

# **St. Brendan's NS, Eyrecourt**

## **Statement of Strategy for School Attendance**

### **Introduction**

In St. Brendan's N.S. we value the individuality of all our children and respect their right to access all areas of learning. We work to enable them to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are necessary for their self-fulfillment and their development into active and responsible adults.

### **Rationale**

St. Brendan's N.S. decided to draft its attendance strategy because:

- It is a requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- The school wishes to ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

### **Relationship to the characteristic spirit of the school**

St. Brendan's N.S. is a Catholic School and as such we foster Christian values of love, tolerance, fairness and respect for self and others. We welcome pupils of all denominations and strive to nurture each child's gifts and capabilities in an atmosphere of trust. We celebrate the uniqueness of each child and value his/her contribution to the school. We hope by meeting their needs, foundations are laid for happiness and fulfillment in later life.

### **Aims**

In St. Brendan's N.S. we aim:

- To foster an appreciation of learning
- To raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To promote positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourages pupils to attend school
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000 and Guidelines from NEWB.

### **Strategies to encourage good attendance**

- **Caring Environment** – St. Brendan’s N.S., at all times, aims to ensure that children are taught in a safe secure and caring environment where their intellectual, physical and spiritual development are catered for
- We try to create a welcoming environment for pupils and parents. Teachers consistently try to encourage good attendance in their respective classrooms
- **Special Needs** – pupils needing support are identified as early as possible and the appropriate support systems put into place. We emphasise positive achievements and do all we can to enhance self-esteem
- **Rewards** - Certificates are issued and presented annually for full attendance.
- **Reports:** We inform parents about the amount of days a child has been absent at parent/teacher meetings in November each year and in the end of year school reports.

### **Communication**

- **Parental Support** - It is the policy of St. Brendan’s N.S. to encourage and maintain open communication between home and school and to encourage parents in their role as primary educators of their children. The Principal and teachers are likewise available, on an appointment basis, to meet parents.
- The calendar for the coming school year is published in September and available online at [www.eyrecourtns.ie](http://www.eyrecourtns.ie) 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.
- Attendance is one of the issues addressed at meetings for new parents when their child is enrolled in St. Brendan’s National School
- It is also covered in the information pack given to all parents of Junior Infant children. Parents are asked to notify the school if a pupil will be absent or if they have been absent either by writing a note or calling the school. Parents are made aware of the school’s obligation to notify the EWO if a child has been absent for 20 days or more in the information newsletter sent out each September.
- Don’t Let Your Child Miss Out (Leaflet for parents NEWB 2004) will be made available on the school website.
- This leaflet outlines

1. The importance of regular attendance
2. Parental obligations in relation to attendance under the Education Welfare Act
3. Advice to parents on what they can do to help children attend school regularly.

An awareness of the importance of good attendance is kept to the forefront in the classroom and at assemblies.

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.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

### **Communication with other Schools**

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

### **Record Keeping School Records**

A roll call is taken every day and should a child be absent, he/she is required to have an explanatory note/phone call from his/her parents. This may be recorded in the home/school diary. The Education and Welfare Act '**obliges the parents of an absent child to notify the school of the cause of absence not later than the third day of absence**'. Notes or record of non- attendances are duly dated and need to be kept.

When a child has accumulated 15 days of absence, a letter is sent to the parents/guardians to inform them of the Education Welfare Act requirements. 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.

### **Annual Report**

An annual attendance report is completed at the end of the school year and is sent to the

National Educational Welfare Board. The school secretary and principal complete this report using the school roll books.

**Success Criteria**

Annual attendance rates are maintained or increased.

2015 – Annual attendance rate – 93.8%

2016- Annual attendance rate – 95.3%

**Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Principal and class teacher to implement this policy under the guidance of the school’s Board of Management.

The School Secretary will assist the principal to document absences in the quarterly report to the NEWB.

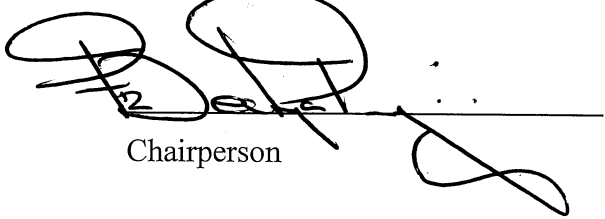
**Implementation Date:**

September 1<sup>st</sup> 2017.

**Timetable for Review:**

September 2019

**Ratified on 18/10/2017**



Chairperson