Attendance Policy

St. Michael’s N.S.

Castletown Geoghegan

**Attendance Policy**

**Introductory Statement**

There is a very strong tradition of regular attendance in St Michael’s N.S. However, the changing social habits and patterns necessitated the updating of the schools attendance policy. It is necessary for parents to be aware of the absolute necessity for regular, punctual attendance at school, and of fostering awareness of this among the children to promote regular attendance. This policy was formulated by the teaching staff of the school with the co-operation and assistance of the Board of Management.

**Rationale**

The Board of Management recognizes the clear and direct relationship between the regular attendance at school and the progress of the pupil. The Board also recognizes that high and regular attendance engenders a positive attitude to school and learning. The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarized as follows:

* To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupil’s learning
* Legislative requirements such as Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act 1998
* The role of the NEWB/Tulsa
* We are anxious that parents be aware of the absolute necessity for regular, punctual attendance at school.

**Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School**

To nurture each child and develop his/her potential in a caring and harmonious environment it is vital that the child attends school regularly and punctually.

**Aims and Objectives**

By the introduction, revision and implementation of this policy the school hopes:

* To raise awareness of the importance of school attendance on a regular basis.
* To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
* To promote positive attitudes to learning amongst students in the school.
* To identify and develop links with at an early stage pupils who are at risk of developing school attendance problems and pupils at risk of leaving school early.
* To encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
* To ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance.
* To identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.
* To share the promotion of regular, punctual attendance amongst all in the school community.
* To comply with, and inform all, of the roles and responsibilities required by the Education Welfare Act 2000.

**Guidelines**

**Defining and Recording Non-Attendance:**

A parent is obliged to cause a child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend at “a national school or other suitable school” on each day that the school is open for instruction; and “a pupil’s absence can only be authorized by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organized by the school or in which the school is involved.

School attendance and punctuality is the responsibility of parents and/or guardians. The school Principal cannot authorize a child’s absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements. To facilitate the noting and recording of absences and the legal requirements the following procedures operate in the school:

* All pupils’ absences must be explained by a parent/guardian either before or after in written format. This note should be dated, signed and contain a clear explanation for the pupils absence.
* If the pupil required medical attention during his/her absence a doctor’s certificate should be included.
* Notes or record of non-attendance, duly dated, will be retained by the class teacher.
* In the event of other absences/appointments e.g. half-days, medical appointments etc. parents/guardians are also expected to furnish a note to the class teacher as mentioned above. This is also a requirement of the Education Welfare Act.
* Where it is known that the child’s absence will be for an extended period e.g. seven days, the parent/guardian is expected to contact the teacher or principal.

**Punctuality**

The school gate is open from 8.45a.m. and children are required to be in their classrooms by 9.00 a.m. when school commences. 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.

**Late arrivals**

When a child is late for class he/she must approach the principal or teacher with a written or verbal explanation as to the cause of being late. Alternatively the child can be accompanied by a parent/guardian to the front door. Similar procedures apply when a parent/guardian is collecting a child early from school for some exceptional reason.

**Promoting Good School Attendance**

**Parent/Guardian:**

* Ensure their children are regular and punctual in attendance at school.
* Notify the school if their children cannot attend, are late or have to leave early.
* Work with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems.
* Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time.
* Discussing planned absences with the school
* Showing an interest in their children’s school day, work and their homework.
* Encouraging their children to participate in school activities.
* Praising and encouraging their children’s achievements.
* Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
* Ensuring, insofar as possible, that children’s appointments (dentist, doctor 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 children particularly in the junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

**Pupils:**

* Pupils have a clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
* Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
* Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
* Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

**Teacher:**

The class teacher will:

* Maintain the school roll in accordance with procedures.
* Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
* Contact parents/guardians in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
* Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
* Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
* Inform the Principal of concerns she may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

**School Principal:**

The school Principal will:

* Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
* Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
* If a pupil is not attending school regularly
* When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
* If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
* 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.
* Promote the importance of regular and punctual attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
* Check electronic roll book at the end of each term to evaluate attendance levels.
* **Education Welfare Officer:**

Support for Principal and school on issues relating to attendance of pupils. Communication with other schools/other providers:

* School records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school by post as soon as we receive written notification of transfer. This information will include a record of attendance.
* School reports of children who transfer to this school will be sought from the previous scheme.

**Procedures in relation to the Removal from Register/Transfer from another school:**

A Principal may only remove a pupil’s name from a school register where they have been informed that the child has been enrolled in another school or when the Welfare Board notifies them that the child has been registered by it as in receipt of out-of-school education.

1. Transfer to another school:

Where a child transfers to a new school, the Principal, once she/he receives notification from the new school, will forward a Certificate stating the child’s record of attendance in the school, the last class the child attended and any other relevant information pertaining to the education of the child.

1. Transfer from another school:

The Principal of this school will notify the Principal of the child’s last school attendance that the child is now registered in their school as soon as possible.

1. Other

Expulsion of the child: the Principal will contact the Education Welfare Officer where a child has been suspended or expelled from a school for 6 days or more.

**Annual Report**

The Annual Report on Attendance is returned to the National Educational Welfare Board at the end of each year by the Principal. A Copy of Report is retained on file in the office.

**Success Criteria**

The success of this Policy will be determined by:

* Increase in attendance levels
* Record of reasons/causes of absences
* Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils.

**Timetable for Review**

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

**Ratification and Communication**

This policy was communicated to and ratified by the Board of Management of St. Michael’s N.S., Castletown Geoghegan at its meeting held on ­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal Date

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management Date