School

Policy on Attendance

Introduction

The Board of Management of Derryquay National School is committed to maintaining a high level of participation by all pupils. This policy document was drawn up to demonstrate that commitment and to communicate to parents the necessity for regular, punctual attendance at school.

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 Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Board of Management wishes to fulfil its obligations in respect of the School Attendance Strategy
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Derryquay N.S. endeavours to foster and nourish the spiritual, academic, physical and social education of the pupils in a happy and caring environment. We wish to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils, and therefore 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
- To ensure the smooth running of the school
- To minimise disruption to classes.

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). In addition each student is registered on POD (Primary Online Database) along with details of information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, PPSN, Nationality, Ethnic/Cultural background, Religion, Parents' Names and Parents' Occupations).

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 10.30 each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. The roll book may not be altered once it has been filled in. On return from an absence, children who have not provided a note, will be supplied with an absence form which they return filled out to their class teacher the following day. The reason for the absence is ticked on the form. The categories of absences correspond with the TUSLA (Educational Welfare Services) form. These are filed in the school office.

Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher and written into a book in the secretary's office.

Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school's concerns.

When a child reaches 12 days absence, a letter will be automatically sent to parents informing them of this and the responsibility of the school to report to TUSLA should the child reach 20 days absence.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer 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.

Categories of Absenteeism

- Irregular Absentee: 2/5 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason
- Seriously Irregular Absentee: 6/10 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason
- Chronic Absentee: 11+ days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason

Appropriate contact will take place between the school and parents/guardians of these children;

- For irregular absenteeism, the teacher will inform the parents by letter of her/his concerns about the child and seek to meet the parents to discuss the matter
- For seriously irregular absenteeism, the Principal will write to the parents inviting them to a meeting to discuss the problem
- For chronic absenteeism the Principal will inform the Education Welfare Officer and notify the parents of this by letter

1. Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be forwarded to the Principal of the school by post as soon as written confirmation of this transfer is received.
2. Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer into **Derryquay N.S** will be sought directly from the previous school.
3. Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to secondary school will be sent to the school once enrolment has been confirmed.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

1. **Derryquay N.S.** endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians
2. Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community.
3. 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.
4. Special Needs – pupils needing support are identified as early as possible and the appropriate support systems put into place. We emphasise positive achievements and do all we can to enhance self-esteem
5. The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and a reminder is published 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.**
6. As stated in the Code of Behaviour, parents are expected to write a note/letter notifying the teacher of the reason for a child's absence within three days of the child's return
7. Certificates are awarded to students who have full attendance during the school year.
8. We endeavour to provide enjoyable activities for children at the beginning of the day to promote attendance and punctuality.

Communication

- Information on school policies is given to parents when the child is enrolled.
- The school timetable is given to new parents and it is sent to all parents at the start of the school year.
- New or revised policies are communicated to parents through email
- Parents are informed of Board decisions through the Agreed Report.

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 EWB five 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. This information will be communicated to the school community through the school's newsletter.

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
- 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 under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents' Association.

Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in Term 1, September 2017 and will be reviewed again in 2020 or sooner if necessary.

Ratification/Communication

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management in Derryquay N.S. at a meeting held on the 28th of September 2017.

A copy of this policy is available on request in the school office.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____
Principal