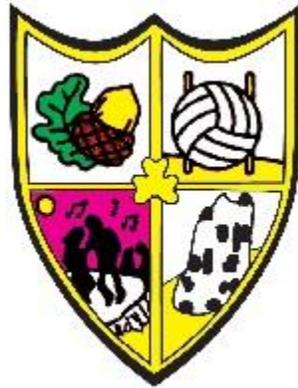


Clocha Rince NS



Attendance Policy

Introduction

This policy was developed by school staff during the 2013/2014 school year. It was then posted in draft format on the school website for parental consideration and input. It was brought to the Board for further development at a meeting on 3rd April 2014.

Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarised as follows:

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
- The role of the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) assumed into the Child & Family Agency (CFA)
- Department of Education Circular 0028/2013

Aims and Objectives

The policy leads to:

- ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- encouraging full attendance where possible
- identifying pupils at risk
- promoting a positive learning environment
- raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- fostering an appreciation of learning
- identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

Compliance with School Ethos

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

Punctuality

Please see School Health & Safety Policy regarding Access and Exit Procedures.

School begins at 9:05am. There is a 10 minute assembly period. Classes begin at 9:15am.

All pupils are expected to be in attendance at 9:05am and in their class at 9:15am.

Any pupil arriving at 9:20am will be recorded as being 15 minutes late.

Late arrival causes a disturbance to the class and is also time missed from the teaching and learning environment. Pupils who arrive late to class must apologise to the class teacher and offer an excuse. Under the school Access & Exit Procedures, parents are reminded that all pupil arriving late to school must be accompanied to the office by a parent/guardian to ensure there is a formal handover of care by the parent/guardian.

In the event of regular pattern of late arrival, parents will be contacted by the class teacher or principal to establish the cause of this regular pattern of arrival. A pupil may be reprimanded under the Code of Behaviour & Discipline for regularly arriving late to school.

Where the school is not satisfied that the situation has been addressed and that an educational welfare issue exists due to the continued absence of the pupil for part of the school day, a report will be made to the National Educational Welfare Board (Child & Family Agency)

Early Removal

Parents are obliged to ensure their children attend school for the entirety of the school day. In the event that a parent requires that their child be removed before the end of the school day, the pupil must be signed out of the school by that parents/guardian. This can be done by visiting the school office and arranging for the pupil to be removed.

All 'early removals' will be recorded by the school.

Where there is a pattern of early removal by a parent/guardian of a pupil, the class teacher and/or principal will contact the parent/guardian to inform them that regular early removal results in disruption to the pupil's learning and that such is an educational welfare issue.

Where the school is not satisfied that the situation has been addressed and that an educational welfare issue exists due to the continued absence of the pupil for part of the school day, a report will be made to the National Educational Welfare Board (Child & Family Agency)

Registering, Recording and Reporting Attendance

When a pupil is enrolled into Clocha Rince NS, they are registered in the Clárleabhar (Register). *Please see Policy on Enrolment.*

Following Circular 0028/2013, a pupil can only be registered by their name as it appears on the Birth Certificate.

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on a daily basis in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) and on the school data management system, 'Alladin'. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book). The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Clárleabhar (Register).

Clárleabhar – Register

The Deputy Principal has responsibility for maintaining the Clárleabhar. The Clárleabhar is kept in the principal's office and must never be removed from the school building until such time as it is passed to the National Archives or for any such purpose required by legislation.

- All new enrolments are immediately registered in the Clárleabhar and a Roll Number assigned.
- Male and Female pupils will be recorded in the one school register.
- The schools Clárleabhar is regarded as the “register” for the purposes of section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- The occupation and information on pupils attainment will not be recorded in the Clárleabhar as indicated in Circular 0028/2013.
- The name recorded in the Clárleabhar will be the name recorded on the pupil's birth certificate or other appropriate legal document. The name recorded on the baptismal certificate can no longer be recorded for this purpose.
- Details of the “Religious Denomination as stated by the Parents(or Guardian)” or where relevant, none, shall be recorded.
- The column headed “Additional Information” will now be used to record instances where a child's name has been removed from the Clárleabhar in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- A pupils details may never be erased, redacted or physically removed from the Clárleabhar **under any circumstances.**

Referenced from Department of Education Circular 0028/2013

An Leabhar Rolla

Each class teacher has a responsibility to ensure good maintenance and order on their Leabhar Rolla. The completed Leabhar Rolla must be forwarded to the principal for placement in the school archive. Such documents will be eventually forwarded to the National Archives.

The Leabhar Rolla is kept safely in the applicable classroom and must never be removed from the school building until such time as it is made available to the National Archives or for any such purpose required by legislation.

- The school will record the information required in Columns A, B, C, D, E, and F only.
- 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 10:45am each morning. A pupil will be marked either absent or present at the time of roll call and there will be no provision for adjusting the Leabhar Rolla where a pupil subsequently does not complete the full school day or arrives after the roll call.
- A pupil's name must be struck off the Leabhar Rolla for the following reasons:
 - i. As soon as the teacher becomes aware that the pupil has left the school or;
 - ii. On the first Monday following an absence of 20 consecutive days.The pupil's name is struck off by writing a Capital 'B' and drawing a line through the relevant row of the Leabhar Rolla. Teachers must always consult with the Principal/Deputy- Principal before striking a name from the Leabhar Rolla.

