

PLEAN SCOILE
CASTLETOWN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

RATIONALE:

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff, parents, N.E.W.B. guidelines and Board of Management in order to a) highlight the strategies and measures in place in Castletown Primary School to foster an appreciation of learning among pupils and encourage regular attendance at school b) to comply with the National Education Welfare Board guidelines c) to meet the requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000 Section 22(1) and the Education Act 1998. It was compiled in May and June 2017.

VISION:

Castletown Primary School encourages and promotes full attendance by our pupils for the whole academic year through positive incentives for pupils and reminders to parents / guardians of the importance of same.

REWARDING OF STUDENTS WITH GOOD ATTENDANCE:

There used to be a very strong tradition of good attendance in Castletown Primary School. However, the changing social fabric of the nation is altering attitudes to school and we are anxious that parents be aware of the absolute necessity for regular punctual attendance at school.

Quite simply, children cannot learn if they are not in school.

As a school where the average overall attendance between 31st August 2016 and the 5th May 2017 was 93.3%, where three classes have an average attendance of 91% and where the class with the highest average only reaches 94.64% targeting good attendance has become an area of attention for our school. The following strategies have been put in place to help foster an appreciation of learning and good attendance:

- ✓ Presenting certificates to pupils who have full attendance at the end of each term.
- ✓ Presenting certificates and a prize (book, markers, crayons, game) to pupils who have full attendance at the end of a school year.
- ✓ Presenting certificates to pupils at the end of the school year who missed between one and five days who present a note of explanation from parent / guardian.
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- ✓ Presentation of certificates will take place at school assembly and photographs will be uploaded on the school website.

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STRATEGIES FOR MONITORING AND IMPROVING ATTENDANCE:

The following strategies will be employed to improve attendance:

- ✓ The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, will be flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- ✓ Castletown Primary School will promote development of good self-esteem and self-worth in its pupils (see Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy).
- ✓ Support for pupils who have special educational needs in accordance with DES guidelines.
- ✓ New parents / guardians are informed of procedures in relation to attendance and the importance of attendance, by the principal, on enrolment in the school. They are asked to refrain from booking foreign holidays during school term.
- ✓ Attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher, in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the deputy principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- ✓ The school will use regular notifications through the school website and web texts to promote attendance and punctuality.
- ✓ Where concerns arise, the class teacher, secretary or deputy principal monitoring attendance brings the concern to the attention of the principal.
- ✓ The principal and deputy principal assess each case individually at this point and a phone call to parent / guardian may be deemed necessary.
- ✓ The class teacher will encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually. However, pupils should not be made feel uncomfortable if they arrive late. An appointment is arranged, with parents / guardians, by class teacher when it becomes an ongoing problem.
- ✓ The class teacher will ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians (by phone) in instances where absences are not explained. A standard note in homework journal is used for informing the class teacher of reason for absence.
- ✓ The class teacher will keep a daily record of attendance in the Roll Book.
- ✓ Attendance figures are monitored by the secretary each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and by the deputy principal on Friday on Sales Plus.
- ✓ The secretary will also bring details of continued absences and patterns of absences to the attention of the class teachers, the deputy principal and the principal as necessary.
- ✓ The principal will promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
- ✓ The Principal will inform the NEWB:
 - When a pupil has been missing for twenty or more days during the course of the school year.
 - When a pupil has been suspended from school under the Code of Behaviour.
- ✓ Extra-curricular activities, such as hurling, Gaelic football, soccer, basketball, athletics and folk group will be encouraged for all pupils, specifically those at risk of non-attendance.
- ✓ Differentiated homework for pupils where class teacher and parent / guardian have identified class homework as a deterrent to attendance.

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IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE AT RISK OF DEVELOPING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS:

The following strategies may be employed to identify students at risk of developing school attendance problems:

- ✓ On transfer to Castletown Primary School, attendance records will be sought from previous schools on pupil attendance.
- ✓ Class teachers will inform the deputy principal / principal of any concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- ✓ Contact with various agencies who are involved with such students.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CLOSER CONTACTS BETWEEN THE SCHOOL AND HOME:

Closer home/school relations will be fostered through:

- ✓ Principal will attend Parents' Association's meetings if, and when invited.
- ✓ Open night in September each year to provide an opportunity for parents and class teacher to get to know each other.
- ✓ Attendance at meetings (Parent/Teacher).
- ✓ Parent Courses.
- ✓ Attendance at school events (eg Concerts, Masses, Book Launches, Book Fair, matches etc).
- ✓ Involvement in Paired Reading, Maths for Fun, etc.
- ✓ Regular correspondence to families.
- ✓ All news updates on school website and/or text message.
- ✓ Comment by class teacher on attendance in homework journal once a month to be signed by parent / guardian.

PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS:

Contact with the following bodies will be fostered and developed in order to promote the good attendance of students in Castletown Primary School:

- ✓ NEWB.
- ✓ Other schools in the vicinity.
- ✓ NEPS.
- ✓ Local GAA clubs, soccer clubs, etc.
- ✓ Community Gardaí.
- ✓ Local interest groups such as the Vincent de Paul.

ENCOURAGING FULL PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN THE LIFE OF THE SCHOOL:

In so far as is practicable, programmes will be developed with the bodies mentioned above which will encourage the full participation with students in the life of the school. Examples of these are:

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- ✓ Attendance incentive scheme.
- ✓ Counselling (behavioural, bereavement, art therapy, focusing on interactive pausing).
- ✓ Introduction to athletics, badminton, tennis, uni-hoc, spike ball, basketball and any other initiative which comes to the attention of the staff and is available in the vicinity.
- ✓ Gaelic Games and soccer are very popular among our pupils. Alternative activity stations are organised for those pupils with little or no interest in Gaelic Games.

IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IN ORDER TO IMPROVE HIS / HER ATTENDANCE:

The Board of Management, teachers and whole school community will be mindful at all times of:

- ✓ The identification of aspects of the operation and management of the school and of the teaching of the school curriculum that may contribute to problems relating to school attendance on the part of certain students.
- ✓ The identification of strategies for the removal of those aspects in so far as they are not necessary or expedient for the proper and effective running of the school having regard, in particular, to the educational needs of students.
- ✓ The identification of strategies that will encourage more regular attendance at school on the part of such students.
- ✓ The need to review this strategy into the future to accommodate the changing needs of the school and of its population.

Results of review June 2019: Overall attendance from 31 / 8 / 2018 to 5 / 5 / 2019 94.54% (a slight increase)

The highest class attendance is 96.28% (up 2%).

The lowest class attendance is 91.38% (only one class now – where there were 3 classes on this figure).

Four classes have an average attendance above 95%.

Two of the remaining four have an attendance of 94%. We will continue to work on our strategies.

Ratified: _____

Signed: William J. Hennessy
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date:

18th June '19

This policy will be reviewed every two years.