

# **SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY** Glasheen Boys' School

Last Reviewed – December 2015

## **INTRODUCTION:**

In Scoil Mhuire Gan Smál (B), Glasheen B.N.S., there has been a tradition of good school attendance. However, it is recognised that regular evaluation of attendance is necessary, given the changing conditions in schools. Our attendance policy stemmed from the drawing up of our DEIS plan in 2007. The redrafting of our attendance policy was a collaborative school process involving staff, parents, Board of Management, School Completion Programme (SCP), Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Co-ordinator. It is essential that all parents are aware of the necessity for regular attendance and **reminders are given regularly at School Assembly & in School Newsletters.**

## **RATIONALE:**

Factors contributing to the formulation of the policy are:

- The changing **nature of society**
- The arrival of international / newcomer students who return to the home country of their parents on holiday or family visits, **during school term**
- DEIS Band 2 School
- Legislative requirements e.g. The Education Act 1998 and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

## **AIMS:**

- To increase awareness of the **importance of school attendance.**
- To identify **pupils at risk** of becoming early school leavers.
- To promote a **positive learning environment.**
- To ensure compliance with **relevant legislation** (see above).

## **SCHOOL ETHOS:**

Glasheen Boys' School wants every pupil to participate fully in all aspects of school life. Regular attendance is central to this. In Glasheen B.N.S., we aim to care holistically for every child and to promote cooperation between pupils, parents and staff. A whole school approach to attendance is essential. Regular meetings between the DEIS SCOP coordinator, the principal and HSCL are held.

Attendance is always a topic on the agenda. Attendance is also a regular topic at Staff Meetings and is part of the School's DEIS Plan.

### **ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:**

#### **There are many people who can play a significant (or very significant) role in School Attendance**

- Parents, Class Teacher, Principal (Michael Daly), HSCL Coordinator (Damian Ryan), DEIS SCOP Key worker (Diane Lackey), School Secretary (Sheila Macilwraith), EWO (Fidelma Collins), School Warden (Margaret).

### **POLICY CONTENT.**

#### **RECORDING:**

In Glasheen BNS, the Roll Book of each class is used to record absences every day. Class teachers send the class 'Rolla Copy' to the school secretary who then uses the Leabhar Tinrimh to keep an official record of attendance. All teachers also use the online facility 'Databiz'. The annual attendance of each pupil is recorded in the Clár Leabhar. Annual attendance figures are also sent to Cork City Council, which includes those who have had full attendance. End of year School Reports are sent to parents every June, which record the number of days present/absent in the current school year.

When a child does not attend, the class teacher records this each morning at 9.50a.m. It may not be altered once filled. Parents are required to write a note or to write in the Homework Journal, explaining the absence. Notes are kept by the class teacher. Parents can also communicate the absence through the school office. A note of this is kept by the class teacher.

**\*\*\*Parents of Junior & Senior Infant Pupils (who do not have a Homework Journal), are asked to communicate school absences by way of a School Notebook/Telephone Call to office.\*\*\***

If a child leaves the school during the school day, the parents MUST sign out the child in the school office. A File for this purpose is provided. When School Attendance becomes an issue, a parent may receive a visit by the SCP worker and/or HSCL Coordinator to see what support may be provided or encouragement offered. If attendance continues to be an issue parents are invited to meet with the Principal and are informed of the school's concerns.

The school will inform the EWO / NEWB, where a child has:

- missed 20 or more days in a school year
- when attendance is irregular

- where a pupil is removed from the school register
- where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

### **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ATTENDANCE:**

School attendance in Glasheen BNS has generally been very good. Nevertheless, due to a variety of factors, there are always some pupils who miss a significant number of valuable school days.

- **Early identification of children at risk** is essential, so a team approach by SCP worker, HSCL Coordinator, class teachers and principal is adopted, as previously indicated. Those at risk are the children who miss more than 5 days in a 20 day period and those without an explanatory note or phone call. Contact is first made by the class teacher in the home work journal. Appropriate contact may then need to be established by the SCP worker, HSCL Coordinator or Principal.

- The school endeavours to create a safe, bright, welcoming, interesting **environment** for pupils and parents.

- A **good pattern of attendance** needs to be established in Junior and Senior Infants to ensure that a pattern has been established by First Class.

- The **School Calendar is communicated** to parents in September to enable them to plan around school closures.

- Cork City Council awards Annual **Full Attendance Certs** during the school year. These certificates are presented to the children at a School Assembly, to acknowledge their efforts and to encourage other pupils to aim for this success.

- Children with '**Most Improved Attendance**' are also acknowledged.

- **School Completion Programme** - This includes After-School activities; In-School individual supports; Holiday activities. If there is poor/irregular attendance, this is addressed with the parents by the SCP worker, in conjunction with the Principal and Class teacher. School Completion Transition Programme takes place annually for 6th Class pupils, in order to ease the transition of pupils to second level schools.

- **Communication with Pre-schools** in the area.

### **STRATEGIES FOR NON ATTENDANCE:**

- All schools are obliged to inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if the child does not attend on a regular basis.

- After all reasonable efforts have been made by the NEWB to consult with the child's parents and the Principal, the EWO may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent whom it is concluded is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend school.
- Five annual Reports are sent by the school to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) with reasons for absence of pupils with poor attendance.
- Parents are notified/reminded by the school after the child has reached 15 Days absence (See sample letter – Appendix 1).

#### **TRANSFER TO ANOTHER SCHOOL:**

- Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Principal of the child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school.
- When the principal of this school receives notification that a child has registered elsewhere, he will inform the principal of any difficulties or issues in relation to that child's attendance. This will also apply to second level transfers.

#### **COMMUNICATION:**

##### **Communication with the following about school attendance is essential**

1. General Parent Body
2. Parents' Association
3. All Pupils
4. All Staff
5. HSCL Co-Ordinator
6. School Completion Worker.
7. Education Welfare Officer.
8. Board of Management

As with all school policies, staff will be aware that the use of **positive language** when dealing with parents, adults and children is extremely important.

#### **Review:**

A review / update of the policy will take place each school year. Any changes will be notified to the Board of Management for ratification. This School Attendance

Policy was last reviewed in November 2013, in consultation with staff, parents, pupils and the Board of Management of Glasheen BNS. It was subsequently ratified by the Board of Management. **It was last updated in December 2015.**

Signed: *Máire Calnan* (Chairperson Board of Management)

## **Appendix 1**

### **Standard Reminder Letter**

Re: School Attendance 2015 – 2016

Dear Parents,

Since the implementation of the Education Welfare Act, we are all very conscious of the checks that are carried out on school attendance by Education Welfare staff. Many absences are due to unavoidable illnesses and are completely understandable.

In the event of a pupil missing 20 days in a school year, however, it is our duty to remind all parents that there is the possibility of being contacted by Education Welfare. Until now, we have been doing this, on a regular basis, through our school newsletters.

It can be difficult for parents to keep track of school absences so, in an effort to support and keep parents informed, we have decided to send out a reminder letter to all parents of pupils who have missed 15 or more school days. In this way, parents can be alerted/given an update.

If there is anything further we can do to support or encourage school attendance, we are always happy to do so. Please be assured of our ongoing support and understanding.

Every good wish,

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Michael Daly (Principal).

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of days missed to date: \_\_\_\_\_