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HOLY ROSARY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

The principles in this policy are approved by the Board of Management and therefore constitute standard practices, which apply throughout Holy Rosary Primary School.

Signed

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date

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“Mol an Óige agus tiocfaidh sí”

“Recognising and embracing the diversity within the community, we are committed to developing the individual pupil in a secure and challenging learning environment”

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Version No.	Date	Comments
1.0	December 2014	Initial Release
2.0	November 2017	Policy reviewed and reformatted

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management in November 2017. It will be reviewed in the event of incidents or a scheduled review no later than 2020.

1 Policy, Rational and Characteristic Spirit of the School

1.1 Policy

1.1.1 The aims and objectives of the policy can be summarised as follows:

- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually
- 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 through the role of Home School Community Liaison Teacher 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
- To provide for the implementation of legislation concerning school attendance, in particular the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

1.1.2 The success of this policy will be assessed against the above aims and the targets outlined in the school Action Plan for Attendance.

1.1.3 The Principal, Staff and Teachers, together with the BOM, will be responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

1.2 Rationale & Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit

1.2.1 Holy Rosary Primary School bases its School Attendance Policy on the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

1.2.2 The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

1.2.3 Holy Rosary Primary School endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities.

1.2.4 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.

2 Definitions

2.1.1 **BOM** – Holy Rosary Board of Management.

2.1.2 **DES** - Department of Education and Skills.

2.1.3 **Education Welfare Officer** – officer employed throughout the country to offer advice, support and guidance to parents who need support in ensuring that their child attends schools regularly.

2.1.4 **HSCL** – Home School Community Liaison Teacher.

2.1.5 **Post Holder for Attendance** – Person responsible for liaising with TUSLA regarding attendance.

2.1.6 **SNA**– Special Needs Assistant.

2.1.7 **TUSLA** – Child and Family Agency.

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2.1.8 **NEWB** – National Education Welfare Board.

3 Implementation of the Attendance Policy

3.1 Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

- 3.1.1 The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded electronically on the Administration software Aladdin on a daily basis.
- 3.1.2 Class attendance data is recorded automatically, by the same system thus replacing the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book).
- 3.1.3 The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Primary Online Database, together with information provided in enrolment forms (PPSN, name, Mother's maiden name, Address, Date of Birth, Gender, Nationality, Religion, Ethnic background whether in receipt of learning support or Irish exemption).
- 3.1.4 Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.
- 3.1.4.1 The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, 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.
- 3.1.5 The "Post Holder for Attendance" makes returns to TUSLA.
- 3.1.6 Parents are asked to write a note to the class teacher explaining the reason for a child's absence.
- 3.1.6.1 The teacher will record the reason for the absence. All class teachers record a pupil's absence, category of absence and reason – if any – on the school's on-line Administration software Aladdin.
- 3.1.7 The Roll is called in all classes before 11am daily. According to DES guidelines any pupils who arrive after Roll Call are marked absent. Only children who are in class before 11am can be marked present.
- 3.1.8 Late arrivals and early departures are also recorded. Parents who arrive after 9.30am must "sign the child in" at the office. Parents who pick up their children during the school day must "sign the child out" at the office.

3.2 Strategies for Improving Attendance

The following strategies have been put in place to help foster an appreciation of learning and good attendance:

- 3.2.1.1 Pupils who have full attendance or almost full attendance at the end of each term are presented with certificates. This is done at a special assembly.
- 3.2.1.2 Pupils who have full attendance at the end of the school year are presented with a medal and certificate. Pupils with almost full attendance are presented with a certificate.
- 3.2.1.3 Pupils who have full attendance in a calendar month will be acknowledged at assembly.
- 3.2.1.4 On occasion, the school will hold an Attendance Week or offer additional incentives to pupils to promote attendance.
- 3.2.1.5 The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, will be flexible and relevant to meet the needs of the individual child.

- 3.2.1.6 Children with special educational needs will be supported in accordance with DES guidelines and as much as is practicable.
- 3.2.1.7 Extra-curricular activities will be encouraged for all pupils, specifically those at risk of non-attendance.
- 3.2.1.8 The care team (Principal, HSCL & Senior staff members) meet every Thursday. As part of this meeting they regularly review unexplained absences and pupils who are regularly late. Staff are invited to air concerns to members of the team.

3.3 Communication

- 3.3.1 The importance of good attendance/punctuality is regularly communicated to the school community through assemblies and Newsletters.
- 3.3.2 Parents/guardians of Junior Infants are invited to engage in an introductory programme, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained.
 - 3.3.2.1 There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.
- 3.3.3 The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and a reminder is published in September.
 - 3.3.3.1 It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising absences due to family holidays during the school term.
- 3.3.4 The school has developed a good relationship with the School Completion Co-ordinator & TUSLA personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

4 Attendance Problems

4.1 Identification of students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems

- 4.1.1 The following table categorises the different levels of absence and the appropriate level of contact that will take place between the school and parents/guardians of these children.

Category of Absence	Level of Absence	Contact with Parents/Guardians
Irregular Absentees	5 days irregular absences	Care Team decides whether letter should be sent to parents/guardians outlining pupil's absences and need for good attendance.
Continued Irregular Absentees	10 days irregular absences	Letter sent to parents/guardians asking them to make appointment with class teacher or HSCL to discuss pupil's attendance.

Serious Absentees	15 days absent	Family is visited by HSCL Teacher to offer support.
Chronic Absentees	18 – 20 days	Parents are invited to meeting with the Principal. At 20 days report is sent to NEWB.

4.2 Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

- 4.2.1 The Postholder for Attendance, HSCL Teacher and Care Team will have responsibility for monitoring non-attendance in Holy Rosary Primary School.
- 4.2.2 The above table guides the school's contact with parents/guardians regarding non-attendance.
- 4.2.3 If parent does not respond to the correspondence the HSCL will be asked to make a home visit.
- 4.2.4 If a pupil exceeds 20 days absence a referral form to TUSLA will be completed and forwarded to our local TUSLA officer.
- 4.2.4.1 In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, in such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Welfare Board to consult with the child's parents 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.
- 4.2.4.2 A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.
- 4.2.5 Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the Education Welfare Board as requested throughout the school year.
- 4.2.6 An annual report is submitted detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.
- 4.2.7 Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to Holy Rosary Primary School will be sought directly from the previous school.

5 Transfer to Another School

- 5.1.1 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.
- 5.1.2 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.
- 5.1.3 The Principal maybe consulted by the home school liaison officer of Secondary schools regarding attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to secondary schools.

6 Success Criteria

6.1.1 The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy;
At the end of our 3 year Action Plan for Attendance we will have reached the following targets

- Annual attendance rates of at least 94.2%
- Number of children missing 20+ days less than 15% of school population
- Number of children with full attendance will be at least 6%

Briefing Note

<p>Purpose:</p> <p>This policy is published by the Board of Management of Holy Rosary Primary School to outline the processes in relation to attendance at the school.</p>	<p>Scope:</p> <p>This policy relates to staff, parents/guardians and children of Holy Rosary school only.</p>
<p>What's New / What's Changed & Why?</p> <p>This policy was reviewed and reformatted and issued as version 2.0.</p>	
<p>Target Audience:</p> <p>Parents/Guardians of Children at Holy Rosary Primary School. Holy Rosary staff involved in children's school attendance.</p>	
<p>Note:</p>	