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| **St Ibars NS.**  **Castlebridge,**  **Co. Wexford.**  **Tel: 053 9159442**  **Fax: 053 9159442**  **Website:** www.castlebridgens.ie  **E-mail:** castlebridgens@gmail.com | Logo | **Scoil Naomh Iobhar.**  **Castlebridge,**  **Co. Wexford.**  **Eugene Byrne.**  **(Chairperson of Board)**  **Edward Lyons (Principal)** |

**Policy on Attendance**

**Introduction**

This policy document was drawn up:

* To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians drew up this Policy on Attendance. We in Scoil Naomh Iobhar aim to provide a safe, positive and inclusive environment for all our pupils in which regular attendance is an agreed priority.

**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**

Scoil Naomh Iobhar 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. This policy complements the school ethos which is on display in the school and which aims to provide a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

* **Aims and Objectives:**

**This policy aims to :**

* Raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
* Identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
* Promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
* Ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
* Enable learning opportunities to be availed of
* Ensure pupils at risk are supported through interventions
* Ensure the families of pupils at risk are informed and supported

**Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance**

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) on a daily basis. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book). The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register), together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil’s Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents’ Names and Parents’ Occupations).

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 in the Leabhar Rolla. The roll call is taken before 10.30am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. 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. Parents/guardians must also sign a child out if a child departs early during the school day.

Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher, a pattern of such behaviour will be notified to the Principal.

Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school’s concerns.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, 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.

**Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance**

Scoil Naomh Iobhar, endeavour 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.

Scoil Naomh Iobhar school’s homework policy, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, clearly outlines the school’s expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.

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.

Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch.

The Principal,(Mr Edward Lyons) and the Deputy Principal (Mrs AnnMarie Hearne), examine the annual attendance of the pupils in St Ibars. Mrs Hearne and the Eugene Byrne award certificates to pupils who have full attendance during the school year. In his role as Chairperson of the Board he visits the school annually to present the certificates. Certificates are also available to pupils who improve their attendance over a short period of time, and to pupils who improve their overall attendance.

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school’s policy on Equal

Opportunity and Gender Equity.

**Promoting Good Attendance.**

The school promotes good attendance by the following:

1. Creating a safe and welcoming environment for pupils.

2. Parents are made aware of the importance of regular attendance to enable the child’s uninterrupted progress at the beginning of year meeting and regularly through newsletters during the year.

3. The school produces a newsletter each term to keep parents updated on all that is happening in the school.

4. Castlebridge NS has a very child friendly website which celebrates all the achievements of its pupils.

5. Parents are informed of the NEWB rule of 20 days compulsory notification at the beginning of school year letter. All absences of more than 20 days notified to NEWB –and to parents.

6. In school promotion of attendance through awarding attendance certificates at the end of each school year.

7. The Principal in co-operation with the staff awards end of week student of the week certificates. Further the Principal rewards the class of the week.

8. Attendance filled in for each child in end of year report-for parents information.

9. Developing, implementing, evaluating and reviewing targets and actions on attendance on an annual basis.

10. Home school links positively encouraged by the whole school community. Regular updates on textaparent re school events, school closures etc.

11. The inclusion of a large body of the childrens’ work in the Castlebridge Show.

12. The creation and maintenance of a vegetable garden within the school grounds.

13. The organisation of school tours for all the classes in St Ibars.

14. The attendance at plays, [age appropriate] exhibitions, education programmes etc, eg Classes in St Ibars regularly avail of the education programmes available at the Wexford Wildfowl Reserve.

15. Including students in projects such as:

* Credit Union quizzes.
* Bree Sports.
* School plays.
* Rackard League,[hurling, girls and boys football, camogie and boys and girls rounders].
* Mini-sevens.
* School sports day with barbecue organised by parents.
* GAA coaching and Tag rugby.
* Sprocket Rocket Cycling Safety Course.
* Library visits.
* Term masses organised by the 6th class teachers with the active participation of the student body.
* School choir.
* Fis –Film Project
* Swimming lessons.
* The promotion of a minder system where 6th class assist with infants at playtime.
* Green Schools.
* Participation in Co Council projects .
* Workshops in dance etc.
* Annual Fancy Dress walk at Halloween.
* The school organises several charitable fundraisers during the year. In the 2010-2011 year we had one local {St Vincent de Paul}, two national {Daffodil day and the Irish Wheel chair association}, one international {Goal Jersey Day}. The children are all encouraged to take part in these fundraisers and made aware of their positive impact.
* Parents Council organise Cheerios Breakfast Morning and an annual visit from Santa Claus.
* Visits by external visitors eg, Lecture by MD of Microsoft Ireland re internet –mobile phone safety in March 2011.
* A 2pm - 3pm club operates in the school. Further we operate a Homework club between 3pm -4pm Monday – Thursday to facilitate those having problems completing homework.

**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 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 on 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 five times 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.

**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
* 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.

**Implementation**

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents’ Association.

**Ratification and Review**

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management during the last term of 2010-2011

It was ratified by the Board of Management on Date: 14th of September 2011

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, BoM

The policy was communicated to the Parent Association on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, PA

**Review Date:** 14th of September 2014