



The aims of the attendance policy in St. Clare's Primary School are to :

- (1) encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- (2) share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- (3) inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Act.
- (4) identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- (5) ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- (6) develop links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- (7) Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are regularly unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - The Education Welfare Board.
 - The Education Welfare Officer
 - The Board of Management

Punctuality

School is open from 8.50 a.m. and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9.a.m. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under The Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Guidance for Parents

Reasons for pupils' absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school may contact parents when a written explanation for the child's absence is not received by the school. If a parent rings the school to explain the reason for a child's absence the date, time and reason for absence will be recorded and kept on Aladdin.

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 approve of school attendance;
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining, if at all possible, 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.

Pupils

Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.

Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.

Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.

Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

A strategy for promoting good school attendance

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The creation of a safe and welcoming environment within St. Clare's.
- Ensuring children are happy.
- Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding.
- Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc are identified early.
- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- The current reward system may be used to rewarding and promoting good attendance at school:



Mrs Bolger (postholder) will arrange awards for children with good attendance & various class league tables each year to encourage good attendance. At Christmas, Easter and summer breaks children who have missed fewer than 2 days (or 'at risk' children who have missed fewer than 5 days) will be entered into a draw for numerous prizes. In summer time all children whose names have been entered for that year will be entered into a draw for a bicycle voucher (paid for from DEIS grant or SCP)

- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- The attendance rates of pupils be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal and HSCL of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.
- The issue will be discussed with the child and the child's parent by class teacher in the first instance and subsequently by the HSCL officer and the Principal.
- Parents will be notified in writing when their child misses 15 days informing them that in the event of their child missing 20 days that the school is obliged under the Education Welfare Act to inform the National Education Welfare board of their absences (Appendix 1)
- At the end of the school year parents of children who have missed 20 days receive a letter informing them that a report has been made to the NEWB (Appendix 3)
- Following these communications a report will be made to the NEWB officer on through our on line pupil management system Aladdin
- Parents will be encouraged to ensure children do not miss school unnecessarily (See Appendix 2
- Meetings will be arranged with the parents of 'at risk children' and the NEWB Welfare officer as soon as a problem becomes evident.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
 - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff
- Ensure that record of phone call is kept in event of parent ringing school to advise of and explain pupil absence.



Post Holder with Responsibility for Attendance

The Post Holder with Responsibility for Attendance (Mrs Imelda Bradley) will liaise with class teacher and Principal regarding attendance and absenteeism. The Post Holder will coordinate and be responsible for preparing the SCP attendance returns and the NEWB returns. A whole school awareness of the role of staff in monitoring and encouraging school attendance will be developed. Relevant statistics will be presented at staff meetings.

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing, using specified school absence sheet(available from office)
Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal and/or Post Holder with responsibility for attendance and HSCL of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil – e.g patterns of absence or extended unexplained absences.

Record/Communication

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed, subject to parental consent,

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through;

- Improved attendance levels
- Happy confident well adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback

Ratified by Board of Management on _____ Date

Signed _____

Chairperson, Board of Management



Appendix 1

Sample letter to parents following absence of 15 days

Insert date

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As part of our School Policy we let parents know if a child has missed 15 or more days from school.

This letter is just to let you know that according to our records your child has missed **days** since 1st September, 2010

In the event that your child misses 20 days from school we are obliged under the Educational Welfare Act to inform the National Educational Welfare Board of the absences.

If you have any queries, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

Alma Leonard

Principal

Appendix 2

November 2013



Guidelines for common Childhood Illnesses		
Illness	Symptoms and signs	What to Do
Fever	Temperature- 100.4 F or 38.0 C	Stay home must be fever free for 24hrs before going back to school.
Headache	If the child can't do normal activities	Stay Home
Vomiting	More than 2 times in 24 Hrs or if diarrhoea also	Stay home until 24 hrs after last episode
Diarrhoea	More than 3 times in 24 hrs	Stay home until 24 hrs after last episode
Sore Throat	If not eating or fever	Back as soon as well or 24 hrs after starting antibiotic if prescribed.
Cold Symptoms	Stuffed or runny nose, sneezing mild cough.	No need to stay home.
Cough	If the cough disrupts normal activities...	Return to school after Doctor has cleared child of serious illness e.g. whooping cough.
Asthma	If your child can't do normal activities or coughing a lot...	Needs to see Doctor or asthma nurse to review treatment.
Conjunctivitis (red eyes)	With yellow or green puss	Seek treatment and return after 24 hrs.
Chicken Pox	May have fever, abdominal pain, sore throat, headache, or feeling sick a day or two before rash appears.	Return when blisters are dry and crusted over.
Hand foot and mouth Disease	Not infectious once rash appears	No need to stay home unless drooling.
Impetigo.	Blisters developing on patch of red itchy skin., soon forming crusty yellow-brown sores.	May return 24hrs after starting antibiotics, 48hrs after starting antibiotic cream. Sores must be covered with dressing.
Ringworm	Ring shaped oval patch of scaly red skin.	Return after starting treatment. Keep area covered.
Head lice	Spread directly from head to head.	Must be treated. No need to stay home.
Dentist or Doctor visit		Back to school afterwards unless advised to stay home.
Produced in association with Dr Van der Spek, HSE Drumalee, Cavan.		

Parents!

Remember that schools must report to Educational Welfare Board....

If your child does not attend on a regular basis.

If your child has missed 20 days or more!



Appendix 3

Sample letter to parents following 20 days absence

Date

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding {{ first_name }}'s attendance at school.

{{ first_name }} has now been absent for {{ days_absent }} days so far this year.

Because {{ first_name }} has now been absent for 20 days, the school must pass the information to the National Educational Welfare Board. An Educational Welfare Officer may therefore be in contact with you to discuss the matter further.

Yours Truly,

{{ your_name }}