

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

PURPOSE

1. Regular and punctual attendance at school is essential for learning and progress.
2. The Board are responsible for monitoring all children's attendance.
3. To inform parents when attendance is irregular or unexplained.

OBJECTIVES

1. Teachers mark the Attendance Register twice daily: first thing in the morning and immediately after lunch.
2. Parents will notify the school on the first day of their child's absence as early as possible before 8.40 am.
3. The teachers will notify the office of unexplained absences by 9.00 am.
4. The Attendance Officer will contact parents when the daily return causes concern. If unable to contact parents/caregivers, the Truancy Officer will be notified to visit the home
5. When necessary a formal letter will be posted home to parents where irregular attendance is causing concern – from the Principal and co-signed by the Board Chairperson.
6. Consistently high attendance will be acknowledged by teachers and Principal.
7. Reports will contain attendance data.
8. Children who are sick are not expected to attend school.
9. Parents carry responsibility to enroll their eligible children in a registered school (SS 20 and 24 Education Act 1989) and to ensure they attend.
10. There are procedures under S29 of the Act for unjustified irregular attendances.
11. Attendance Registers will be checked regularly and concerns noted.
12. Protocol of Procedures Appendix 1 to Policy will be followed.

BEING POSITIVE ABOUT CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL

Parent/Caregiver's Role

Parents are EXPECTED to notify the school whenever their child/ren will be absent. This can be done by:

- A phone call;
- A note delivered by a sibling or another child;
- Call at the school personally.

School's Role

Teachers note on e-tap the names of children who are not present during the roll call.

Children who are LATE for school and thus miss the roll call DO NOT go directly to their class. The latecomers MUST report directly to the resource room to sign in on the late sheet.

A text message/email is sent to all students who are marked absent but not accounted for. If no response has been received, the Attendance Officer will phone the parent/caregiver. Truancy will be contacted when the school is unable to make contact to follow up absences.

Truancy Service Role

- Responds to the school requests
- Visit homes to check on unaccounted children. If a child IS at home, remind parents of their responsibility to advise the school (school is concerned for the safety of the child). If child NOT home, leave a card with a note.
- Reports back to the school via a phone call.

EACH SCHOOL WILL HAVE THEIR OWN ATTENDANCE POLICY.

THE TRUANCY SERVICE is the school's authorised agents as Attendance Officers.

RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE TRUANCY ACT 1989

24. Penalty for failure to enroll:

- (1) Where a parent of a person required by this Act to be enrolled at a registered school fails or refuses to ensure that the person is enrolled at a registered school, the parent commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000.00.

- (2) The payment of a fine in respect of a conviction for an offence against subsection (1) of this section is not a bar to proceedings for further such offence. CF 1964, No 135, s 116.

29 Penalty for irregular attendance:

- (1) Every parent of a person who:
 - (a) While enrolled at a registered school, does not attend as provided in Section 24 of this Act; or
 - (b) While enrolled at a correspondence school, does not do the work of the course in which the student is enrolled

Commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding an amount calculated at the rate of \$15.00 for every school day for which the offence has occurred.

- (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, a fine imposed for an offence against that subsection shall not exceed \$150.00 for a first offence against the subsection (or section 120 (1) of the Education Act 1964) or \$400.00 for a second or subsequent offence.
- (3) The imposition of a penalty under this section does not affect or restrict the operation of any provision of the Child, Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989, cf 1964, No 135, ss119 (2), 120.

31 Ensuring attendance of students:

- (1) Any Board may appoint any person to be an Attendance Officer for the schools or institutions it administers.
- (2) A person may be appointed an Attendance Officer by two or more Boards.
- (3) Every Board shall, by any means it thinks appropriate, take all reasonable steps to ensure the attendance of students enrolled at its school or schools (or institution or institutions).
- (4) An Attendance Officer, on producing a distinctive badge or other evidence of appointment, or a member of the Police may, at any time, detain any person who appears to have turned 6 and not to have turned 16 and who is not then at school, and question the person as to the person's name, address, the school (if any) at which the person is enrolled and the reason for the person's absence from school.

- (5) If not satisfied by the person's answers that the person has a good reason for not being at school, the Attendance Officer or member of the Police -
 - (a) May take the person to the person's home or to the school at which the Officer thinks the person is enrolled:
 - (b) Repealed by s7 Education Amendment Act (no 4) 1991 (1991 No 136).
- (6) A person who, after an Attendance Officer has produced evidence of appointment, obstructs or interferes with the Officer in the exercise of powers under this section, commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000.00.
- (7) Any Attendance Officer, a Principal, or any person appointed by the Board for the purpose may lay information, conduct prosecutions, and take any other proceedings, under this part of this Act.
- (8) A certificate sealed by a Board showing that a person named in it is appointed for any purpose under this section is sufficient evidence of the matters specified in the certificate; and the authenticity of, on validity of the affixing of, a Board's seal shall not in any proceedings under this part of this Act be inquired into or disputed. Cf 1964, No 135 s 123.

Subsection (4) has been amended, as from 1/1/93, by a s 5(2) Education Amendment Act (No 4) 1991 (1991 No 136) by substituting the expression "16" for the expression "15". It would appear that the expression "5" (indicated in italics) should have been amended to read "6" although there has been no formal amendment to the effect.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN BEFORE REFERRAL

1. Attendance Register marked by the teacher.
2. Absences documented and returned to Attendance Officer.
3. Attendance Officer contacts families or emergency contact.
4. If no explanation or contact made the Truancy Services is engaged to make home contact.
5. Truancy Services report back to school on outcome of visit.

If parents have made no contact and irregular attendance still occurs, the following steps may be taken by the school:

1. Letter home.
2. Second letter home with computer printout of absences (DP/Principal). Parents invited to attend interview at school.
3. Third letter from Principal.

4. Final warning – **urgency stage** (Board Chair) – delivered by Truancy Officer.
5. School gives Police authority to prosecute parents of absent pupil.