SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was formulated in order to promote and encourage good attendance and to recognise children at risk of poor attendance and to intervene early. To this end the following were taken into consideration

 The Education Act 1998.

 The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

 The role of the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB).

 Circulars and guidance from the Department of Education and Skills.

The aims of the attendance policy in Gaelscoil Uí Choimín 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.
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 practicable, 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 Services (EWS), Child and Family Agency.
* The Education Welfare Officer
* The Board of Management

**Punctuality**

School is open from 9:05 a.m. and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9:15 a.m. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under The Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Services.

**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. Parents are also encouraged to ring or email to inform the school of absences. Parents are obliged to provide a reason for absences on Aladdin or provide a written explanation when their child is absent. For frequent absences, especially due to illness, a doctor’s cert will be required. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The HSCL 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, HSCL and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems;
1. Making sure their children understand that parents support and approve of school attendance;
2. Discussing planned absences with the school and the HSCL.
3. Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
4. Showing an interest in their children’s school day and their children’s homework.
5. Encouraging them to participate in school activities.
6. Praising and encouraging their children’s achievements.
7. Instilling in their children, a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
8. Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
9. Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children’s appointments (with dentists, etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
10. Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
11. 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**

* 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 correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

# A 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 curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
* The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
* Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
* Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
* The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
* The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance through daily recording of the roll on Aladdin, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child. The HSCL will monitor patterns of attendance to identify pupils who are at risk of developing school attendance problems.
* Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance. The HSCL will make contact with parents of target children and children with a pattern of absenteeism when the child is out.

# School Principal

The School Principal will:

* Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
* Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
* If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
* When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
* If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
* When a pupil’s name is removed from the school register.
* Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
* Inform parents regularly of absence records for their child.
* Notification to parents (after 10 days absence)
* Notification to parents (after 15 days absence) in compliance with the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency
* Notification to parents (after 17 days absence)
* Notification to parents (after 20 days absence)
* Notification to parents, irrespective of reasons, when the child has been absent for 20 days to inform them that they will/have been included in the annual NEWB report for the school.
* Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff

### Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

* Note absences for entry in Aladdin.
* Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
* Contact parents, in instances, where absences are not explained.
* Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
* Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

**HSCL**

The HSCL co-ordinator will

* Monitor attendance to identify patterns and pupils at risk of developing school attendance problems.
* Make contact with the parents of target children.
* Visit the homes of prioritized children to liaise with the family and support the family with attendance issues and help them with improving attendance.
* Make contact with parents to get reasons for unexplained absences.
* Arrange prevention meetings in September with parents of pupils with 20+ days absence in the previous year

**Record/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.

**Ratified by Board of Management:** 15/02/2023

**Signed:** Máire Uí Fhloinn

(Chairperson, Board of Management**)**