

# Ramsgrange NS

## Title

Attendance Strategy Statement

## Introductory Statement

The policy was drafted on a principal administration day in May 2010 and all teachers were involved in the final draft. The postholder for attendance was also involved in drafting the policy.

## Rationale

It is necessary to devise an attendance strategy statement at this time as:

- There was no previous policy in place
- It is a requirement under Education Welfare Act 2000
- School needs to encourage pupils to be in attendance

## Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

We hope to provide suitable learning situations and to guide and stimulate the children in their pursuit of knowledge. We hope to adapt the curriculum where necessary to suit the children under our care and to base our lessons as far as possible on their environment and experience, so as to allow each child to progress at an appropriate pace and to achieve satisfaction and success at their own level.

## Aims

The school ideally hopes to achieve the following by introducing this statement:

- To foster an appreciation of learning
- 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
- To promote positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend school
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines form NEWB

## Content of policy

### Defining and Recording Non-Attendance

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.

Non-attendance is recorded on a daily basis in the class roll books and these are stored in the individual classroom. The post holder for attendance also keeps a daily written record of attendance and absences. The Education Welfare act obliges the parents of an absent child to notify the principal of the cause of absence not later than the third day of absence. Parents are informed at the beginning of each school year of this requirement. Parents are expected to inform the school of the reason for absence, to be signed and dated by the parents.

*Notes or record of non attendance will be kept in the school as per the record keeping policy.*

*Schools must report certain non attendance matters to NEWB (i.e. pupils absent for 20 days or more or where a principal is concerned about a pupil's attendance)*

Class teachers will communicate the non-attendance of pupils and the effects that it has on pupil learning to parents through the parent teacher meetings, a phone call or informal meetings with the parent.

In the event of half-day absences notes of explanation are required.

*The Education Welfare Act 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.*

## Whole school strategies to promote attendance:

- **Environment:** The school strives to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents.
- **Early intervention:** New parents/guardians are informed of procedures in relation to attendance, the importance of attendance and the requirements in relation to the NEWB.
- **Homework:** What sanctions do we impose for non-completion of homework? Might this cause pupils to miss school? Do they have to “make up” for homework missed???????
- **Uniform:** If a child arrived to school without a uniform/complete uniform, a note of explanation is required.
- **Rewards:** Improved, good or full attendance will be rewarded at the end of each year.
- **Equality of Participation:** The school charges for swimming, which takes place during the second term of the school year. Parents are given adequate time to source the required funding for same. The same applies to the school tour.
- **Reports:** The school reports the total amount of days missed in a year to parents in the end of year reports and at parent teacher meetings. In serious cases of absence this figure is given in proportion to the school year as a whole.
- **Curriculum:** The school stimulating learning environments and differentiation takes place to cater for pupils of all levels of ability.
- **Parents:** The school will communicate the requirements of schools and of parents under the Education Welfare Act to parents on enrolment by issuing new parents as copy of ‘*Don’t Let Your Child Miss Out*’ (leaflet for parents NEWB, 2004)

## Communication with other schools/other providers

Good communication exists between other local primary schools and the local post primary school.

Information will be shared on a need to know basis with other schools. (refer to record keeping policy)

The school has links with the local GAA club.

The local Educational Welfare Officer is Sheila Clarke. Meetings may be organised with her if necessary.

## Strategies in event of non-attendance

*The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended for 6 days or more or expelled, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register.*

Parents are made aware of the schools duties outlined in the Education Welfare Act in relation to reporting the non-attendance of a child to the Education Welfare Officer.

If the parent refuses to explain the reason for the absence, this will be recorded as an unexplained absence.

The non-attendance of a pupil is communicated informally to the principal.

When the school needs to communicate to the parent that the non-attendance of their child in the school is a case of concern, the parent will be contacted by phone or a face to face meeting organised.

The secretary and deputy principal have responsibility for communicating the non-attendance of a child to the NEWB.

Opportunities will be provided to support the child to “catch up” on work missed.

## Procedures in relation to the Removal from Register/Transfer from another school

*A principal may only remove a pupil’s name from a 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.*

The principal or deputy principal will inform the Education Welfare Officer in any of the following circumstances:

- intended expulsion of the child,
- notification from another school that the child has been enrolled in that school,
- notification by the Education Welfare Officer that the child is in receipt of education outside of the regular school system (e.g. home) or
- has enrolled in a special school.

Transfer to another school: Where parents remove a child from a school the principal is obliged to give them and the new school a certificate stating child's record of attendance and absences in the school, the last class the child attended, and any other relevant information pertaining to the education of the child.

Transfer from another school: *The principal of the current school must notify the principal of the child's last school attended that the child is now registered in their school "as soon as may be". 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.*

## Annual Report

The board of management will inform the Education Welfare Officer and Parents Association of the level of attendance at the school for each school year. This will be done "*within six weeks of the end of the school year*".

A letter giving an overview of attendance levels for the year will be provided.

A postholder has been assigned to complete the Annual Report form for NEWB. This is completed on-line with assistance from the school secretary.

## Success Criteria

Some practical indicators of the success of the strategies in the statement are:

- Good attendance levels – as based on school rolls, registers etc
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils
- Reduced reporting to the NEWB

The postholder for attendance is responsible for reporting to staff at staff meetings on attendance and the teaching staff will evaluate its success at the end of each school year.

## Roles and Responsibility

The class teachers will coordinate and monitor the implementation of the strategies in this statement. The class teacher also encourages good school attendance.

The principal will oversee the attendance levels in the school and may speak with parents regarding concerns about non-attendance.

Parents are obliged by law to ensure regular attendance at school and to officially inform the school regarding any absences.

## Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented from September 2010.

## Timetable for Review

The policy will be reviewed in the school year 2014/2015 or if necessary amended in advance of this.