

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Education Welfare Act 2000 promotes school attendance and Section 17 of the legislation states that there is a statutory obligation on parents to ensure their child attends a recognised school once registered. Furthermore, where a child is absent from the school, the parent is required under the Act to notify the Principal of the school of the reason for the child's absence. At St. Matthew's we would ask for those reasons in writing. The Act states that the relevant authorities will be informed of pupils who have been absent for twenty school days or more (this includes illness, holidays outside school holidays etc.) Children deemed at risk will be registered with the National Educational Welfare Board. A letter to parents explaining this issue can be found at Appendix 1. A sample letter indicating why a pupil was absent is distributed to parents at the annual 'Homework Meeting'. These notes can be found on the parent's noticeboard and at Appendix 2.

AIMS

- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Identify pupils at risk
- Promote a positive learning environment
- Enable learning opportunities to be availed of
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Foster an appreciation of learning

ENCOURAGING GOOD ATTENDANCE

Parents are discouraged from taking holidays during school time and it was agreed that work would not be given to children to do while they are on holiday. Teachers should not do anything to facilitate parents taking children on holidays during school time.

When recording daily numbers, teachers are asked to list absent and late children and to include the reasons for absence of children. Parents are asked to give reasons for absences in writing. Children will be praised at the final assembly for excellent attendance.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

- Call the roll daily and record attendances and absences.
- Teachers provide Deputy Principal with the numbers & names of absent pupils daily.
- Keep all letters from parents relating to pupil attendance for the given academic year. These are then shredded at the end of the year.

ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL

- Register each student on the day the child first attends the school and removes the student's name from the register when the child is transferring to another school or is registered with the National Education Welfare Board.
- To keep a record of the pupil's attendance at the school and the reasons for any failure to attend.
- To inform the relevant authorities in writing, where a student is absent in excess of twenty school days in a school year, where a student is suspended for a period in excess of 6 school days, where a student's name is removed from the register or where, in the opinion of the Principal the student is not attending regularly.
- Informs the BOM of school attendance

- Communicates to a school to which a student is transferring any problem relating to school attendance and other appropriate matters relating to the child's educational progress.
- Reports annually to the Parent's Association on the overall attendance of children in the school.
- Ensure that the Roll Books, Leabhair Tinreamh and Pupil Registers are kept up to date.

ROLE OF PARENTS

- The parent of a child should enable the child to attend school on each school day when the child is well enough to do so.
- Please note that letters from parents concerning illness and doctor's certificates will be kept on file in the school for one year (Appendix 2). If a child has missed more than 20 days notes relating to that child will be given by the class teacher to the principal at the end of the school year. Written permission from a parent is necessary for a pupil to leave the school for any reason during school hours. In that case the pupil must be collected from the classroom.
- Parents should provide the class teacher with notes regarding school absences.

COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

- When a child transfers from St. Matthew's to another school, school records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers into St. Matthew's N.S confirmation of the transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought.
- Pupils transferring from St. Matthew's to a Post Primary school will be forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

The school circulated the N.E.W.B information booklet "Don't Let Your Child Miss Out" to all parents in February 2005. The school also informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act 2000. Regular school circulars disseminate this information. Parents of new children are informed on enrolment.

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
- Teachers and the Principal are concerned about a child's attendance.

The N.E.W.B is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line.