



Mary Mother of Hope J.N.S.

Procedures for dealing with Absences from School in accordance with the Education Welfare Act.

The Education Welfare Act

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act, schools are obliged to:

- Maintain a record of students attending school
- Record school attendance and notify the relevant Educational Welfare Officer of particular problems relating to attendance
- Support students with difficulties in attending school on a regular basis
- Prepare and implement a school attendance strategy to encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school
- Prepare and implement a code of behaviour, setting standards of behaviour and disciplinary procedures for the school.
- Liaise with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues

School guidelines for Serious Absences

- Each class teacher has a responsibility to monitor the attendance of the children in their care.
- While marking the Rolla, teachers should be aware of emerging patterns in relation to poor attendance.
- Where teachers see a pattern of poor attendance emerging, they should bring this to the attention of parents at an early stage : poor attendance patterns are more easily changed if attention is drawn to them at an early stage.
- The Educational Welfare Act requires schools to notify the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) of pupils who have been absent for 20 days and who are aged over 6 years of age.

- However, in this school, we will be monitoring the attendance patterns of children from when they start school in Junior Infants, and we will inform the NEWB of such absences, in order to seek to address the matter and deal with it as early as possible in the child's school career.

Procedures for Ongoing Monitoring of Attendance

Ms. Gallagher has, under the terms of her Special Duties Post, undertaken to monitor school attendance and policy development in this area. She will be available to support, advise and remind staff on an ongoing basis of how these procedures are being implemented.

- On a monthly basis, she will circulate an Attendance Record Sheet to each class teacher.
- On this sheet, the class teacher records the total number of absences for each child for that month.
- The cumulative figure is then provided for each subsequent month.

Letters will be sent home, drawing parents' attention to poor attendance :

- After 10 days absence

What to do when a child reaches 10 days absence

- It is school policy that when a child has been absent for **10 days** the class teacher writes to his/her parents notifying them of the absence
- A sample letter is attached.

What to do when a child reaches 20 days absence

- When a child has been absent for **20 days** we notify the NEWB. The School has no discretion over handing this information on to the Welfare Board, regardless of the reason for absence.
- However, the NEWB will take account of absences due to illness, bereavement or other such circumstances
- There are four periods during the year when we are obliged to report information to the NEWB. Class teachers will be responsible for providing information on these absences. Additionally, the NEWB request an Annual Report at the end of each school year.

Keeping records of Absences

- 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.
- Teachers should keep these notes, Medical Certificates and other explanations for student absences in the green Attendance folder for inspection by the Educational Welfare Officer.
- If a child misses school and a written explanation is not sent in, the class teacher must send home a letter requesting this. These letters are to be found in the green Attendance folder.

Need for regular review of Attendance patterns

As already stated, there is a need for regular review of school attendance in each class. The primary responsibility for this lies with the class teacher. Teachers should therefore actively review the attendance patterns of all children in their care.

The school will continue to encourage school attendance, by celebrating pupils with full attendance each month, and by acknowledging excellent attendance at the end of the school year.