

## **St. Dympna's N.S. Attendance Policy**

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

The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians drew up this policy on attendance.

### **Rationale**

**The policy was drafted for the following reasons:**

- Analysis of previous attendance statistics:
- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation, such as:
  - Child Protection Guidelines 2011
  - The Education Act 1998
  - Tusla: Developing The Statement of Strategy for School Attendance
  - The Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupil's learning.
- To update and review previous policy absenteeism.
- Recommendation from School Inspector about Board of Management developing school attendance strategy.

### **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

St. Dympna'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, the school hopes to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and all 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 foster positive attitudes of learning.
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

### **Communications Regarding 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 Tinrímh (Excel Version).

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instructions, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 10am each morning. Any pupil not present by 10am will be marked absent for the day. The roll book may not be altered once it has been filled in. Parents must inform the school of the reason for their child's absence. Parents may use notes, phone call or homework journal. Notes will be retained by the class teacher. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day.

Early departures are noted by class teacher and must be accompanied by a note from parents/guardians. In the event of a parent/guardian needing to take the child during the school day and have not sent in a note with the child, the parent/guardian must sign the leaving early book.

If a pupil arrives late to the school the children will sign the "Late Book" and an individual record kept. Parents/Guardians are informed in writing on the end of the 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 concerns.

Parents will be notified when pupils have missed 10 and 15 days. 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. The school will engage with Social Services where applicable.

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

St. Dymphna's N.S. 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.

The calendar for the school is published annually in the first newsletter of the year. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimizing the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.

Parent/Guardians are informed if a child has no lunch. When parents/guardians can't be contacted lunch will be bought for the child.

Certificates will be awarded for good attendance quarterly in conjunction with the quarterly terms in Roll Books. Gold certificates will be awarded to children who have missed 0 days during a quarterly term and silver certificates will be awarded to children who have missed 4 or less days (with the exception of the first quarterly term where silver certificates will be awarded to children who have only missed 1 day). There will be special awards for children with chronic illnesses for their attendance.

## **Communication**

The school has developed a good relationship with Tusla's Educational Welfare Services (EWS) and Social Workers and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk. The school maintains communications with local pre-school 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 that "the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognized school on each school day". Section 21 of the Act obliges school to inform EWS (Educational Welfare Services) and 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 Educational 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 a parent(s) may result in a fine and/or imprisonment. Parents will be issued a notification from the school when the child has missed 10 and 15 days. Absenteeism can be considered as neglect in relation to Child Protection.

## **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 a 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 related 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. This information will be entered on P.O.D. (Primary Online Database).

## **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 will be implemented following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parent's Association.

### **Review and Monitoring**

This policy has been made available to school personnel and the Parent's Association and is readily assessable to parents on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron, if requested. This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

Policy Ratified by the Board of Management on

Date of Review

Board of Management Chairperson\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

Principal Signature\_\_\_\_\_