

## *Clonlara, Co. Clare.*

### **Policy on Attendance**

#### **Introduction**

This policy was drawn up:

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

The staff, in consultation with parents/guardians drew up this Policy on Attendance which was ratified by the Board of Management.

#### **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**

St. Senan's National 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 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).

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 10.00 am. 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. 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 if a child departs early during the school day. Late arrivals, if on a frequent basis, must report to the principal who records same.

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.

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.

### **Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance**

St. Senan's National School 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.

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.

Our school's 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 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.

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 a sandwich and a drink.

The N.E.W.B. awards certificates to pupils who have full attendance during the school year.

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's enrolment policy.

### **Communication**

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

### **Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance**

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states the ‘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 E.W.B. 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.

### **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 is presently being implemented following ratification by the Board of

Management and communication to the Parents' Association.