**Rahealty N.S.**

**Attendance Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy document was drawn up:

* To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians drew up this policy on Attendance.

**Rationale**

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

* The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation, such as:
  + The Education Act, 1998
  + The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
* The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils’ learning.

**Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Rahealty N.S. endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils, and the school hopes to promote co-operation among pupils, parent/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance and punctuality throughout the school year.

**Aims**

* To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
* To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
* To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
* To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

**Content**

**Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance**

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on Aladdin, a web based electronic roll book. All pupil attendance is tracked through this system as is the yearly attendance and quarterly reports for TUSLA. It is compliant with recent DES circulars. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 9.30 am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. The roll allows for the entry of pupils who are late but must be noted and explanation given for late attendance. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher or kept in the child’s journal. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. Late arrivals or early departures are recorded by the class teacher.

Attendance will be monitored and parents will be informed when ten days absence has been recorded. Thereafter, we will have regular communication with parents and provide them with updates on their child’s attendance if it is a cause for concern.

We are using a sign-out book for children who are collected early by a parent. This enables us to keep a record of such absences and make parents aware of how much time is being missed. We also request parents to inform the school if someone other than a parent is collecting their child.

The school must inform the Education Welfare service of TUSLA, 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.

**Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance**

Rahealty N.S. endeavour to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. We endeavour to display kindness, compassion and understanding. Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high level of co-operation among the school community. The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a learning environment for all pupils.

Each class record is kept online through Aladdin. Classes hold regular discussions with the children on the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. A focus will be on positively affirming those children who have excellent attendance with termly attendance awards. A gold, silver and bronze cert for attendance will be given at the end of each term and the pupils photo will be taken for the noticeboard and/or school website.

Rahealty N.S. school’s homework policy, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, clearly outlines the school’s expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and a reminder is published in September. 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.

Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will contact the parents or provide lunch for the child.

**Strategies in the event of Non-Attendance**

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) act (2000) , states that “the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day.”

Section 21 of the act obliges schools to inform the education Welfare Officer if a child is absent onmore than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Boards 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. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and / or imprisonment.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the EWB five times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted – not more than six weeks following the end of the school year – detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

**Transfer to Another School**

Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare ) Act (2000) the Principal of the child’s current school must notify the Principal of the child’s previous school that the child is now registered in their school.

When a Principal received 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. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second level education.

**Parents/Guardians can promote good attendance by:**

* Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
* Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason.
* Work with the school and TUSLA to resolve any attendance problems.
* Making sure their children understand that parents support and approve of school attendance.
* Discussing planned absences with the school.
* Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time.
* Praising and encouraging the children’s achievements.
* Complete absence notes.
* By ensuring, if possible that children’s appointments are arranged for times outside of school hours.

**Success Criteria**

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy;

* An increase in annual attendance rates and punctuality
* Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the education (Welfare) Act 2000.

Roles and Responsibilities

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

**Implementation**

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents’ Association.

**Ratification and Review**

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management.

**Approved by**

**Chairperson:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Principal:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**