

ATTENDANCE STRATEGY POLICY

Update May 2015

Rationale

This policy has been drawn up to comply with the Education Welfare act 2000.

Aims

1. To raise awareness of the importance of school attendance among both parents and pupils
2. To comply with the requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000 / Guidelines from NEWB

Definition

For the purpose of this policy, non-attendance shall include ***any absence of a pupil on any day (or part thereof) on which the school is open for instruction irrespective of the reason for that absence.***

Parents & the Education Welfare Act 2000

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act a parent is obliged to cause a child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend at "a national school or other suitable school" on each day that the school is open for instruction.

The parents of an absent child are obliged to notify the principal of the cause of absence not later than the third day of absence. The Act also requires a parent to notify the school when a child is absent for part of a school day, a school day or more than a school day in the manner prescribed by the school.

Strategies to promote attendance

- Early intervention: new parents are to be informed of the importance of attendance and the school's procedures in relation to attendance.
- Incentives: where appropriate teachers will incentivise pupils by introducing a reward system for good attendance e.g. homework passes, certificates, "golden time", full attendance certificate at the end of the year.
- Parent awareness: at the beginning of each school year parents will be reminded of their obligations under the terms of the Education Welfare Act. They will also be informed that under the Act the principal is obliged to notify the NEWB when pupils are absent for 20 days or more or where the principal is concerned about a pupils attendance.

Checklist of actions to address poor attendance:

	Action:	When?
1.	In-school discussion with pupil	when pupil has missed 9 days
2.	Contact between school and parent / guardian to express concern e.g. phone call, letter, discussion at parents evening	When pupil has missed 15 days
3.	Specific meeting in school with parent / guardian to identify problems and agree interventions	When pupil has missed 18 days
4.	Concerns and agreements communicated in writing to parent / guardian	Immediately after specific meeting in school

- Notes from parents explaining absences are to be kept by each class teacher for the full academic year. Where absences exceed 20 days the notes are to be given to the principal where they may be used to assist any actions subsequently undertaken by the NEWB.
- Parents who do not fulfil their requirements under the Act are to be reported to the Education Welfare Officer.
- At the end of each school year the class teachers will include in the "summer report" information relating to each pupil's attendance.

Removal from the Register

A principal may only remove a pupil's name from the school register where they have been informed that the child has been enrolled in another school or when the Welfare Board notifies them that the child has been registered by it as in receipt of out-of-school education.