

# Gaelscoil na Móna

## Pupil Attendance Policy

September 2011



*Striving Together for Achievement*

### **As a school we aim to:**

- Maintain an attendance rate of a *minimum* of 95%
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance

### **Good attendance is important because:**

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Regular attendees make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attendees find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Regular attendees find learning more satisfying
- Regular attendees have an easier transfer to secondary school

### **As a parent you can help us by:**

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return
- Arranging dental and doctor's appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child's return to school after an illness
- Keeping us updated by telephone or letter if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness

### **We shall:**

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls and letters as appropriate
- Query attendance below 95% by phone
- Request a parent's meeting to investigate attendance below 90%
- Publish our attendance rate in the Board of Governors Annual Report to parents
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Fulfil our obligation to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) who visits the school each month to review and support attendance matters if we continue to have concerns.

### **Authorised Absence**

Some absences are allowed by law and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, family bereavement, religious observance.

We realise that there are *rare* occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

## Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons, which are **not** permitted by law. These are known as “unauthorised absences”. Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting for a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Other unexplained absences.
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- Because it is your child’s birthday
- Holidays

## Punctuality

- Morning registration is at 9.00am. This is the time your child must be in the classroom, so you need to ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8.50am at the latest.
- Structured classroom activities and the homework club begin each morning at 8.30am which are hugely beneficial academically and socially for your child and we would urge you to encourage your child to be in early for these.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions and homework period takes place shortly after registration.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child’s punctuality.

## Term Time Leave of Absence

The School has a week’s closure at the end of May/start of June each year in which parents can take their children on holiday.

- Department of Education (NI) states that requests for holidays **cannot** be authorised once children reach statutory school age (ie Primary One).
- To take a child on holiday in September is very unsettling as they miss the start of the school year.
- Your child may miss out on important time-bound assessments if taken on holiday at other times of the year
- If the school does not agree and you take your child on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised.
- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom

We value your support in helping us to maintain and build upon our high standards.

***Every day counts...***