

*Ballyfin N.S*  
*Attendance Policy*

# **Ballyfin National School.**

## **School Attendance Policy**

### **Revised Dec. 2010.**

### **(Updated Oct. 2013).**

#### **School Details:**

- 1** Ballyfin N.S. is a co-educational primary school providing education to pupils from Junior Infants to sixth class.  
We currently have 228 pupils enrolled in our school.  
Classes begin at 9:20 am and finish at 3 pm. J.I. and S.I. classes finish at 2 pm.
- 2** The school places great value on regular attendance and strives to promote an awareness of the value of regular school attendance as an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

#### **Education Welfare Act 2002:**

The Education Welfare Act became law on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2002. It established the National Education Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.). Under the Act schools are expected to monitor and track attendance.  
The Act also outlines the schools obligation to promote good attendance and to address problems relating to attendance.  
If a student is absent for 20 days or more in a school year, the school is required to inform the Education Welfare Officer (E.W.O.).  
The Education Welfare Officer will deal with each case.

#### **Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to provide for the academic, physical, emotional, social and spiritual education of our pupils. The varying needs of all the children, the talents, personalities and learning styles of both pupils and teachers, will determine our delivery and approach.

We endeavour to build on the children's strengths and support them when they encounter difficulties.

We recognise that the parents are the primary educators of their children and we depend on their support and co-operation, together with that of the Board of Management, the Department of Education and Skills and the wider community.

Regular school attendance helps to facilitate the achievement of those aims of the mission statement.

## **Aims of School Attendance Policy**

- To promote an ethos of regular attendance and punctuality in the school.
- To share the promotion of school attendance amongst the Board of Management, Principal, teaching staff, ancillary staff, parents/guardians and the whole school community.
- To inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Welfare Act.
- To identify pupils who may be at risk due to poor or irregular school attendance.
- To ensure the school has a procedure in place to track absences, promote attendance and to address problems relating to punctuality and attendance.

## **Strategies to help Foster an appreciation of learning and school attendance.**

- The importance of regular school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupils attendance is recorded daily.
- Pupils attendance and punctuality are monitored.
- Parents /guardians are required to write a note notifying the teacher of the reason for any absence.
- Parents/guardians may be contacted by the school where reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to allow their child to stay in school for the duration of the whole day.
- Parents/guardians must provide a note of explanation for any early collection of pupils or for any pupil arriving late for school.
- Parents/guardians must use the sign in/sign out book at reception if withdrawing their child early from school.

- School attendance statistics are reported at the end of each quarter and annually to the National Education Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.).
- Once 20 days absences are reached the school principal will inform the N.E.W.B. The principal will also inform the parents/guardians of this by letter (see letter attached).
- The school calendar is issued early in the school year. It is sent out to parents via newsletter. Parents are informed of all school absences as they occur throughout the year.
- The end of year school progress reports contains a section for reporting to parents /guardians re attendance and absence.

### **Holidays during school term:**

- Ballyfin N.S. does not encourage the practice of parents/guardians withdrawing children from school for holidays during the school term.
- Twenty days can easily be accumulated when sick days and other genuine absences are taken into account. Taking holidays during school term means that the twenty days absence can be quickly breached.
- The last few weeks of the summer term are hugely important for pupils. It is the time when standardised tests are administered and work is revised.
- Teachers are not obliged to give homework to pupils to cover vacation time as homework is based on teacher instruction and work done in class. It is not appropriate for a parent to request a class teacher to set homework for pupils who absent themselves for holidays during the school term.
- **Punctuality:**  
 School is open from 9:20 am to 3:00 pm (2 pm for Junior and Senior infants). All pupils and staff are expected to be on time in order that formal instructions can begin promptly.  
 The principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act to report children who are persistently late for school to the National Educational Welfare or the H.S.E.  
 The school stresses the importance of punctuality at enrolment, parent/teacher meetings and in newsletters.

### **Role of Parents/Guardians:**

- Ensure regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notify the school if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- Work with School and Education Welfare Service to resolve any attendance problems.
- Discuss planned absences with the school.
- Praise and encourage their children achievements.
- Notify the school in writing of the reasons for absences from school.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, the children's medical appointments are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Notify the school in writing, if their child/children, particularly in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.
- Show an interest in their children's school day and their homework . Parents/guardians should sign the homework journal.
- Encourage their children to participate in school activities.
- Instilling in their children a sense of positive self worth. (Remember the school motto "Be Proud").

