

## St Kilian's Junior School

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Roll Number: 19556F

Principal: *Kate Sweeney M.Ed.*

Deputy Principal: *Noreen Coll B.Ed.*

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### Attendance Policy

#### Attendance Strategy Statement

This policy was formulated in February 2005 by Ms. Kate Sweeney, Principal, in consultation with the teaching staff, in line with new guidelines and requirements from the NEWB and ratified by the Board of Management. It was reviewed in 2009, following a review of our Code of Conduct.

#### Rationale

St Kilian's Junior School decided to review its attendance for these reasons

- It is a priority area identified by the parents, pupils and staff.
- The school needs to encourage the pupils to be in attendance.
- It is a requirement under Education Welfare Act 2000
- It encourages good practice.

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

The development of good practice will enhance the pupils' core values which in turn will lead to a harmonious environment. It will allow for development and nurturing of pupils' potential / talents while providing for the safe welfare of pupils. Co-operation between staff parents and pupils will be deepened.

#### Aims

St. Kilian's School hopes

- To foster an appreciation of learning.
- To raise awareness of importance of school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of school leaving early.
- 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 encourage pupils to attend school
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines form NEWB.

The Principal and staff will be responsible for the implementation and on going monitoring of the statement.

### **Recording Non – attendance**

Parents of an absent child are obliged to notify the class teacher of the cause of absence in writing, usually on the child's return. If the child is absent for a long period of time ( over one week) parents are asked to phone and notify the school , and also send in written notification on the child's return. Notes or record of non attendance duly dated will be kept in a folder in the teacher's classroom. These will include notes from school diary or handwritten notes. St. Kilian's School will report certain non attendance matters to NEWB (i.e. pupils absent for 20 days or more or where the class teacher or principal is concerned about a pupil's attendance.)

### **Communication with parents**

Regular newsletters/ memos are sent to parents ( at least once per term) stating the importance of child's good attendance and emphasising the negative impact of withdrawing pupils for weekend breaks and (long) holidays during the school term. The effects on the child from an educational point of view will be outlined and the adverse effects which are associated with this will also be stated.

The importance of good attendance is stressed at the Induction Meeting for parents prior to their child starting school. It is also emphasised in our School Handbook for Parents.

### **Half – Day Absences**

The Education Welfare Act requires a parent to notify the school when a child is absent for part of a school day, a school day or more than a school day.

Our policy requires a note from parent / guardian giving reasons for any of the above absences. The note can be written in diary or written separately.

### **Strategies to promote attendance**

- **Environment :**  
St. Kilian's School is sensitive to the needs of the pupils and to the difficulties which they encounter while we strive to attain improvements in attendance. We accept and encourage arrivals at all times while we stress importance of good practice and conformity with school timetables.
- **Early intervention :**  
We highlight importance of regular attendance at the appointed time to new parents. We outline the procedures in relation to attendance and outline the negative effect on school work and on a child's attitude. We state the importance of playtime in the morning in Infants as a settling in process and for organisational purposes. We emphasise the importance in relation to pupil's happiness, progress and formation of good habits in the long term.
- **Homework:**  
Non completion must be explained by a note from parent / guardian. Consideration is given to home environment and in the situation where difficulty of task is an issue every effort is made in order to make home-

work child friendly and to ensure it is work which can be done independently.

- Uniform :  
Every encouragement is given to child to wear appropriate wear for school i.e. school uniform or school tracksuit.
- Transport :  
Parents are encouraged to be very punctual when dropping or collecting pupils to avoid causing anxiety. Children in infants must be collected by an adult at home time. Children in first and second classes may be collected , or may walk home unaccompanied only if they have written permission from a parent/guardian.
- Lunches :  
Children are encouraged to bring healthy lunches and a drink of water / non fizzy drink. In the event of a child forgetting a lunch a phone call is made to the parents who generally bring a lunch to the school. A healthy snack can be provided by the school, if this fails. If a child informs the class teacher s/he has not had a breakfast, a light snack is again provided by the school.
- Rewards :  
We acknowledge punctual attendances at assembly and encourage other pupils who need to improve to follow good example.  
Pupils' full attendance is celebrated annually at the end of each school year. Certificates and prizes are awarded by the Principal.
- Recording Attendance :  
Attendance in all school terms will be monitored by class teacher and reported to the Principal. Each child is made aware of own attendance thereby giving them a sense of involvement in their progress / lack of progress.  
The school has devised a form to record all absences. This has a dual purpose. It facilitates the teacher when filling out the NEWB returns. It is also sent to the office weekly. The Principal will contact parents in writing when a child reaches 15 days absence, alerting the parents to avoid the child missing over 19 days in any given year.
- Equality of Participation:  
We favour equality and are mindful of pupils who may have difficulty paying for various activities. We have some strategies in place i.e. paying in small amounts for school tours, books, lunches etc.  
Monies received from DES under Giving Children an Even Break are expended under the responsibility of the Deputy Principal. Some of this funding is used to promote literacy training for selected children and a family member.
- Equality issues :  
We strive to ensure that all pupils respect each other and use correct terminology when discussing related issues.

