**Robertson National School**

**Attendance Policy**

**Introduction:**

Changing social habits and patterns necessitate the creation of a school attendance policy. The redrafting was a collaborative process involving staff and Board of Management.

**Rationale:**

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy could be summarized as follows:

1. The changing fabric of society
2. The role of the N.E.W.B
3. Levels of disadvantage
4. Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000
5. Changing attitudes to education

**Aims and Objectives:**

The revised policy is geared towards

* Encouraging full attendance where possible
* Identifying pupils at risk
* Promoting a positive learning environment
* Enabling learning opportunities to be availed of
* Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
* Fostering an appreciation of learning

**Compliance with School Ethos**

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance and the Principal makes returns to N.E.W.B. The Principal has responsibility for maintaining the Leabhair Tinreamh.

**Policy Content:**

**Recording**

Individual school attendance is recorded in the Leabhair Rolla and in the Leabhair Tinreamh. All children attending and data on parents is recorded in the school register.

A note from parents/guardians is required to cover each absence and these are dated and kept in the office. Parents are made aware of the requirements of the N.E.W.B. particularly the by- law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year.

School attendance is also recorded electronically on the school’s online database, Aladdin.

**School Strategies:**

* Parents are asked to make contact with the school before 10 a.m. on the first morning of absence. Contact may be in the form of a telephone call, note or oral message. If no contact is made by 10 a.m. an attempt will be made to contact the parents.
* Traditionally, school attendance is strong in our school and has not been adversely affected by social changes. However, staff remain vigilant so that students with erratic or worrying low levels of attendance are identified early. Appropriate contact takes place between school and parent/guardians either via letter or note in the homework diary when this occurs.
* A meeting between parents and Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

**Communication with other Schools**

* When a child transfers from the Robertson N.S. to another school, school’s records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
* When a child transfers into the RobertsonN.S. confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child’s previous school, and appropriate records sought.
* Data re. pupils transferring from the RobertsonN.S. to a Post Primary school will be forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment and with agreement from parents. Documents produced by the NCCA are used for the transfer of information.

**Communication with Parents**

Parents are regularly informed of the school’s policy on attendance and their responsibility for ensuring that their children attend regularly. Parents of new children are informed on enrolment.

**Promoting Attendance**

The school promotes good attendance by:

* Creating a safe and welcoming environment;
* Ensuring children are happy;
* Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding;
* Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying, etc. are identified early;
* Rewarding good attendance with certificates.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

* Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance;
* Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason;
* Working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems;
* Making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance.
* Discussing planned absences with the school;
* Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time;
* Showing an interest in their children’s school day and their children’s homework.
* Encouraging them to participate in school activities;
* Praising and encouraging their children’s achievements;
* Instilling in their children a positive attitude to school;
* Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school;
* Ensuring, as much 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 of other related school matters;
* Notifying the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

**Punctuality**

School begins at 9.20 a.m. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The class teacher will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. If there is no improvement the Principal will contact the parents/guardians. If there is still no improvement the matter will be brought to the Board of Management. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Late arrivals and early departures are recorded.

**National Education Welfare Board**

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

1. A child is expelled
2. A child is suspended
3. A child has missed more than 20 days
4. A child’s attendance is erratic and giving cause for concern

The N.E.W.B is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report.

**Evaluation:**

The success of any Attendance policy is measured through

* Improved attendance levels
* Happy confident well adjusted children
* Positive parental feedback
* Teacher vigilance

**Implementation/Ratification and Review:**

This policy was drafted and ratified in 2015. It replaced a previous version, drafted in 2013. It was circulated to parents and reviewed by the Board of Management during the school year 2017/2018.