

Monaghan Model School

Attendance Strategy

Introduction

This policy document was drawn up:

- To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

The Board of Management in consultation with staff and parents drew up this Policy on Attendance.

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 promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

The Model school endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils, and 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, Religion, Parents' Names and Parents' Occupations). In the case of children transferring from another school we record last school attended and class in which pupil had been enrolled.

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 before 10.30 am each morning. Any pupil not present or who has not furnished written notification that they were going to be late will be marked absent for the day. The roll book may not be altered once it has been filled in. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher. Parents/guardians must also provide a note or give verbal notification if a child needs to depart early during the school day.

An evaluation of each pupil's annual attendance is relayed to parents in the form of a comment on the end of year report. **These are recorded as number of days absent during the year.**

The school will inform Education Welfare Officer, through Tusla (Child & Family Agency), 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 for 6 days or more or is expelled.

Annual Attendance Report (AAR) will be sent to Tusla at the end of each academic year.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Staff and management at Monaghan Model School endeavour to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. Members of the Parents' Association 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 collaborate in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

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. The main policies are also included in our Handbook for new parents. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and a reminder is published in November. Any unplanned updates are sent by Text-a-Parent. 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.

Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will provide an alternative lunch.

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

Communication

The school has developed good relationships with the local Education Welfare Board (EWB) personnel and Home School Liaison Officer and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

The school maintains communication with some local childcare facilities and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible. Sixth class pupils are facilitated in attending an induction day in their new school.

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. When a pupil reaches sixteen days of absence without a valid written excuse from parents a letter will be sent to his/her parents explaining our concern about the pupil's attendance and confirming that the child will be reported to NEWB when 20 days are reached.

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 posted to the EWB five times during the school year. 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.

All pupils and teachers are expected to arrive on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Services (TUSLA)

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. This is fully complied with in the Model School.

When a pupil from our school transfers to another school a brief reason for transfer is noted in the Clár Leabhar (Register).

When the Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere she will 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 for pupils who would not normally attend on a regular basis.
- 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.

Ratification and Review

Reviewed and ratified by Board of Management: January 2015

Signature of Chairperson: _____ Date: _____

Next Review Date: January 2018