



Scoil Chaitríona Junior

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE

Introduction & Rationale

This policy document was drawn up:

- To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians drew up this Policy on Attendance.

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
 - The Education Welfare Bill (Amendment) 2102
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Scoil Chaitríona Junior endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. 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.

Aims

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

Content

Attendance Care Team

Principal: Patricia Coleman

Overall Attendance Co-ordinator: Teresa Carleton

HSCL: Dave Gleeson

NEWO Linda Quinn

School Completion Person: Aoife Rooney

Pupil Registration: Henrietta Broderick

Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) of each class on a daily basis. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book). The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register), together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents' Names and Parents' Occupations).

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at no later than 9.50am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. The roll book may not be altered once it has been filled in. Class teachers record absences on a Special Record Sheet to be kept in the roll book. (Appendix 1)

A Standard School Absence Note (circulated in the first week of September, Appendix 2) from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. Parent / guardian must sign a “leaving school early” copy available in each classroom before taking the child out early from school. At break times the parent goes to the staff room to tell the child’s teacher he/she is taking the child early. Late arrivals are noted by the class teacher and concerns forwarded to the overall attendance Co-ordinator (Teresa Carleton) and or HSCL (Dave Gleeson).

Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Attendance Co-ordinator during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school’s concerns.

The school informs the Education Welfare Officer at the NEWB Attendance Meetings, 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.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Scoil Chaitríona Junior, endeavour 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 an induction meeting in the 2nd school term, 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 Junior Infants onwards. Support services and assessment available through the school are emphasised for families who may need encouragement towards making a difference for their child/ren.

A copy of “Don’t let your child Miss out” is provided to parents at the Induction Meeting.

Scoil Chaitríona Junior schools homework policy, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, clearly outlines the school’s expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June along with a letter advising parents to plan their holidays around school closures. A reminder is published in September. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will provide a cereal and drink.

Teachers and Principal encourage good attendance through meeting with parents, giving positive feedback on improvements over a short period of time and overall attendance. Set targets for School Completion are reviewed on an annual basis.

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's policy on Equal Opportunity and Gender Equity.

Communication

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Board (EWB) personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk. In some cases it may be necessary to seek advice from outside agencies such as NEPS, C.A.M.H.S., Social Worker, Family Support or other.

The school works with School Completion, Junior Achievement, the local area partnership, the local sports partnership and other bodies in developing programmes to promote school attendance. These programmes aim to minimise the risks of irregular or non-attendance and to maximise the opportunities provided to all pupils.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and Scoil Chaitríona Senior in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible. A paired reading programme takes place in the third term between 5th Class and 2nd class to ease the transition between the Junior and Senior schools.

Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

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'.

Scoil Chaitríona issues notice to parents / guardians in the form of a letter regarding unexplained absences of 15 to 20 days. Parents / guardians are invited to meet with the Attendance Co-ordinator and or HSCL to explain such absences.

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, HSCL 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 and other relevant information of children who are absent 20 days or more are recorded by the Attendance Co-ordinator at regular intervals and reported to the NEWB and / or at the Attendance Care Meeting held six times during the school.

Unexplained absences or suspicion of truancy from school are queried by the class teacher on meeting the parent in the morning, by phone call from the class teacher, Attendance Co-ordinator or secretary or at parent teacher meetings.

Where a child is more than 3 days unexplained absences from school the teacher contacts the parent to identify the reason for the absence and where appropriate informs the attendance Co-ordinator and /or HSCL immediately.

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 Scoil Chaitríona Junior to Scoil Chaitríona Senior. In the case where a child leaves school and the destination is unknown the child's name is kept on the school roll for 21 consecutive days and on the school register until the pupil normally leaves school at the end of Second Class.

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 and the amended 2012 Bill

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Implementation

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

Ratification and Review

This policy was approved by the Board of Management in Term 1, 2016/2017 school year.

It was ratified by the Board of Management on Date: 13th December, 2016

Signed: _____ Chairperson, BoM

This policy was communicated to the Parent Association on December 14th 2016

Signed: _____ Chairperson, PA

The policy is available to view on the school's website.

Review Date: School Year 2019 -2020

Scoil Chaitríona Junior, Renmore

Child's Name _____ Teacher _____

Date of Absence from ___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___ No. of days

REASON FOR ABSENCE
(Please tick one of the following)

- (A) Illness
- (B) Urgent family Reasons
- (C) Other (Please specify eg Holidays, religious Observance etc)

- (D) Transfer to another school (please specify school)

SIGNATURE (Parent / Guardian) _____ Date _____

Under legislation the school is compelled to report absences of 20 days or more, regardless of reasons of absence. Please fill in this form and return it to the class teacher each time your child is absent from school.

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Scoil Chaitríona Junior, Renmore

Child's Name _____ Teacher _____

Date of Absence from ___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___ No. of days

REASON FOR ABSENCE
(Please tick one of the following)

- (E) Illness
- (F) Urgent family Reasons
- (G) Other (Please specify eg Holidays, religious Observance etc)

- (H) Transfer to another school (please specify school)

SIGNATURE (Parent / Guardian) _____ Date _____

Under legislation the school is compelled to report absences of 20 days or more, regardless of reasons of absence. Please fill in this form and return it to the class teacher each time your child is absent from school.