- A pupils details may never be erased, redacted or physically removed from the Clárleabhar **under any circumstances.**

An Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil

The purpose of the Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil is to record summary information in relation to daily, monthly and annual attendance of pupils. The school no longer records this information in hard copy. This information is downloaded from the school data management system and appended to the Leabhar Tinrimh Folder. The Deputy-Principal has responsibility in this area. The Leabhar Tinrimh is kept in the Principal's office and must never be removed from the school building until such time as it is made available to the National Archives or for any such purpose required by legislation.

Education (Welfare) Act 2000

Parents are reminded that the school must have a written letter excusing a pupil's absence and the reason for the absence. Absence letters should be furnished to the school before the absence in circumstances where parents/guardians are aware that a pupil will not be in school on a particular day. The reason for absence must be recorded. Parents are requested to inform the school of the specific reason a pupil is absent. This may include Illness, urgent family reason, religious observance, death of a relative, holidays etc. Where an absence letter is not received, the school must record the absence as 'Unexplained' when reporting to the 'Educational Welfare Board'.

Parents are also reminded that the school is legally obliged to report pupils who have missed more than 19 school days to the NEWB/Child and Family Agency. This represents 1/10 of the school year which if missed from school has negative repercussions on a pupil's learning. Indeed, parents/guardians should strive to ensure that their child achieves full/near to full attendance.

The school will make every effort to inform a family in writing when your child has missed 15 days of school. The school will also inform you when your child has missed 20 days or more from school and that a report will be made to the NEWB/CFA.

These procedures apply to all pupils regardless of reason for absence. In the event where a pupil has been absent for 20 days due to extenuating circumstances e.g. hospitalisation of a pupil, the school may also inform the NEWB that such extenuating circumstances existed and that no immediate educational welfare concern exists.

National Education Welfare Board/Child & Family Agency

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child has missed more than 20 days.
- The school has an educational welfare concern pertaining to issues of attendance or the educational provision being made for the pupil.

The NEWB/Child & Family Agency is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line.

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 NEWB/CFA 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.

Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment through kindness, compassion and understanding, which strives to ensure our pupils are happy.
- high interest and high standard teaching and learning environment is created and nurtured by all school partners
- being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early
- identifying attendance issues as targets on Individual Education Plans, where applicable
- rewarding good attendance with certificates/rewards.
- annual report to all families on average class and average school attendance.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Clocha Rince NS endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing applicable 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.

Identifying At Risk Pupils

Traditionally, school attendance is strong in our school. However, the staff remains vigilant so that 'risk' students are identified early. Risk students can be categorised as;

- Those who miss more than 10 days in a school year.
- Those who are removed early on 5 or more occasions in a school year.
- Those who are late to school on 5 or more occasions in a school year.

Induction of New Pupils/Families

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.

Early Communication of School Calendar

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in May, at the latest, and a copy is published on the school website. 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.

Designated Post-holder Duty

The Post-holder with responsibility for Attendance will visit the classes twice per year to encourage full attendance.

Acknowledgement/Reward for Very Good/Excellent Attendance

Each Year, the school will award certificates to the pupils with the best attendance; pupils who have missed no day of school and those who have missed 3 days or less.

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.

A school cannot remove a pupil from the school register until such time as the new school remits confirmation of enrolment. In the event whereby such notice is not provided, the principal may refer the issue to the NEWB/CFA to investigate and confirm the whereabouts of that child.

Communication with other Schools

- When a child transfers from Clocha Rince NS to another school, the schools records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers into Clocha Rince NS, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from Clocha Rince NS to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Communication with Parents

The school remits a letter twice yearly to all families regarding the procedures for Dropping off and Collection at the school.

An attendance letter will be remitted once per year reminding families of the attendance procedures and the implications of non-attendance as per the *Education Welfare Act 2000*. This information is also disseminated by regular school circulars.

Parents of new children are informed about these matters upon enrolment.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance in the Leabhar Rolla and on 'Aladdin', the school data management system.

A post-holder will be designated responsibility for monitoring attendance and reporting to the school staff and parents on attendance patterns and will also have responsibility for promoting regular attendance.

The Deputy Principal has responsibility for maintaining the Clár Leabhair and the Leabhair Tinrimh.

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Responsibility of Parents

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notifying the School if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- Working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance

- problems;
- Making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance;
 - Discussing planned absences with the school.
 - Refraining from taking holidays during school time
 - Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
 - Encouraging them to participate in school activities.
 - Praising and encouraging their children's achievements.
 - Instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
 - Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
 - Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
 - Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
 - Notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through attendance records and statistical returns
- Positive perceptions by pupils about our school
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Implementation/Ratification and Review

This policy formally documents the policy which has been in place in our school.

It was ratified by the Board of Management on _____ and will be reviewed during the 2016/2017 school year.

References:

Don't let your Child Miss Out - NEWB 2004
Education Welfare Act 2000
Education Act 1998
Section 29 Education Act
Empty Desks - CDU Mary Immaculate
Circular 0028/2013