- Reports :  
We report total amount of days missed in a year to parents in the end of year reports. It is also brought to the attention of the parents at the Parent Teacher meetings, if necessary.
- Curriculum :  
We are sensitive to the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils and provide an interesting presentation of curricular subjects to pupils bearing that in mind.
- Timetabling :  
Pupils' needs are accommodated adequately.
- Parents :  
We communicate the requirements of schools and of parents under the Education Welfare Act at
  1. Induction meetings
  2. Memo to parents at start of year.
  3. Parent/ teacher meetings.
  4. School Newsletters
  5. Parents' Handbook
  - 6.
 Leaflet *Don't Let Your Child Miss Out* distributed to new parents.
  - Learning Needs :  
The learning needs of at risk pupils are monitored carefully and constantly.
  - Staff Development :  
Create awareness of the needs of the individual and how to evaluate same.
  - Communication with other schools /Links  
The school liaises with all the Senior Primary school/s to which pupils will move. The pupil's educational achievements, ability levels, needs, relevant issues pertaining to individual pupils are outlined.

Our local **Education Welfare Officer** is Nyree Fitzpatrick. The Principal sends the EWO an end of year annual report within the first week of July, outlining all absences over 19 days, and indicating concerns about individual cases where necessary. Concerns are also indicated mid-year by telephone as required. The Principal has participated in case conferences with the EWO and family members when requested.

### **Strategies in event of non-attendance**

(The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register)

Parents receive a copy of Don't Let your Child Miss Out outlining their statutory duties. Parents are aware of school duties outlined in E.W.A. in relation to reporting the non-attendance of a child to the Education Welfare Officer on any report who they

conclude is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school and of the possible consequence of a case being taken against the parent (fine and/or imprisonment)

Parents are asked to notify the class teacher in writing of all absences and the reasons for such absences.

These communications are kept in a folder by the teacher. If a parent has literacy problems s/he may telephone the principal who conveys the explanation for absence to class teacher. This explanation is entered by the class teacher in the Pupil Absence Record Form. Prompt templates are available to each class teacher to send to parents in the event that the parent does not provide a written explanation for an absence. If there are further difficulties the class teacher would refer the matter to the Principal. Each child is monitored re non – attendance and when child (reaches) has been absent 15 days, the class teacher notifies the Principal, who will contact the parent in writing.

- If Principal is concerned she may seek the help of Social and Community Services, Millbrook Lawns, Tallaght, D.24

The non attendance of a pupil is communicated to Education Welfare Officer by telephone and this may be followed by a meeting.

The class teacher may outline what work the child has missed if parent is in a situation where she / he can assist pupil. However the class teacher cannot give help to pupil to ‘catch up’ on work missed due to time constraints resulting from workload.

### **Procedures in relation to the Removal from Register / Transfer from another school**

St Kilian’s Junior School will remove a pupil’s name from a school register when they have been informed that the child has been enrolled in another school.

### **Procedures in relation to the Removal of a pupil from Register / Transfer to another school**

The Principal/ Secretary will arrange to remove a pupil’s name from the register when she has been informed that the child

- a) has been enrolled in another school.
- b) when the Welfare Board notified her that a child has been registered by it as in receipt of out – of – school education.
- c) has enrolled in a special school.

### **Transfer to another school**

Where parents remove a child the principal will give the child a certificate / report card stating record of attendance and absences in the school, the last class the child attended and any other relevant information pertaining to the education of the child.

