

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY



Scoil Mhuire, Ballyboden, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

Opening Statement

The Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Ballyboden believes that regular attendance at school is most important if a child is to achieve his/her full educational potential. Poor attendance, even an odd day here and there can mean that a child can fall behind in learning, feel left out of what is happening in the classroom and around the school and can limit the development of positive social relationships and friendships at school.

The Board therefore brings this policy to the attention of staff members and to all members of our school community.

The aims of this attendance policy in Scoil Mhuire, Ballyboden are to:

1. encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
2. share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
3. inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Welfare Act.
4. identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
5. ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
6. develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
7. identify and remove, insofar as is possible and practical any obstacles to school attendance.

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - The Education Welfare Board
 - The Education Welfare Officer
 - The Board of Management

Punctuality

School is open from 8:50 a.m. and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9:00 a.m. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being absent or consistently late. The Principal is obliged under The Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Guidance for Parents

Section [(21) (9)] of the Act states that: “a pupil’s absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. The school principal cannot authorise a child’s absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for pupils’ absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. To facilitate this, such communications should not be in the homework diary, but on a separate page or sheet of paper. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child’s name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child’s absence is not received by the school.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- Notifying the School if their children cannot attend for any reason
- Working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems
- Making sure their children understand that parents support approve of school attendance
- Discussing planned absences with the school
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- Showing an interest in their children’s school day and their children’s homework
- Encouraging them to participate in school activities
- Praising and encouraging their children’s achievements
- Instilling in their children, a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children’s appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters
- Notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher

Pupils can contribute to ensuring good school attendance

- Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
- Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
- Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

Our strategy for promoting good school attendance

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The school will have a positive and welcoming attitude towards our pupils, their parents and guardians.
- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school will provide an educational experience which will acknowledge and reward progress as much as achievement.
- The school will promote development of positive self-concept and self-esteem in the children.
- The Board will support in as far as is possible ensure that supports for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Skills' guidelines.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- A special reward system operates through our **Dfl** system for promoting and rewarding good attendance at school.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilized.
- The support of the School Completion Programme will be utilized to support school attendance.
- The support of the HSCL teacher will be utilized to support families with school attendance.
- The school will provide for breakfast clubs and school lunches for children and who might otherwise not have breakfast or food during the day.
- The school will assist in the provision of school books and uniforms for children whose families may not be able to provide them so that this will not be an impediment to attendance.
- The school will provide for after school activities such as sport and drama to help foster a positive attitude to school and school attendance.
- The school will provide for opportunities to show case skills and talent through performances and displays to help foster a positive attitude to school and school attendance.
- The school will celebrate achievement at school assemblies to help foster a positive attitude to school and school attendance.
- The school will celebrate key events and festivals in school year in a fun way to help foster a positive attitude to school and school attendance.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- The attendance rates of pupils will also be monitored closely by the school's attendance officer employed through the School Completion Programme.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform parents when their child has missed 15 days in a school year and of the obligation to inform the Education Welfare Board if any child is absent for 20 days or more in a school year.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
 1. If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 2. When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 3. If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 4. When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer to communicate concerns regarding a pupil's attendance.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with proper procedure.
- Keep a written record of pupils' explained and unexplained absences.
- Provide our attendance officer with the names of absent children so that he/she may contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
- Operate a reward system through our system of **DfL** for pupils with exceptional attendance.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer will:

- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Provide the principal with the names of children who are approaching twenty absences during the school year.
- Contact the parents/guardians of children absent without explanation by phone.
- Maintain a record of phone calls/contact made to parents/guardians of absent children.

Record keeping / Communication

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed.

Review

The policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of experience. It will be reviewed by the full staff and Board of Management at least every five years. Any staff member, board member, parent, guardian or student who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Next review of this policy will occur as stated below.

Publication

This policy will be made available to parents / guardians at the time of application for enrolment and by request at any time from the office. This policy will be available on the school's website for public access and on the schools' intranet in the public section of the server for staff members to access.

Drawn up by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire, Ballyboden.

Ratified by Board of Management on: _____

Date: 3rd March 2021

The board undertakes to review this policy again before the end of December 2022

On behalf of the Board of Management

Signed:

Chairperson, Board of Management
Fr. John Hughes, OSA

Principal,
Mr. Owen McLoughlin