

Policy on Attendance

Introductory statement

We, the staff of St Brigid's school recognise the benefits of good attendance at school. We saw the need for a review of our existing policy and to develop a whole school approach to improving attendance levels. This policy was updated by the whole staff at a staff meeting in November 2017 in collaboration with the Board of Management

Rationale

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management and staff wishes to comply with legislation, such as:
 - The Education Act, 1998
 - The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Board of Management and staff wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

St Brigid's school, Drumcong 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 staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year.

- **Aims**
- To foster an appreciation of learning by having good attendance practices.
- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning.
- To identify at an early stage, students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

Content

Recording Attendance and Non-Attendance

- Attendance is monitored daily by class teachers and school secretary and recorded on Aladdin school administration software.
- Parents are reminded regularly of the time of roll call. Any child who arrives into school after that time, without the teacher's prior knowledge, will be deemed absent.
- Parents are requested to sign school designed absence sheets to explain child's absence which are kept on file.
- Late arrivals are recorded and parents are informed as necessary.
- Parents are requested to sign a late arrival/early departure form and explain reasons for same.
- A quarterly record of attendance is sent home for parent's signature and retained in child's file.
- Annual attendance is recorded on Aladdin and written on end of year school reports.

St Brigid's National School, Drumcong

- Parents are notified when their child is absent for 15 days and then 20 days. After an absence of 20 days a report is submitted to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

- St Brigid's School, Drumcong endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment where there is a culture of mutual respect and trust.
- 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 while taking into account the needs of individual children.
- The school highlights the importance of good attendance and the high expectations of students' attendance in the classrooms at daily roll call, in the quarterly publications of newsletters, at weekly assemblies, during parent / teacher meetings and at student council meetings .
- The school awards a trophy and certificate to students with perfect attendance at the end of the school year. Certificates are awarded also to students with near full attendance (1 or 2 days).
- Students are rewarded for full attendance at the end of each term and improvements in attendance are noted and affirmed privately.
- Attendance percentages at intervals are published in the school newsletter and on the school website.
- The school calendar is published in June for the upcoming school year and included with end of year school reports to enable families to plan events around school closures.
- School attendance is discussed at Board of Management meetings .
- The details of the overall level of attendance of the school during the school year is published on the school's website as part of the Board of Management Report.

Responding to poor attendance:

Section 17 Of the education Welfare Act 2000 states: "*the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each day*"

- St Brigid's school engages in early dialogue with parents and students when a student is absent regularly.
- Students are supported through the Care Team comprising Principal, Deputy Principal and class teacher.
- The school is obliged to inform Tusla's Educational Welfare Service if a child does not attend school regularly or is absent 20 days or more in a school year.
- St Brigid's uses multi-agency services as necessary to support students and their family.

Communication:

With other Schools

- When a child transfers from St Brigid's School, to another school, the school's records on attendance and academic progress will be forwarded on receipt of notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers to St Brigid's School confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought.
- Relevant records of pupils transferring to St Brigid's School to a Post-Primary school will be forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment. (See Education Passport circular 0045/2014)

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

With Parents

- The School informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act 2000. This information is also disseminated regularly through school circulars.
- Parents of new entrants are informed on enrolment.

Success Criteria

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

- Improved attendance levels
- Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000
- Positive feedback and co-operation from parents.

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.
- Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance and report concerns to Principal / Deputy Principal.
- The Principal / Secretary make returns to Tusla's Education Welfare Services.

Ratification and review

This policy was reviewed in November 2018 and ratified by the Board of Management on

_____. It replaces the existing policy and is implemented

forthwith.

Signed: _____

Chairperson, BoM

Date: _____

Review Date: September/October 2019.

Communication: This policy is available on the school's website. It is also available on request from the Principal / secretary.