### **Transfer from another school**

The principal rings the other school informing them that this child’s parents/guardians are enquiring about enrolling the child, and seeks a verbal and written report on the child .St. Kilian’s JNS will forward notification in writing (standard form) to child’s

last school attended. The previous principal (school B) will notify the current principal (school A) of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and matters relating to educational progress which are appropriate procedure for intended expulsion of a pupil.

### **Intended Expulsion of a pupil ( See also Code of Behaviour)**

#### **Reporting Expulsion**

Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23, Section 24, Section 26 Education Act 1998 Section 15, Section 29.

The Education Act 1998 requires each school to publish its code of behaviour including its policy on the expulsion of students.

Guidance issued by the Department of Education and Science on Codes of Behaviour remain extant until replaced or updated.

The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 requires that a student may not be expelled except according to the school's published policy.

In the event of a situation where a child is being considered for expulsion the situation shall be reported to the parents / guardians.

If a satisfactory solution can not be worked on which in turn brings about a satisfactory conclusion then the matter is reported to the Board of Management.

#### **Decision to Expel a Student**

The Act of 2000 (Section 24) stipulates that where a board of management is of the opinion that a student should be expelled, the board is required to inform the NEWB of its decision, and the reasons why in writing.

The decision to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after the NEWB have received notification in writing. The new Notice of Decision to Expel form should be used for this purpose – see template below.

On receipt of this Form, a letter of acknowledgement will issue immediately from the National Education Welfare Board.

The date of receipt will be clearly indicated on the acknowledgement. The "20 school days" begin when the Form is received by the NEWB.

#### **Reporting Students who have been expelled**

Where a school has expelled a student, and all appeals processes both internal and external have been exhausted, the student's expulsion should be reported on the Student Absence Report Form.

NOTICE OF DECISION TO EXPEL

**School Returns Section,  
National Educational Welfare Board,  
16 – 22 Green Street, Dublin 7**

<b>School roll number:</b>
<b>School name:</b>
<b>School address:</b>
<b>The Board of Management at its meeting on .../.../.....formed the opinion that the student named below should be expelled.</b>
<b>Name of student:</b>
<b>Address of student:</b>
<b>Date of birth:..../..../...</b> <b>PPSN:</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian:</b>
<b>Address of parent/guardian:</b>
<b>Telephone:</b>
<b>Reason for expulsion:</b>
<b>Date parent/guardian was informed of Board of Management's decision in writing .../.../...</b>

**All primary and Post Primary Schools (including VEC Schools)**

Has the parent/guardian been informed of their right of appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998?

Yes

No

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Title:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Secretary / Chairperson / Manager / Chief Executive Officer)

on behalf of the Board of Management

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date: .../.../...

**Note:** This notice should only be completed and returned after all local appeals processes at school level have been exhausted. This notice fulfils the school's obligations under Section 24(1) of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_  
For guidance on completion of this form please refer to Section C of Guidance for Schools on Reporting of Student Absences and Expulsions.

**NEWB Internal Use Only**

Date Received .../.../...

Date acknowledged.../.../...

Referred to .....

**Annual Report**

The principal and secretary will return the standard attendance form at the end of each report period to the Education Welfare Officer. They will also return the cumulative attendance records annually within six weeks of the end of the school year.

**Success criteria**

The success of our attendance statement will be evident in the pupil's attendance reports at the end of each term and cumulatively at the end of the school year. Special emphasis will be placed on the monitoring of children who are presenting with irregular attendance. The principal will evaluate overall attendance. The class teacher will observe, record, and report on poor attendees.

The role of the pupils will be developed by alerting them to the importance of regular attendance and the negative aspects of non-attendance in habit forming and educational progress. Pupils will be reminded of the importance of punctual attendance at assemblies.

Parents of newly enrolled children are made aware of importance of good attendance at the induction meeting for new parents. A memo/newsletter is sent to all parents once a term reminding them of same.

**Roles and Responsibility**

The principal and the class teacher have responsibility for overseeing all procedures.



**Implementation Date**

This policy will be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005.

**Timetable for review**

This policy will be reviewed as necessary

**Ratification and communication**

The BOM ratified this statement in 2005. This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in 2010.



Chairperson of B.O.M.