



Attendance Strategy

Blarney Street

Introduction

This policy was drawn up by the Board of Management of Blarney Street, in consultation with staff, parents and pupils to ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils, and to inform the target setting for our DEIS Plan for Attendance.

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

Blarney Street 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 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 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 on Aladdin in each class on a daily basis. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) on Aladdin. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register) on Aladdin, together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, PPS Number, Address, Eircode, Parents' Names and Language spoken at home).

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 before 9.40am each morning, with a bell set as a reminder at 9:30am. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. Parents are asked to inform class teachers in advance of appointments. 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 in the child's file. Parents/guardians must sign their child out from their class, giving a reason, if their child departs early during the school day.

Late arrivals are recorded by the class teacher on Aladdin.

Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. The class teacher, principal & HSCL coordinator can monitor the attendance of those whose non-attendance is a concern.

Identification & categorisation

Identification of students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems. These are categorised as follows:

- a) Irregular absentee: 10-14 days
- b) Seriously irregular absentee: 15+ days absent
- c) Chronic absentee: 20+ days absent

The school must inform the Education Welfare Office; 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 class teacher will write to parents informing them that their child has missed 15 days and will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer once they have missed 20 days.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Blarney Street 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. The school works closely with the School Completion

Programme on tracking & monitoring attendance & on working with children who have a poor attendance record.

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.

Attendance Drives - both school led and Tusla led are implemented annually. The class with the best attendance figures and the class with the most improved attendance in the previous calendar month, are announced at our monthly assembly.

Communication

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Board (EWB) personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

The school works with the School Completion Programme in developing programmes to promote school attendance. These programmes aim to minimise the risks of irregular or non-attendance and to maximise the opportunities provided to all pupils.

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 that '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 for 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 EWB twice 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. This information is communicated to the school community through the school's assembly.

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
- Pupil awareness of attendance initiatives
- 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.

Ratification and Review

The original Attendance Strategy was ratified by the Board of Management 25/10/16, reviewed 25/10/2018. The policy was communicated to the Parents' Association on 26/10/2016, and was subsequently published on our school website.

The policy was reviewed, amended and updated in December 2023 and was ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, BoM

The policy was communicated to the Parent Association on [Date: _____]

Signed: _____ Chairperson, PA

Review Date: November 2025