

Title: Attendance Policy - St. Kevin's N.S., Greystones

Introduction:

We are conscious that a high level of school attendance is of utmost importance. Therefore, this policy was reviewed to reflect this belief and elements were added in an effort to improve overall school attendance.

Aims and Objectives:

The revised policy aims to:

- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Identify pupils at risk
- Promote a positive learning environment
- Maximise learning opportunities
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Foster an appreciation of learning

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school:

Creating a climate that encourages and reinforces good attendance will, in turn, create a harmonious environment where every child is afforded the opportunity to develop their own gifts while caring for one another in the way Jesus taught us.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Teachers in St. Kevin's recognise the importance of good school attendance for children's social and academic development. While recognising that children will be absent from school from time to time due to illness, urgent family reasons etc., we encourage parents to avoid unnecessary absences from school for their children (c.f. letter to parents re Attendance, Appendix 1).

Teachers record the number of children's absences on the end of year school report.

The accurate recording of attendance, and maintenance of the Leabhar Rolla, is the responsibility of each class teacher under the supervision of Ms. Freda Trihy. The Principal & School Secretary have the responsibility of maintaining the Leabhar Tinreamh. Mary Begg, Assistant Principal is responsible for the National Education Welfare Board returns.

Recording:

Individual school attendance is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla at 9:30 each day. As per circular 28/13, the school will use an excel version of The Daily Attendance Book (Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil). This will be printed off each month and kept in a folder in the school office. Relevant data on all pupils attending is recorded in the School Register. Children arriving at school after 9.30am will be marked absent in the roll book, unless a note is given to the class teacher on the previous day explaining the reason their child will be late to school.

Daily figures are also recorded electronically, which facilitates the collation of data and highlights pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern

A note from parents/guardians is required to cover each absence.

Punctuality:

Students who are not in class before the bell rings at 9:10, will be marked on Aladdin as late. If this becomes a regular occurrence, the class teacher will bring it to the attention of the parents with a view to improving. If it does not improve, the class teacher should inform the principal.

Leaving school early

If parents would like their child(ren) to leave the school early, they will need to provide the teacher with a note explaining this. They will also need to be signed out at the office. If they return to school following an appointment etc, their name will be highlighted on the sign out sheet, so everyone is aware of their return

School Strategies:

St. Kevin's Attendance figures are high. In an effort to maintain and promote regular attendance, the school will:

- Award certificates to children who have had no absences during each of the three school terms.
- Children will be awarded attendance medals at an end of year Assembly. The following criteria will be used:
 1. Gold Medal- awarded to children who have full attendance for the year
 2. Silver Medal- awarded to children who only missed one day for the year
 3. Bronze Medal- awarded to children who missed three days or less days for the year
- A 'Wall of Fame' noticeboard will be permanently on display outside Mr. Vance's office. This will be updated termly and students names with perfect attendance for that term will be printed in red and children with perfect attendance to date will be printed in blue
- Both the Junior and Senior class with the best attendance and most improved attendance for the month will be awarded a Trophy and where appropriate given a night off written homework. This achievement will be recognised on the 'Wall of Fame' noticeboard and posted on the school blog
- All class monthly attendances are compared and displayed on the 'Wall of Fame'
- In an effort to reduce the number of children who miss 20 days during the school year, parents will be informed by post when their child has missed 15 school days.

When irregular attendance is a cause for concern (particularly unexplained absences), appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians either by phone, letter or a note in the homework diary. A meeting between parents and the Principal may be called if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the National Education Welfare Board.

Communication with other Schools:

- When a child transfers from St. Kevin's N.S. to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on request to the receiving school, following receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

- When a child transfers to St. Kevin's N.S., confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought.
- Pupils transferring from St. Kevin's N.S. to a Post Primary school will have a copy of their final school report forwarded to the receiving school. This form is also used to confirm enrolment.

Communication with Parents:

The Attendance letter (Appendix 1) is issued annually to all parents/guardians.

Promoting Attendance:

The school promotes good attendance by;

- Creating an environment which is safe, supportive and conducive to learning, as described in St. Kevin's Code of Behaviour;
- Monitoring the risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. to facilitate early intervention
- Rewarding good attendance

National Education Welfare Board:

The National Education Welfare Board is informed if;

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child has missed more than 20 days

The N.E.W.B. is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line.

Evaluation:

The success of this Attendance policy is measured through;

- Maintained/improved attendance levels
- Pupils who are happy and fulfilled in a positive learning environment
- Positive parental feedback
- Staff feedback

Implementation/Ratification and Review:

This policy was ratified by St. Kevin's Board of Management on 30th April 2014.

Chairperson's signature _____ **Date:** _____

References:

Don't let your Child Miss Out - NEWB 2004
Education Welfare Act 2000
Section 29 Education Act

Appendix 1 – Letter to Parents

School Attendance

Dear Parents,

As you are probably aware, the Education Welfare Act was passed into law in July 2002. Essentially, this act is about promoting school attendance. The National Education Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.) was established to support regular school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

The attendance rate in St. Kevin's is extremely high and this is a record that we are very proud of.

In our continuing commitment to maintain this high standard, I would like to bring the following points to your attention:

- Assembly time is from 8:50 to 9:10 a.m., allowing pupils a twenty minute period to assemble in their classrooms. Pupils arriving after the 9:10 bell will be marked as late. Children who arrive later than roll call at 9:30 a.m. will be marked absent.
- A written explanation for all absences should be given to the class teacher.
- If a child misses twenty schooldays, the Board of Management is required to notify the National Education Welfare Board. For this reason, if your child is absent for an extended period due to illness, it is advisable to retain any relevant medical certificates.
- I would also ask you to bear the absence of twenty school days in mind when booking family holidays. We appreciate that holidays are far less expensive in June, but the education of your child should take precedence over this.
- The Board must report all absences, regardless of the reason for non-attendance.
- Ensuring that your child attends school punctually and regularly will enhance his/her potential to make social and educational progress.

I would like to thank you in advance for working in cooperation with the school in an effort to improve our school attendance.

Kind regards,

Scott Vance
Principal