



## **Caherline N.S Attendance Strategy Statement**

### **Introduction**

This policy document was drawn up to ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils of Caherline N.S. We hope to nurture each child to develop their potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued. The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians drew up this Attendance Strategy Statement.

### **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.
- Our school needs to encourage pupils to be in attendance.
- It is a priority area identified by the parents/guardians, staff and social services.

The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning. Caherline NS endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. It seeks to provide a harmonious environment so that its pupils will reach their potential. 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. Our attendance policy has the welfare of pupils in mind.

### **Aims**

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- Foster an appreciation of learning among students
- Raise the awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development

- Ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend school
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- Comply with requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines for NEWB.
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

## **Content**

### **Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance**

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on the Aladdin System (Roll Book) of each class on a daily basis. The Leabhar Tinnreamh and Clár Leabhar (Register) will be automatically updated.

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her nonattendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 10.30a.m. each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. Pupils arriving late to school will also be noted. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence or a late arrival. Such notes will be retained by the school. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day.

Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher.

Parents/guardians are informed in writing at the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Parents of pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are to be invited to meet with the Principal/Teacher during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school's concerns.

The school will inform parents in writing once a pupil reaches 15 days of absence. 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.

A child non-attending school when the school is open for instruction due to family holiday will be recorded as absent. It is not possible for the class teacher or principal to give permission to take the child out of school for this reason.

### **Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance**

Caherline NS has in place the following whole school strategies to promote attendance:

<b>Environment:</b>	In the school as a whole and within the classroom we seek to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents.
<b>Late Arrivals:</b>	Generally pupils arrive in time. Where necessary pupils/parents are reminded of school start time.
<b>Early Intervention:</b>	New parents are informed of procedures in relation to, and the importance of, attendance.
<b>Homework:</b>	If homework is not completed, pupil must 'catch-up' at the weekend or the following night. Also maybe asked to miss their break.
<b>Uniform:</b>	If a child arrives without a uniform they are spoken to and encouraged to wear correct uniform every day.
<b>Lunches:</b>	If a child arrives at school without a lunch, they are asked to share with other family members or other pupils. Parent will be contacted on some occasions.
<b>Equality of Participation:</b>	Children are given adequate time to source materials for class (e.g. art and craft materials, swimming togs, hurleys etc.). However we are sensitive to family needs when charging for any events.
<b>Reports:</b>	Where attendance is a problem, we report the total amount of days missed in a year to parents in reports/parent teacher meetings. All teachers have a grid in their roll books. After 15 days absence teachers inform school secretary and principal. An advisory letter is sent to parents/guardians telling them that on 20 days absence the NEWB is informed.
<b>Timetabling:</b>	Sometimes the timetables are changed to place interesting subjects first thing in the morning.
<b>Parents:</b>	We communicate to the parents the requirements of our school, and of the parents, under the Education Welfare Act.
<b>Learning Needs:</b>	We endeavour to cater for the learning needs of 'at risk pupils'. We modify the curriculum on offer in relevance to them. We use 'life experiences of child and child's environment.
<b>Staff Development:</b>	All staff take part in in-service courses to stay up to date with any new developments.

Caherline NS, 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.

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 third class onwards.

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

### **Communication**

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

We communicate with other primary schools as follows:

- Meetings to discuss Special Education, e.g. clustering
- Matches (both girls and boys)
- Confirmation
- Retirement functions

We communicate with post-primary schools by:

- Teacher visits to secondary schools to give reports on each child progressing to 2<sup>nd</sup> level.
- Resource teacher visits all secondary schools where necessary.
- Day visit to our school by various local secondary schools
- Open days at secondary schools for 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils
- Limerick Youth Service operate a transition programme for all 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils who will be going to John the Baptist C/S in Hospital.

Caherline NS also have links with :

- Caherline Hurling Club
- Bruff Rugby Club
- Basketball clubs
- Athletic clubs

- Caherconlish GAA

### **Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance**

- The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register.
- Contacting parents on an informal basis when a child is absent regularly.
- Reporting sightings of children who are absent unbeknownst to parents to parents.
- Providing a range of, pre-school activities including supervision in the playground to ensure that pupils who may be reluctant to come to school do so.
- Parents are aware of their statutory duties outlined in the Education Welfare Act in relation to causing their children to attend school. (See Appendix 1: 'Don't let your child miss out' – leaflet for parents NEWB 2004). The above leaflet is sent out to all parents as necessary.
- Parents are aware of the schools duties outlined the EWA in relation to reporting the non-attendance of a child to the EWO, of the serving of a 'school attendance notice' by the EWO on any parent who they conclude is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school and of the possible consequence of a successful case being taken against the parent.
- Parents are expected to state in writing reason for non-attendance and these notes are kept on file in each child's personal folder.
- In the case of a literacy problem with a parent, a record is kept of a telephone call or personal call to the school.
- If we are concerned regarding the non-attendance of a child an appointment will be made to meet the parents.
- The non-attendance records for the school are communicated in a report which is sent out to the NEWB.
- In a case where a child has missed a lot of days, the class teacher/resource teacher will support the child to help 'catch-up'.

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.

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.

### **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 class teacher to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

### **School Principal/Deputy Principal**

The school principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer.
  - o If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
  - o When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the school year
  - o When a pupil's name is removed from the school register
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.

**Class Teacher**

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupils

**Implementation**

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management.