

Attendance Policy 2016



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OUR ETHOS

The Central Model Infants' School is a co-educational school, under the patronage of the Minister of Education. The Central Model Infants' School is an inclusive, child centred Learning Community. Respectful relationships are fundamental to us. We achieve excellence through high expectations, teamwork and shared leadership. We aim to nourish and develop each child's sense of their own self-worth as an individual and celebrate their unique gifts and talents.

Rationale

We have devised this policy to meet our obligations under Education Welfare Act 2000. We have reviewed this policy in relation to the '[Children First' Child Protection Guidelines 2011](#). It will assist all members of the school community to deal effectively with any attendance issues that may arise.






'Neglect can be defined in terms of an omission, where the child suffers significant harm or impairment of development by being deprived of food, clothing, warmth, hygiene, intellectual stimulation, supervision and safety, attachment from adults, and/or medical care.' (Children First, page 8 2. 2.21).

'Neglect generally becomes apparent in different ways over a period of time rather than at one specific point..... A child who consistently misses school may be being deprived of intellectual stimulation.'

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

We are an infants' school with 194 pupils, aged 4-8 years. There are 17 teachers [including the Principal. We also have a shared Home School Liaison Teacher, (HSCL) Anne Marie Connolly and one shared Support Teacher Bridget Kildee. We get to know each child and their family very well and are, therefore, in a position to move and act swiftly to prevent poor attendance becoming a lifelong habit.

Policy Aims

-  To raise awareness among parents, families, pupils and staff of the importance of good attendance, and so reduce pupil absences.
-  To maximise attendance so that every child can achieve their learning potential.
-  To put in place clear procedures for all to follow if an issue of poor attendance arises.
-  To identify potential early school leavers and try to prevent patterns of poor attendance developing as early as possible in the child's school life.
-  To comply with the requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Child Protection Guidelines 2011.

Fostering Strong Attendance

- ✚ We believe that it is the responsibility of parents, as the primary educators, to ensure their children attend school as regularly as possible. The school will do its best to help parents with this duty.
- ✚ We welcome all parents into our school to take part in their child's education. It is good for the child to see that the school can be a meaningful part of family life.
- ✚ We encourage and reward children's efforts as much as we can so that school is a fulfilling experience.
- ✚ We monitor all children's social/ emotional well-being and learning through weekly care-team meetings. Poor attendance is discussed here and actions to be taken are agreed and recorded. The involvement of the HSCL, Principal, Support teacher, Class teacher and sometimes other staff helps to keep us focused on any attendance issues there may be and ensures follow-up. Regular review meetings are held.
- ✚ Weekly assemblies are held where individual children are chosen to be "Pupil of the Week" from each class. Good or improved attendance is regularly highlighted and praised.
- ✚ At the end of each month there is a reward (Trophy, popcorn and a movie) for the class year group with the best attendance for that month. Parents of the winning classes are invited to that assembly to see the class receive their trophy
- ✚ Children who have achieved full attendance (from the winning class) during that month will be highlighted and receive a certificate.
- ✚ At the end of the school year the NEWB Award Certificates and small prizes are presented by our Education Welfare Officer to children with full and improved attendance.

We aim to make school as attractive as possible through the following activities:-

- ✚ The After School Explorers Club (funded by the School Completion Programme) identifies children who may be poor attenders to join the weekly club. We engage the children in fun educational activities after school.
- ✚ The Be Active initiative, children and their parents participate in fun sporting activities.
- ✚ Trips in the locality to foster the children's love of nature, art, music theatre etc.,
- ✚ Cultural events within /outside of school.
- ✚ Various HSCL initiatives ie:-Kidstalk, Maths for Fun, Art Projects etc.
- ✚ Children are referred to the NYP (Neighbourhood Youth Project), CASPR (Community After-school Programme), Osmond House and the Belvedere Youth Club.
- ✚ The school also liaises with local statutory and voluntary agencies in the children's interests.

While we expect children to wear their uniform and have their homework done we never want them to miss school because of worry or fear so teachers should be calm and fair in dealing with these issues.

Procedures for Dealing with Non-Attendance

- ✚ The class teacher notes from the daily roll call that a child is often absent without explanation.
- ✚ The Class teacher asks Parents/Guardians for verbal or written explanations for any absences.
- ✚ She/He discusses this with the child's parent/guardian. At this stage we offer whatever support we can to improve the situation.

If there is no improvement in attendance the issue may be will be discussed at the weekly Care Team Meeting. The HSCL may pay a home visit to offer support to the family.

The Class teacher will bring this to the attention of Margaret Healy, the Post Holder responsible for Attendance and she will monitor this and bring it to the attention of the Principal Catherine Groves, the Home School Liaison Anne Marie Connolly and the designated person from the Education Welfare Board at their monthly meetings.

- ✚ If the poor attendance continues the concerned teacher informs Margaret Healy who in turn informs the Principal.
- ✚ Teachers should send a note to the office as early as possible in the day informing the Principal that a child of concern is absent. The Principal may decide to phone the child's parents/guardian to inquire about the non-attendance of a pupil.
- ✚ If the child has missed 12 days or more a letter from the school will be sent home to inform the parents of how many days their children have missed.
- ✚ Once the Principal has met parents in relation to poor attendance she will monitor the child's attendance through regular visits to the classroom. This will be an opportunity to praise improvement and raise awareness of how seriously we value every child's attendance.
- ✚ If a pupil reaches 20 days of absence the school will write to the Parents/Guardians informing them that we have notified The NEWB National Education Welfare Board of this.
- ✚ At this stage an E.W.O (Education Welfare Officer) will contact the child's parents/guardians to work on improving attendance.
- ✚ Legal action may be taken, if the above steps fail, by the NEWB under section 21 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, to safeguard the child's right to education.

Success Criteria

- ✚ Our pupils' attendance will improve.
- ✚ All children, parents and staff will be aware of the critical importance of good school attendance now and in the child's future.
- ✚ All staff will know the procedures and their own responsibilities in relation to the children's attendance.
- ✚ We will reduce the rate of early school leaving among the most vulnerable children in our care.

Implementation

This Attendance Policy has been implemented from September 2011 and will be regularly reviewed by the staff and Board of Management to ensure it meets the needs of the school community.

Timetable for Review

We will review this policy in _____ unless there is a particular reason to do so before then.

Ratification and Communication

This policy will be included in the enrolment pack for new pupils with the Code of Behaviour and posted up on the School Website. Parents will be asked to read it with our Code of Behaviour and sign their support for it. Parents will also be given the NEWB leaflet "Don't let your child miss out", which is available in several languages.

This Attendance Policy was ratified by the Board of Management:-

On:- _____

Signed: _____ Chairperson – Board of Management.
