

MOYDERWELL MERCY PRIMARY

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

Introduction

This policy document was drawn up:

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

The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians drew up this Policy on Attendance in Term 2 2011. It was reviewed in April 2014 and again in Feb 2017.

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' learning.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Moyderwell Mercy Primary 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

Class attendance data is recorded on the computerised system Databiz.

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. The roll call is taken at 10.00a.m. each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. The Sign-Out Book in the office must be used.

Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher in the teacher's Student Profile Folder/Ringbinder.

Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the child's school attendance and punctuality during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school's concerns.

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

- Moyderwell Mercy Primary, 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.
- While every effort is made to promote and expect punctuality, a child who arrives late will be welcomed by teacher. Consistent lack of punctuality will be discussed with parents and improvement sought.
- Incoming Junior Infant entrants and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction day in the month of March prior to the September start. School 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. An introduction pack is given to each incoming new family (whether incoming Junior Infants or not). Parents and Guardians are directed to the school web-site for the full Policy of Attendance.
- Moyderwell Mercy Primary school's homework policy (2012, reviewed in 2014), 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. If homework is not done, the children are expected to attend school the following day, with a note of explanation from the parent.
- The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and is available on the website throughout the year. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimizing the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term. Please retain the school calendar for reference.
- Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform. If a pupil cannot have the appropriate school, (s)he is expected to attend, with a note of explanation from parents. When continual non compliance of uniform occurs, a uniform may be given to the pupil until the issue is sorted.
- Parents/guardians send their children to school. The school will provide food for the child. If a child has no lunch parents/guardians will be directed to the school lunch order form on www.carambola.ie a free lunch scheme available to all students in Moyderwell Mercy Primary since September 2013.
- Principal with assistance from class teachers will present award certificates to pupils who have full attendance during each term. Certificates are also available to pupils who improve their attendance over a short period of time, and to pupils who improve their overall attendance.
- Individual attendance folders are used for particular children whose attendance is a concern to encourage improvement.
- School Completion Programme – Through SCP a target list of children at risk is drawn up. The Principal has responsibility for monitoring the attendance and general welfare of these children.
- Equality of participation is a central part of our philosophy of mercy education. No child should miss school or other event due to lack of money. Teachers are encouraged to be mindful of this issue if a pupil is reluctant to go somewhere or missing on a particular day.

Communication

The school has developed a good relationship with the local National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk. Our HSCL teacher works closely with Principal and staff in monitoring attendance.

The HSCL teacher works with parents in developing programmes to promote good home school relationships. These programmes aim to minimise the risks of irregular or non-attendance and to maximise the opportunities provided for parents and pupils.

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

Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

- Class Teacher liaises with parents where there is a concern over absences.

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’.

- Following standard reporting procedures a letter of concern will be issued to the parents of any child who has missed over 20 days.

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.

- HSCL will make contact with the parent and offer support.
- Parents will be invited to discuss the reason for the absences with the Principal.
- The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be contacted and a Pre-Referral Form will be submitted.
- 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 to the NEWB four 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 Board of Management.

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 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

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

- An increase in annual attendance rates
- 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.

This reviewed policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Moyderwell Mercy Primary School at its meeting held on:

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Reviewed in April 2014, February 2017,

Next Review: April 2019