### **Role of Board of Management:**

- The Board of Management (B.O.M.) of Ballyfin N.S. is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance and punctuality.

### **Role of School Principal:**

- Overall responsibility for the maintenance of the registration and attendance lies with the school principal. The school Principal Michael Moloney will promote the importance of good school attendance among the whole school community.
- The School Principal assumes responsibility for registration of pupils in the school register and maintenance of pupil attendance records.

- The School Principal will inform the Education Welfare Officer.
  - (i) If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
  - (ii) If a pupil is absent for 20 days or more during the course of a school year.
  - (iii) If a pupil has been suspended.
  - (iv) If a pupil's name has been removed from the school register.
  - (v) If a pupil is regularly late for school.
- The School Principal will inform parents/guardian of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer (E.W.O) (see form attached).
- The School Principal in conjunction with teaching staff and ancillary staff, will promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance. (eg. treats, homework passes, certificates, etc).

#### **Role of Class Teacher:**

The class teacher will

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedures laid out by the Department of Education and Skills (D.E.S.).
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences. Use the pupils attendance sheet. (see form attached).
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
- In conjunction with School Principal and staff, promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance e.g. (treats, homework passes, certificates etc).
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the principal of concerns she/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- Complete the record sheet for "children absent for 20 days or more" and refer it on the School Principal (see form attached).
- Refer to the pupils attendance record when writing up the end of year progress report.

## **Information communicated via Newsletter:**

### **School Absences**

- Reasons for pupils absences must be communicated in writing by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school.
- To facilitate this, such communication should not be in the homework diary but on a separate page or sheet of paper.

**N.B.** The written note should be given to the class teacher stating-

- (1) the child's name.
- (2) the dates of absences
- (3) the reason for absences.

Should a child be absent frequently due to recurring illness or a separate medical condition, parents/guardian are required to supply a medical certificate to this effect to the school. These notes/certificates will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer (E.W.D.)

### **Please Note:**

- (a) Once a pupil has reached 20 days absence in a school year, the school is obliged to contact the Education Welfare Officer.
- (b) Telephoning the school regarding your child's absence must be followed up with a written explanation to the school.
- (c) Please note that the roll call happens at 10:30 am in each classroom. If your child arrives to school after this time he/she will be marked absent unless the school is notified in advance. Notifying the school in advance by telephoning must be followed by a written explanation for the lateness.

A **note** is also required if parents/guardians are collecting their children during school hours.

The Sign in/Sign out book (situated at reception) must also be used when withdrawing your child from school /returning to child to school.

### **References:**

- Education Act 2002.
- Ballyfin N.S. Discipline Policy.
- Ballyfin Child Protection Policy.
- Ballyfin N.S. Health, Safety and Welfare Policy.

### **Appendix**

- N.E.W.B - National Education Welfare Board.
- H.S.E. - Health Service Executive.
- D.E.S. - Department of Education and Skills.
- E.W.O - Education Welfare Officer.
- B.O.M - Board of Management.

### **Forms Attached**

- Pupils Attendance Sheet.
- Children Absent 20 days or More Form.
- Information Parents/Guardians of E.W.O Contact Form.
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- Merit Award Certificate.

### **Concluding Comment:**

This policy statement has been revised and updated based on conditions existing in the school at the time of writing. All amendments and updates will be recorded in the Attendance Policy. The original Attendance Policy was compiled on 1/10/03.

Signed: Patrick B. Hennessy  
Chairman B.O.M.  
Ballyfin N.S

Date : 20/10/2010  
(Updated Oct. 2013).



## Letter of Contact.

(Form for parents/guardians informing then school has made contact with the (E.W.O)).

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I wish to inform you that Ballyfin N.S. has made contact with the Education Welfare Officer (E.W.O). Regarding concerns about your son/daughter \_\_\_\_\_ under one or more of the headings listed below.

☐

Pupil not attending school regularly.

☐

Pupil absent for 20 days or more during the course of a school year.

☐

Pupil has been suspended.

☐

Pupil's name has been removed from the school register.

☐

Pupil is regularly late for school.

The National Education Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.) may be in contact with you with a view to addressing and resolving these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Moloney  
(Principal.)

# BALLYFIN N.S.



## ATTENDANCE AWARD

Well done \_\_\_\_\_

This certificate has been issued to

\_\_\_\_\_

On

\_\_\_\_\_

Your attendance in the school from \_\_\_\_\_

to \_\_\_\_\_ has been excellent.

You were present for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

Keep up the effort. You can really  
**BE PROUD!**

