



Our Lady of Good Counsel BNS Attendance and Absence Policy

Introduction

The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in enhancing our pupils' learning.

Rationale

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

In compliance with legislation.

The **Education Welfare Act (2000)** promotes school attendance and Section 17 of the legislation states that it is a statutory obligation on parents to ensure that their child attends a recognised school. Furthermore, where a child is absent from school, the parent is required under the Act to notify the principal of the school of the reason for the child's absence. The Act states that the relevant authorities will be informed of pupils who have been absent for twenty school days or more (this includes illness, holidays outside of school holidays etc.)

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Our Lady of Good Counsel B.N.S 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 identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

Content

Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on-line using the Aladdin School Administration System. Absence returns are made every three months to the NEW. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 10.15am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. Any pupil arriving late will be marked 'late'. An electronic from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Parents/guardians must also provide written notification if a child departs early during the school day. The child must be signed out by the parent/guardian collecting them at the school office.

Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. During the year absentee levels are monitored and pupils whose non-attendance is a concern, parents are informed of the school's concerns.

Protocol:

- Teachers inform Principal in term 1 once a pupil has been absent 10 days or more. Principal will send a message on Aladdin.
- Teachers inform Principal in term 2 once a pupil has been absent for 15 days or more. Principal will send a message on Aladdin to inform parents of days absent.
- Principal will analyse each case as to whether a phone call needs to be made to the parents to discuss attendance and support needed.
- Principal will issue a letter to parents once a child has missed 20 days.
- Principal will decide on a case by case basis as to whether there is a need to request parents to ring the school to inform of an absence by 10am.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer 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

The school promotes good attendance by:

- **creating a safe and welcoming environment**
- **displaying kindness, compassion and understanding**
- **being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early**
- **implementing the Wellbeing Framework**

Our Lady of Good Counsel B.N.S. endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community. The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

New entrants and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction process, 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.

Our Lady of Good Counsel B.N.S. school's homework policy, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, clearly outlines the school's expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and posted on the school website. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and are encouraged to familiarize themselves with our Healthy Eating Policy.

It is important to note that we do not encourage students to attend school who are feeling unwell at home. This can lead to more infection in the classroom and invariably the child that is unwell is sent home during the school day.

Our Lady of Good Counsel B.N.S. awards certificates to pupils who have full attendance during the school year. The Principal presents the certificates. Certificates are also available to pupils who improve their attendance over a short period of time, and to pupils who improve their overall attendance.

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's policy on Equal Opportunity and Gender Equity.

Communication

General school attendance levels are communicated to the parent body through newsletters and in the Annual Board Report to parents. The school engages with relevant agencies in relation to children who may be at risk.

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

Each term, the school's monthly newsletter will address the importance of attendance and promote "Every School Day Counts" in conjunction with the National Attendance Strategy.

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 Education Welfare Officer 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 by the Education Board 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 during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

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 the Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school, of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

Success Criteria

