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**St Michael’s NS,**

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**A81 EA37.**

***Principal: Ms F Whelan***

***Vice Principal: Mrs R Campbell***

**Attendance Policy**

**Introduction**

The staff of St Michael’s National School identify the importance of regular school attendance for the intellectual, social, emotional and physical well-being of all pupils, and simultaneously understand the negative impact of non-attendance. The staff therefore feel it is fundamental

* To encourage, promote and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.
* To identify effective strategies for use, to encourage attendance.
* To identify procedures to follow in instances of regular non- attendance

**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’ educational and social development.
* The Board of Management acknowledge the fact that pupils who are frequently absent, find it hard to maintain relationships and to attain their full potential.
* The Board of Management and Staff acknowledge the fact that Covid 19 had a negative impact on student’s educational experience and that some students may struggle to re-establish the routines and norms of school life.

The policy was established as a collaborative process, involving staff and the BOM, consultation with DES and the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency. It was presented to the Board of Management for ratification in October 2022.

**Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

St. Michael’s National School 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.

**Aims**

* + To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.
  + To foster an appreciation of learning.
  + To promote positive attitudes to learning
  + To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
* To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early.
* To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend school.
* To identify obstacles to school attendance an
* d remove where possible.
* To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
* To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
* To ensure all absences are explained by way of a note/ phone call by parents and logged on the school Aladdin system by staff.

**Content**

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

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded using the Aladdin, online roll system. 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 using the Aladdin system. The roll call is taken each morning, and must be complete by 10.30 am. Any pupil absent at this time will be marked absent for the day. Any student who arrives between 9.30 and 10.30, will be marked as late. 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. Reasons for absence will also be recorded on the Aladdin system. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child is to depart early during the school day.

Late arrivals and early departures will be recorded by the class teacher on the Aladdin system.

Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Any concerns regarding attendance may be discussed with parents during Parent/Teacher meetings or at any other prior scheduled meeting.

Concerns over children regularly arriving late, or leaving early, will also be addressed with parents at a meeting, or in advance of this if it is causing un-necessary distraction to teaching time. This will also impact directly on a child’s progress and is deemed as problematic as regular non-attendance.

The school must inform the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency 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**

At St. Michael’s National School, we endeavour to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. We strive to encourage and promote high levels of co-operation among all members of the school community. The teaching staff collaborate in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

Parents of new entrants are invited to attend an Enrolment Evening, 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. For pupils joining our school during the school year, a meeting with the class teacher, principal and parents will take place and during this time attendance will be discussed in detail.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June. Parents are reminded of school closures/ holidays will be issued throughout the school year via notes and text messages. Parents are asked to try plan family events/ holidays around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance during the school term.

**Communication**

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

Parent/teacher communication is encouraged at all times.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

**Parental Strategies to Promote Attendance**

* Encourage and promote the importance of school attendance.
* Show interest in their child’s school day, ask how school was, what they learned etc.
* Praise and encourage all achievements.
* Assist with homework and sign their homework journal nightly.
* Notify the school in writing if their child has been absent/ will be absent.
* Avoid taking holidays during the school term.
* Where possible, organise appointments for outside school hours.

**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 Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency 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 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. This information will be communicated to the school community through the school’s newsletter.

**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 can then remove that child from the school roll system.

**Success Criteria**

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

* An increase in annual attendance rates
* Parental Feedback
* 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. The principal is responsible for informing parents of their obligations at the start of the academic year. She is also responsible for reporting 20 days absence to the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency.

Class teachers are responsible for calling the roll, recording late arrivals/ early departures/ full day absence and reasons for absence on Aladdin.

The secretary is responsible for maintaining the Leabhar Tinrimh and all registers and having them readily available for inspectors upon request.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in October 2022. It will be implemented with immediate effect.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson

Date: October 2022