

Rationale

Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin decided to do a review of attendance as it is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school

Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin makes a vigorous effort to create a harmonious and welcoming environment so that children will want to attend school and achieve their full potential. The Gaelscoil also makes an effort to prepare the school's pupils for life by fostering respect for and valuing everyone. An ethos of co-operation is fostered among staff, parents, pupils and the Board of Management.

Aims

The school wishes to achieve the following aims:

- To raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To promote positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions is implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourages pupils to attend school
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines from NEWB

Guidelines

Under paragraph 21 of the Education and Welfare Act 2000, the school Principal will record the attendance or non-attendance, every school day, of every pupil in the school. The following information is available for every pupil who is on the School Roll:

- Attendance or non-attendance for every school day. Attendance at school means that the pupil is present when attendance is checked.
- If a pupil is suspended this is recorded as an absence in the usual way and is classified in the suspension category as appropriate.
- The reasons for not attending school

Activities that the school has organised and which have been authorised by the Principal e.g. school tours or taking part in sports activities, are recorded as attendance at school.

Non-Attendance

- Parents must send a note to the class teacher the first day a pupil returns after being absent. The class teacher keeps these notes together in an envelope in the roll book. Parents are informed of this practice when they register a child in the school. If a note is not received from a parent (or if a phone call is not received by the school office) they are requested to send a note in without delay. The principal informs the NEWB about any pupil who is absent for 20 days or more, or if he is concerned about the attendance of a child.
- If a pupil is regularly absent the class teacher, or the learning support/resource teacher as appropriate, meet with the parents to explain the effect that the non-attendance is having on the child's learning. If attendance does not improve following this meeting the Principal will meet with the parents.

Whole school strategies to promote attendance:

- **Environment:** Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin provides a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and our parents.
- As a rule if children arrive late a parent comes in to explain the reasons or sends a note in. If a pupil is regularly late the class teacher contacts the parents.
- **Early Intervention:** The Principal informs new mothers/fathers about attendance practices and about the importance of attendance at an interview before the child starts school.
- **Homework:** Sanctions are not imposed when homework is not finished. If there are problems regarding homework which is not done, the class teacher speaks to the parents to enquire about the reasons.

- **School uniform:** Parents are requested to ensure that pupils wear the school uniform and to send in a note if for some reason they are without school uniform. If a pupil is regularly without school uniform without a note the Principal sends a note out to the parents.
- **Lunches:** If a child comes to school without lunch a phone call home is made home to get lunch.
- **Assessment:** Teachers keep an eye on the pupils' attendance on days on which tests are held. If there is a pattern of absences teachers change work habits and practices.
- **Equality of Participation:** Fees are charged to take part in certain events, e.g. swimming and school tours. In the case of swimming classes the Principal asks parents to get in contact with him if they have difficulty with the charges. Sufficient time is given to pupils to get the materials necessary for the class.
- **Equality issues:** The school has a policy on equality of participation and teachers watch out for sexist/racist and other inequalities in school which contribute to the non-attendance of some pupils.
- **Reports:** We report to parents on the number of school days the child has lost at the end of the year/in the parent-teacher meetings.
- **Curriculum:** Class teachers and learning support/resource teachers consult with each other with regard to aspects of the implementation/management/teaching of the curriculum which could contribute to problems of school attendance for some pupils.
- **Timetabling:** If pupils are regularly late every effort is made to organise the timetables of individual classes to put interesting subjects on in the morning to accommodate pupils' needs.
- **Parents:** The school makes parents aware of the requirements on schools and on parents under the Education Welfare Act.
- **Learning Needs:** The Gaelscoil makes every effort to accommodate the learning needs of pupils "in danger".

Strategies for non-attendance

- Parents are aware of their legal responsibilities with regard to their children's attendance at school which are described in the Education Welfare Act.
- Parents are aware of the responsibilities of the school as described in the Education Welfare Act with regard to reporting the non-attendance of a child to the Education welfare Officer, "notice of school attendance" being served by the Education Welfare Officer (after the Education Board making every effort to engage with the parents of the child and the principal of the school) on any parent whom the Education Welfare Officer deems has failed to ensure that their child attends school or who does not insist that their child attends school, and the possible results of a successful case against a parent (a fine and/or a period in prison).

Procedures for removing a pupil from the Register/Transfer from another school

The Principal removes a pupil's name from the school register when he is informed that the child is registered in another school or when the Welfare Board informs him that the child is registered with the Board as receiving education outside of the school.

- **Transfer to another school:** When parents take their child out of the school, the Principal gives a certificate to the parents and to the new school which mentions the attendance and absences of the child in the school, the last class which the child attended and any other appropriate information relevant to the child's education.
- **Transfer from another school:** The principal of the current school must inform the principal of the school which the child had attended "as soon as possible" that the child is registered in the school.

Reporting pupil absences

Under the Act, the school is obliged to report to the NEWB in the following cases:

- When the pupil is absent for 20 days or more, cumulatively
- When the Principal is concerned about the attendance about a certain pupil
- When the school decides to exclude a pupil from the school
- When a pupil is suspended for six days or more on a cumulative basis
- When a pupil's name is taken off the school's roll for whatever reason

Categories of reports of absences

A: Illness: Report received that the pupil is ill.

- B: Family Emergencies:** If it were communicated that the absence was because of family emergencies e.g. a death in the family.
- C: Excluded:** The Board of Management expelled the pupil from the school and all internal appeal processes had been employed.
- D: Suspended:** The pupil was suspended from school
- E: Other:** Every other reason e.g. holidays, religious reasons, the pupil's death, emigration etc.
- F: Unexplained:** The parent/guardian had not given any reason for this absence/ these absences.
- G: Transferred to Another School:** The school got notice in writing from another school that the pupil has transferred to that school.

Success Criteria

The Principal will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the strategies in this statement. Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin intends that the strategies which are in this statement will have the following effect:

- Increase in the level of attendance, check rolls, registers

The following criteria are used to assess the effectiveness of this statement:

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils

Roles and Responsibilities

The following people have certain responsibilities for aspects of the statement:

- The Principal
- The Class Teachers
- The Resource, Learning Support Teachers
- Parents
- Pupils
- The Education Welfare Officer
- The Board of Management

Implementation Date

Created	October 2010 (2012)
Reviewed	April 2014
To be reviewed	April 2018

The following reviewed this policy:

- 1 Teaching Staff of Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin
- 2 The Parents Association
- 3 The Board of Management

Date:

Signature of the Chairperson of the Board of Management _____