

# **St. Thomas the Apostle**

## **Attendance Policy**

### **AIMS:**

- To encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- To share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- To inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- To identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- To promote attendance and participation.
- To develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- To identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

To the best of its ability the school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
  - The Education Welfare Board.
  - The Education Welfare Officers.
  - The Board of Management.

### **Punctuality**

The children line up in the yard and enter the school at 9.20am. 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 Education Welfare Act 2000, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

## **Guidance for Parents.**

Section [(21) (9)] of the Education Welfare Act 2000 states that: “a pupil’s absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. The school Principal cannot authorise a child’s absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Parents/guardians can provide 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 and approve of 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 children 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.
- 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, each teacher should have the name(s) of the person (s) who are permitted to collect each child. This is updated at the beginning of each school year.

## **Pupils**

- Pupils have the 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.

### Our strategies for promoting good school attendance

A positive approach is taken towards increasing attendance. St. Thomas the Apostle, adopts strategies to encourage and develop pride in children for their good attendance.

- Praise for good and improved attendance and for being on time.
- Letter written to parents to inform them if their child is approaching 20 days of absenteeism – positively stating the importance of good attendance.
- Contact made with parents if a pattern of late arrival or early collection to school emerges – positively stating the importance of coming to school on time.
- The number of absent days for each child will be recorded on child's annual school report.
- Medals awarded in Nov of each year for those children who missed 3 days or less.
- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Support is provided for pupils, who have special educational needs and are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Skills guidelines.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.

### **Deputy Principal**

The Deputy Principal in consultation with the 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 pupils name is removed from the P.O.D.  
(Pupil Online Database)
- 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

- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences and send it to the office.
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing or by phone.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

### **Record/Communication**

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, as soon as we receive notification on P.O.D. of transfer. Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school. Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed.

**Ratified by the Board of Management on: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017**

**Chairperson:** Marie Devitt

**Principal:** Maura Molony