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Scoil Réalt na Mara,
Kilmore,
Co. Wexford.
Rev. Denis Doyle, PP.
(Chairperson of Board)
Yvonne Miller (Acting Principal)

Attendance Policy

Introduction and Rationale:

The drafting of this policy was a collaborative process involving Staff, Board of Management, and a parents group. We in Scoil Réalt na Mara aim to provide a safe, positive and inclusive environment for all our pupils in which regular attendance is an agreed priority.

Aims and Objectives:

This policy aims to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Identify pupils at risk
- Ensure pupils at risk are supported through interventions
- Ensure the families of pupils at risk are informed and supported
- Promote a positive learning environment
- Enable learning opportunities to be availed of
- Foster an appreciation of learning

Compliance with School Ethos:

This policy complements the school ethos of ‘recognising my worth and realising my potential’, in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual records of attendance, and the school secretarial staff and the principal make returns to NEWB (National Educational Welfare Board). The Principal and the Home School Community Liaison teacher (HSCL) analyse these returns to identify students at risk, in consultation with the class teachers. The Deputy Principal has responsibility for monitoring the Leabhair Tinreamh, and rewarding good attendance.

Recording:

All children attending and data on parents are recorded in the School Clár Leabhar. Individual school attendance is recorded in the Leabhair Rolla of each class, transferred to roll sheets and the information collated on a monthly basis in the office by the Secretary. This data is reviewed and analysed by the Principal and the HSCL. The class data is recorded in the Leabhair Tinreamh.

A note from parents/guardians is required to cover each absence and these are dated and kept in the roll books and transferred to the office in June. Blank notes are available for use in the homework diaries, and the parents of the infant classes are given blank forms at the beginning of the year. Parents are made aware of the requirements of the NEWB, particularly the bye law relating to compulsory notification of absences of more than 20 days per school year. When a child is absent without an explanatory note he/she is marked as “unexplained absence”.

Promoting Good Attendance:

The school promotes good attendance by the following:

1. Creating a safe and welcoming environment for pupils
2. Parents are made aware of the importance of regular attendance to enable the child's uninterrupted progress at the beginning of year meeting and regularly through newsletters during the year.
3. Parents are given a school calendar for the year in September with school holidays clearly marked and asked to consider this when planning holidays etc.
4. Parents of new children coming in September are given a copy of 'Don't let your child miss out'.
5. Parents are informed of NEWB rule of 20 days compulsory notification at the beginning of school year meeting.
6. In-school promotion of attendance through awarding attendance certificates at the end of each term.
7. All information for parents relating to attendance is included in the insert of the child's homework diary.
8. Developing, implementing, evaluating and reviewing DEIS targets and actions on attendance on an annual basis
9. Attendance filled in for each child in end of year report – for parents information
10. All absences of more than 20 days notified to NEWB – and to parents.
11. Including students in projects such as:
 - Stretch and Grow.
 - Participation in Co. Council projects e.g. Singfest, Art Alongside.
 - Credit Union quizzes.
 - Bree Sports.
 - Community games.
 - Rackard league.
 - Mini-sevens.
 - GAA coaching and Tag Rugby.

Risk students

Staff remain vigilant so that risk students are identified early. In the first month of the school year any student who misses more than 5 days in a 20 day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians is identified as a risk student. During the school year staff look out for patterns of non-attendance such as repeated absences on Mondays or Fridays, after long weekends, on particular days such as PE days, school tours etc. Throughout the school year, the NEWB list of students who have missed 20 days or more is analysed. When any of these risk events are identified, contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians either via a letter or a phone call. A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up or the Home School Liaison Officer may visit the family. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer. A child may be referred to the school care team and/or social services if deemed necessary. Teachers are asked to be vigilant so that risks to good attendance, such as disadvantage, bullying etc, are identified early.

Additional strategies to encourage risk students:

There is an awareness among staff that absences are often beyond the control of the child and the pupil is treated with understanding and respect at all times. The following programmes are in place through School Completion Programme to encourage good attendance of risk students.

- Homework club
- Music lessons
- Social skills classes
- Transition programme in 6th class
- Rainbows
- Headstart programme

Communication with other Schools:

- When a child transfers from Kilmore National School to another school, the schools records on attendance will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers into Kilmore National School confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought.

National Education Welfare Board:

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child has missed more than 20 days

The NEWB is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed by the secretary.

Evaluation:

The success of this Attendance policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels
- Using baseline figures from previous years
- Measuring progress to DEIS targets annually
- Identifying lessons learned for future planning and development
- Positive parental feedback

Implementation/Ratification and Review:

This policy will be reviewed in two years.

References:

Don't let your Child Miss Out – NEWB 2004
Education Welfare Act 2000
Section 29 Education Act

Signed: _____

Date: _____