

## School Attendance Policy

### Introduction:

There is a very strong tradition of good attendance in Gortskehy NS. However, we are anxious that parents be aware of the absolute necessity for regular, punctual attendance at school.

### Aims:

- To foster an appreciation of learning by having good attendance practises.
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000
- To raise awareness of importance of school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of school leaving early
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

### The Educational Welfare Act 2000

The legislation governing school attendance in Ireland is the Education Welfare Act 2000. Parents/Guardians are required to ensure that their children from the age of 6 to the age of 16 attend a recognised school on each day that the school is open and classes are in progress.

### The School's Obligations

Under the Education and Welfare Act 2000 schools are required to report to the National Education and Welfare Board which was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

The school reports when:

- a student is suspended for 6 days or more
- a student is absent for 20 days or more
- a student transfers to another school · a student is expelled
- the Principal is concerned about a student's attendance

The school will submit an annual report to the NEWB on the levels of school attendance. Also, the school will report to the NEWB on four other occasions, as outlined by the NEWB during the school year. The Board monitors school attendance and takes a range of measures where children do not attend school regularly.

The NEWB strongly advises against taking children out of school to go on holidays during term – time.

## **Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Attendance**

- Class teachers are required to call and mark the DES Electronic Roll Book on a daily basis.
- An electronic copy of the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) is maintained on Google Drive.
- The school secretary records the annual attendance of each individual pupil on the Primary Online Database (POD), together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, and Religion)

## **Keeping records of Absences**

- The rolla is taken each morning by 10am.
- Any pupil not present at this time will be marked absent for the day.
- Parents will be informed of their responsibilities in relation to school attendance, and will be requested to provide written explanations for all absences from school, regardless of the length or nature of the absence.
- For pupils in 1st to 6th class the main means of communication between home and school is the School Homework Journal. There is a specific section in the journal, Explanation of Absence, which parents are asked to use.
- For pupils in Junior and Senior Infants parents can send in a note explaining absence, sign and return to the class teacher.
- Notes written in Homework Journals can be left in the journal. - Individual notes and other written communication around attendance, such as Medical Certificates and other explanations for student absences should be kept in the pupil files. These will be retained for possible inspection by the National Educational Welfare Officer.
- Letters will be sent home, drawing parents' attention to poor attendance, after 10 and 20 days absence - If a child misses school and a written explanation is not sent in, the class teacher must send home a letter requesting this.
- Each class teacher has a responsibility to monitor the attendance of the children in their care. Teachers should be aware of emerging patterns in relation to poor attendance.

## **Communication with Parents/Guardians**

Good communication with parents/guardians is key to encouraging good attendance.

- By consulting with parents/guardians when reviewing policies the aim is to promote a high-level of co-operation among the school community.
- The calendar for each 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.
- The school also informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act, 2000. (This information is disseminated at least once a year in a school newsletter). Specific reference is made to the consequences of long absences on

children's progress in language acquisition and general academic progress, and also to the fact that children can become unsettled and find it difficult to readapt to their class situation after a long absence.

### **Communication with other schools**

When a child transfers into Gortskehy NS, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school. A Student Transfer Form may be requested from the sending School. This will be photocopied, signed and stamped by or on behalf of the Principal and returned to the Principal of the Sending School. We will retain the original copy. When a child transfers from Gortskehy NS, the receiving school must inform our school by way of written notification that the child has enrolled. This information is then recorded in Register as per Education Act 2000. A Student Transfer Form may be requested by the Receiving School. This form will be completed by the class teacher, signed and stamped by or on the behalf the Principal and returned to the Principal of the Receiving School. (Student Transfer Form is available on Google Drive).

### **School Strategies**

Gortskehy NS may put the following strategies in place to foster an appreciation of good attendance:

- Emphasise importance of good attendance and punctuality on enrolment at the beginning of each term through the school newsletter and to those who the class teachers feel need reminders.
- A school based incentive programme for example "Best Class Attendance" - reward for the three classes with the best attendance at the end of year.
- Improved attendance may be recognised and rewarded.

Class teachers may decide to select strategies from the following list to encourage attendance, if necessary, for an individual pupil or for the class group

- have a "fun" subject every day ·
- share class jobs with children at risk of poor attendance ·
- treat on last day of month for those with full attendance ·
- home-work passes for those with full attendance for the month ·
- extra golden time/art/computers etc

### **Removal of a Pupil during the School Day**

#### **Aims:**

- To highlight the importance of remaining in school for a full school day
- To ensure the safety of all pupils in our school by having all visitors and parents report to the school office
- To ensure the accountability of all pupils during any emergency evacuations
- To retain a record of pupils regularly leaving school early

**Rationale:**

Pupils are expected to remain in school for a full school day. Pupils should only be removed early from school in cases of emergency or unavoidable medical appointments.

**Action:**

**1. Unavoidable medical appointments / Withdrawing a sick child from school**

If a pupil needs to leave early for an unavoidable medical appointment, a letter/note/text should be sent in beforehand from his/her parents.

If a child is sick during the school day, the teacher/principal will firstly ring the parent and if uncontactable, will ring the emergency contact number. Ensure all phone numbers are up to date.

*No child will be allowed to leave the school with any other adult other than his/her parent unless a letter has been received beforehand naming the person who is to collect the child.*

**2. Arriving late to school due to medical appointment or emergency**

Our school day begins at 8.50am. If a child has a medical, dental or unavoidable morning appointment, a note should be sent in beforehand from his/her parents.

**3. Emergencies**

The parent should ring the school en-route and explain the situation. The class teacher can then have the child collected from the class and ready to meet the parent. A record of withdrawal is recorded in the Sign In/Sign Out book by the parent.

*No child will be allowed to leave the school with any other adult other than his/her parent unless the parent themselves has been in an accident. In such cases, the child will only be released to an immediate family member known to the Principal & staff, as named as the Emergency Contact person.*

**Implementation Data:**

This policy is effective from April 2018

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_