



ST BRIGID'S GNS KILLESTER

Attendance Strategy

In St. Brigid's GNS, we value the individuality of all our children and respect their right to access all areas of learning. We work to enable them to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are necessary for their self-fulfilment and their development into active and responsible adults.

St. Brigid's GNS decided to review its attendance strategies because:

- Post Covid, attendance has become an area of concern for a greater number of students.
- It is a priority area identified by staff
- It is a requirement under Education Welfare Act 2000
- The school needs to encourage pupils to be in attendance

Aims

In St. Brigid's GNS we aim:

- To foster an appreciation of learning
- To raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of poor attendance and tailor interventions to support these children
- 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 are 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.

Strategies to encourage good attendance

Caring Environment

St. Brigid's GNS at all times, aims to ensure that children are taught in a safe, secure and caring environment where their intellectual, physical and spiritual development are catered for. We try to create a welcoming environment for pupils and parents. Teachers consistently try to encourage good attendance in their respective classrooms

Special Needs

Pupils needing support are identified as early as possible and the appropriate support systems are put into place ensuring parents are consulted and informed at each stage. We emphasise positive achievements and are invested in enhancing the self-esteem of every pupil.

Rewards

A reward system will be put into place to encourage an improvement in attendance and or punctuality for children whose attendance is poor. This reward system will be devised with the class teacher and deputy principal based on the individual needs, age and circumstances of the child. Certificates are issued for improved attendance, at Christmas, Easter and at the end of the school year

Lunches

A scheme is in place to provide all children with milk and a piece of fruit daily. Emergency breakfasts and lunches are available when required. These measures enhance the school experience for those children who might otherwise be at risk of poor attendance.

Communication

It is the policy of St. Brigid's GNS to encourage and maintain open communication between home and school and to encourage parents in their role as primary educators of their children. The Principal and teachers are available, on an appointment basis, to meet parents.

Attendance is one of the issues addressed at meetings for new parents when their child is enrolled in St. Brigid's GNS. It is also covered in the information pack given to all parents of Junior Infant children

At the beginning of each school year, teachers hold a general meeting of parents and one of the issues addressed is that of the importance of regular school attendance among a range of other topics.

Parents are made aware of the requirements of the Education Welfare Act at pre-enrollment information meetings. Each family is given a copy of the information leaflet - **Don't Let Your Child Miss Out** (Leaflet for parents NEWB 2004) This leaflet outlines:

1. The importance of regular attendance
2. Parental obligations in relation to attendance under the Education Welfare Act
3. Advice to parents on what they can do to help children attend school regularly

Parents are reminded regularly of the importance of good attendance (i.e. newsletters, parent/teacher meetings etc.)

School Records

A roll call is taken every day and should a child be absent, they are required to have an explanatory note from their parents via Aladdin Connect. This remains a record for each child throughout their duration within the school and in the years that follow. The Education and Welfare act 'obliges the parents of an absent child to notify the school of the cause of absence not later than the third day of absence'.

If poor attendance is observed, a call may be made to parents by the class teacher or school management to discuss the reasons behind the poor attendance. Following this discussion, a support plan, specific to the challenges of the individual child, can be implemented to encourage better attendance. Such interventions will be documented by the school.

Teachers will record children's punctuality on Aladdin by noting the number of minutes after 9.00am the child arrives at school. Repeated lateness will be addressed by creating a support plan with the parents, Deputy Principal and class teacher to encourage improved punctuality.

When a child has accumulated 20 days of absence, school management will send a letter to the parent, which may request a meeting with the teacher. When a child has missed 20 days, the absence is reported to the EWO for the county and to the Education Welfare Board as required by the Education Welfare Act. If the absenteeism persists, the school requests active intervention from the EWO.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16th November 2022
This policy will be updated as necessary.

Signed: *Carmel Reid*

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: *Laura Wickham*

Principal