



Scoil Bhríde Midleton 13910N

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Changing social habits and patterns necessitated the introduction of this school's attendance policy. The drafting was a collaborative school process involving staff, the Principal and Board of Management in June 2023 and ratified in June of the same year. This policy is directly linked to the Scoil Bhríde Midleton Code of Conduct, Child Protection and Data and Record Keeping Policies.

Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarised as follows:

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
- The role of the NEWB/TESS and reporting pupils' absences to them
- Levels of disadvantage
- Changing attitudes to education and attendance in Scoil Bhríde Midleton.

Aims and Objectives

The revised policy is geared towards:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Encouraging full attendance where possible
- Identifying pupils at risk
- Promoting a positive learning environment
- Enabling learning opportunities to be availed of
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Fostering an appreciation of learning
- Identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- Developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- Identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount to reinforce the ethos of our school. "Scoil Bhríde Midleton is an inclusive Primary School founded on the Presentation philosophy of Education and Catholic faith. We strive to proactively nurture and educate each child to her fullest potential and at every stage of her development. We believe in striking balance and we encourage the cultivation of strong relationships within the school and community."

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance on the online Aladdin System. The School Deputy Principal Juliet Murphy makes returns to NEWB/TESS. Our School Principal Mr. Séamus O'Connor has responsibility for maintaining/reporting to the relevant state body.

It is the responsibility of the Principal, Deputy Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Punctuality

School begins at 8:40am and 8:30am for Cuisle Centre pupils. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board. The Principal will instigate procedures for persistent lack of punctuality in conjunction the Scoil Bhríde Midleton Code of Conduct.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded by teachers each day on the online 'Aladdin System', together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents' Names and Parents' Occupations).

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 8:50am each morning. Any pupil not present will be digitally marked absent for the day. 'Aladdin' may not be altered once it has been filled in. *A written note* from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher/scanned on to the pupil's profile. Parents/Guardians must also provide a note if they wish for their child to depart early during the school day. These notes are dated and kept by class teachers also. All children must be signed out at reception by a parent/guardian. They must also be signed in again upon returning to Scoil Bhríde Midleton. Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher on Aladdin or in their teacher's journal.

Parents/guardians will be made aware/reminded at the start of each term by the Principal of the requirements of the NEWB particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. They are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern will be invited to meet with the Principal in order to inform them 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.

Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment
- ensuring children are happy
- displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early
- rewarding good attendance with certificates.

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/TESS is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Scoil Bhríde Midleton endeavors to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. 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.

Traditionally, the culture and issue of school attendance in our school has been challenging. However, the staff remains vigilant so that 'risk' students are identified early. Risk students can be categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in a 20-day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians either via a letter or a note in the homework diary when this occurs. A meeting between parents and the Principal/Deputy Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

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.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in early September. 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.

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. Persistent absence will result in the Principal instigating disciplinary procedures in accordance with the Scoil Bhríde Midleton Code of Conduct, for gross misconduct.

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 EWB five 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 school community through the school's email database.

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 our 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. The Principal must also record this move on the POD system. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

Communication

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Board (EWB) personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

The school works with the local youth groups, the local sports partnership and other bodies in developing programmes to promote school attendance. These programmes aim to minimise the risks of irregular or non-attendance and to maximise the opportunities provided to all 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.

Communication with other Schools

- When a child transfers from Scoil Bhríde Midleton to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer. The transfer must also be recorded on POD.
- When a child transfers into Scoil Bhríde Midleton confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from Scoil Bhríde Midleton to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Communication with Parents

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- notifying the School if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems.
- making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance;
- discussing planned absences with the school.
- refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- encouraging them to participate in school activities.
- praising and encouraging their children's achievements.
- instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
- ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
- notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Aladdin-records and statistical returns
- Happy confident well-adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2025.

Ratification

Chairperson