**School Attendance Policy**

**Crosserlough National School**

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGY**

There is a very strong tradition of good attendance in St. Mary’s NS. However, the changing social fabric of the nation is altering attitudes to school and we are anxious that parents be aware of the absolute necessity for regular punctual attendance at school.

**The aims of the attendance policy in St. Mary’s NS are to**

* Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
* Share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
* Inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Act.
* Identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
* Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
* Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
* Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance, ensure that the school is observing all its obligations in relation to attendance, as set down in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

**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 punctuality is monitored. School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:

* The Education Welfare Board.
* The Education Welfare Officer
* The Board of Management

**Punctuality**

School is open from 9.20 a.m. and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9.25 a.m. 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 2000, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

**Attendance and Roll Call**

The Department of Education and Skills’ Rules for National Schools 1965, Chapter VIII School Hours, School Meetings, Roll Call Rule 55 (4) (d) states:

(d) “Roll call shall be completed no later than 40 minutes after the time fixed for the commencement of formal instruction at the school meeting. A minimum period of 10 minutes shall be set down in the timetable for Roll call.”

As we officially start teaching at 9:30am Roll Call takes place between 10:10 and 10:20am daily. If a child is not present during roll call they cannot be marked present on the Roll book.

**Guidance for Parents**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child who is attending a recognised school is at school on every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him or her not to attend (Section 17 of Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Section 21(9) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Therefore, the school cannot give ‘permission’ for holiday absences during term time. We strongly discourage parents from taking students on holidays during term time. If a parent decides to take a child out of school for holidays, the parent must provide a letter to the school to say they are doing so and are aware of the implications. Where there are regular holiday absences, we remind parents of the educational and potential legal impact of removing students from school for periods of time.

**How Parents should report absences to Billis NS**

Reasons for pupils’ absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. To facilitate this, such communications should be recorded in the grid provided at the back of each pupil’s homework diary. Infant classes are provided with an A4 card with a grid on which parents should record each absence, as they do not have a school homework diary. When a child is absent, parents should fill in the absence grid giving the date(s) of absence and the reason for the absence and sign it. This must be completed as soon as the child returns to school. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child’s absence is not received by the school.

**A strategy for promoting good school attendance**

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard: The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child. The school will promote the development of good self-awareness and self-esteem in the children. Support for pupils, who have special educational needs are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Skills’ guidelines. Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils. Teachers promote good attendance at school by showing an interest in each child, welcoming them to school each morning and enquiring of them why they were absent. The Education Welfare Officer will be contacted for advice and support if/when necessary.

The attendance rates and punctuality 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. Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance. This will involve meeting with the parents/guardians to ascertain reasons for absences and how the school can support them.

**School Factors that affect attendance:**

* School climate and classroom climate: Students who experience positive interaction, in the form of praise or being asked questions, are less likely to be absent from school on a regular basis than those who have not experienced such interaction or feel ignored.
* Student–teacher relationships: A positive climate of student–teacher relationships, of mutual trust and respect, and where students have a voice in school matters are known in most educational research to have a strong influence on student engagement and attendance.
* Teacher expectations: Attendance is significantly higher when teachers have high expectations of students – an effect that operates over and above the students’ own expectations of themselves.

**Responsibilities**

* **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 or if principal/deputy principal has concerns about their attendance.. 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. If a pupil has been expelled. When a pupil’s name is removed from the schools register for any reason. Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
* **Teachers** will: Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance; Actively use the school’s Attendance Strategy to promote attendance; Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms; Agree punctuality and attendance standards with students as part of classroom rules; Set example by their own punctuality; Ensure attendance data are recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures; Alert relevant staff if there are concerns about student absences; Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis; Support students on return when they have missed periods of schooling.
* **Parents/Guardians** are responsible for: Setting high standards for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality; Engaging with the school if there is a problem about their child’s attendance and support plans to address the problem; Ensuring that their child regularly attends and arrives at school on time; Avoiding taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason; Avoiding taking their child on holidays during term time Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance. Notifying the school, in advance, if their children cannot attend for any reason. Working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems; Modelling good attitudes to school attendance and punctuality. Discussing planned absences with the school. Not taking holidays during school time Showing an interest in their children’s school day and their children’s home and school work. Supporting and participating 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. Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.

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.

* **Pupils:** Pupils have the 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.

**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 receiving school, on request, as soon as we receive written notification 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 once enrolment has been confirmed.

Ratified by Board of Management on: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

Chairperson, Board of Management