

St. Patrick's SNS, Corduff

Attendance Policy

Rationale

In St Patrick's SNS we strive to provide a secure, happy and inclusive environment in which every child can avail of meaningful learning experiences. We acknowledge that irregular attendance can disrupt this learning and so in consultation with parents, teachers and Board of Management we have developed this policy. We believe that an effective Attendance Policy will help to foster an appreciation of learning and to raise the importance of regular attendance.

Aims

- To promote a positive attitude towards learning so that children are encouraged to attend
- To raise awareness of the importance of good attendance
- To encourage full attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of early school leaving
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000

Whole school strategies to promote attendance:

- From the very beginning of a child's time in school they are aware of the value we place on good attendance.
- The Breakfast Club is open at 8:30am to provide breakfast to those children who wish to avail of it.
- School lunches are provided daily and hot lunches are regularly provided.
- A number of after school activities (sport, choir, dance classes, homework clubs etc.) are available for the children to partake in, thus promoting attendance.
- Teachers will conduct roll call at 10:30am every morning and will record absences in our Aladdin computer system and in their roll book.
- Good attendance is acknowledged through certificates and medals which are presented to excellent attendees at the end of each term.
- We have created a secure and welcoming environment for children and parents. Children who are late are welcomed by teachers and if any child is persistently late the issue is raised with their parents / guardians. Children who arrive late are never made feel unwelcome.
- The school reports the total amount of days absent in a year to parents / guardians at parent teacher meetings and in the end of year report.
- Support is provided for those children who are identified as having educational needs.
- The School Completion Programme will also track children's attendance within the school and provide programmes to encourage attendance, for example –, homework clubs etc.
- Within the SPHE policy there are a number of approaches across the school to raise the self-esteem of pupils including the Walk Tall Programme, Circle Time and Stay Safe Programme. The Friends for Life Programme is also carried out in the school.
- The school has a written anti-bullying policy and procedures are in place to investigate all incidences of bullying.
- Parents/Guardians will only be allowed to collect a child from school early with the expressed permission of the school principal.
- Regular contact will be kept with the NEWB and those children who reach 20 days of absences will be reported at the relevant times.

Strategies in the event of Absences

**Absence occurs whereby a child is not present at roll call.*

- If a child fails to bring in a letter explaining an absence the teacher must request one from the parents/guardians.
- All letters of explanation will be kept in the classroom in the class attendance folder.
- Text messages are now automatically being sent to parents/guardians when their child has missed 10, 15 & 20 days
- After a child misses 15 days, the Principal will contact the parents/guardians to inform them of the 15 day absence.
- Once the child misses 20 days the matter is referred on to Educational Welfare Services.
- The HSCL teacher will be informed of any child around whom we have concerns with regard to absenteeism, and this may be followed up with a home visit.
- If a child is believed to have enrolled in another school the school secretary will follow up on this matter until a letter of enrolment from the other school is obtained.

Success Criteria

- The number of children receiving certificates and medals for excellent attendance will rise.
- The number of children being reported to the NEWB will fall.
- Specific families will show improved attendance.
- Positive feedback will be received from parents and teachers.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that a copy of the 'Attendance Policy' is on our school website.
- Talk with parents/guardians once a child reaches 15 days absences.
- Present medals and certificates for excellent attendance at the end of each term.
- Oversee the promotion of a welcoming school environment.
- Oversee the overall implementation of the Attendance Policy.

The Attendance Post Holder will:

- Take specific responsibility for reporting the relevant children to the NEWB. All records are stored in the Attendance folder in the Principal's office.
- Gather the names of those children with full attendance at the appropriate times.
- Store all letters of explanation for absenteeism.

The Class Teacher will:

- Conduct roll call at the correct time every day and enter data into their roll book and Aladdin system.
- Welcome children at whatever time they arrive to school.
- Provide a happy and secure classroom where all children are provided with meaningful learning experiences.
- Speak to parents about persistent lateness and non-provision of letters of explanation for absences.
- Report absences to parents at parent teacher meetings and on school reports.
- Advise the principal when children have hit the 10, 15 and 20 level of absenteeism.
- Store all letters of explanation for absenteeism and give to the principal at the end of each year.

The HSCL teacher will:

Visit the homes of those children identified by class teacher as being at risk with regard to absenteeism.

The School Completion Coordinator will:

- Track Attendance
- Contact parents with regard to concerns over attendance
- Provide programmes to the school to encourage attendance, for example homework clubs and breakfast club etc.

The School Secretary will:

- Follow up on any child who is believed to be enrolled in a new school but for whom no letter of enrolment has been received.

Parents/Guardians will:

- Bring their child to school every day and only keep them at home where absolutely necessary.
- Provide a letter of explanation to the class teacher for every absence.
- Attend any meetings scheduled by the School Principal.

The Educational Welfare Officer will:

- Follow up on the relevant families as reported by the post-holder for Attendance.

The SEN team will:

- Meet the needs of identified children within the school.

Timetable for Review

New procedures will be reviewed and, if necessary, amended at the end of each school year and upon receipt of revised guidelines from National Education Welfare Board/DES/other agencies.