

Carrigaline Educate Together N.S. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGY BOOKLET

No child is an outsider



A Right to Education

Benefits of a good education

NEWB – Background

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What Teachers can do

A six step plan for encouraging improved attendance

What Schools can do

Eight steps to bring a school attendance strategy to life

When is a Child Too Sick for School?

Guidelines for common illnesses, symptoms and signs - what to do.

This booklet is available to download from our school website:

www.carrigalineeducatetogether.ie

Tel: 0214375616 email: info@cetns.org

A CHILD HAS A RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION.

A good education, combined with loving care and encouragement, will give your child a great start in life.

A good education means your child will be more likely to:

- learn more
- develop their skills and talents
- make and keep friends
- have more confidence and higher self-esteem
- do better at exams
- be employed
- get a higher earning job when they start working
- avoid getting involved in crime
- be happy in life

NATIONAL EDUCATION WELFARE BOARD (NEWB)

Attendance Matters

Most pupils go to school every day and enjoy it. Some children do experience difficulties in attending school for a variety of reasons. Sometimes parents are aware of this. Sometimes they aren't. The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) was established under the Education Welfare Act 2000 to ensure children between the ages of 6 & 16 attend school on a regular basis or are otherwise in receipt of a minimum standard of Education. It also is responsible for the national register of children who are being home-educated and the assessment of the education provided to these children to ensure it meets set minimum standards.

The Law

The Education Welfare Act 2000 allows the NEWB to bring prosecutions against parents who are "failing or neglecting" to cause their children to attend a recognised school. Upon conviction parents may be fined up to €635 each or face up to one month imprisonment.

School Leaving Age

Section 2 of the Education Welfare Act requires children resident in the state to attend school when they reach 6 years of age. Children may **NOT** leave school until they are 16 years old and have **completed** 3 years post primary education whichever occurs **later**.

Local Contact Details

Address: NEWB, Block C, Heritage Business Park, Bessboro Road, Blackrock, Cork

Tel: 021 242 8611 Email: ewsinfo@tusla.ie www.newb.ie

The work of the NEWB

The NEWB aims to reduce unnecessary absences from school by offering support and help to parents, pupils and schools. The key to achieving this is good communication between the school, home and NEWB so that any problems can be resolved quickly.



School Principals are legally obliged to maintain a register of pupils attending his or her school. High levels of school absenteeism must be reported by the Principal to their Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). Upon receipt of this referral the EWO begins a process of intervention aimed at finding a resolution to the issues preventing the child from attending school.

The EWO will work with a range of local and national services to assist the child, family and school. These include the HSE social work department, National Educational Psychological Service, National Council for Special Education, School Completion Programme, Home School & Community Liaison Officers, Family Support Services, VEC's, ISPCC, Child and Mental Health Services, Child Psychology etc.

The NEWB not only work with children who present with school attendance issues but also work with students whose behaviour in school has led to extended periods of suspension or permanent exclusion from school. They also assist families whose children have not been able to secure a place in a school for their children to attend.

National Education Welfare Board New Integrated Approach to School Attendance, Retention and Participation: September 2010 Progress Update

Background

A core part of the new strategy is an integrated child- and family- centred education support service drawing on the skills, expertise and knowledge of four services – Home School Community Liaison (HSCL), Educational Welfare Service (EWS), School Completion Programme (SCP) and the Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers (VTST).

Benefits of integration

The purpose of the integration project is to improve educational outcomes for children. There will be more unified service delivery from the perspective of the child, family and the school.

It is envisaged that integration will result in better engagement with other Departments, agencies and services, statutory and non-statutory working with children and families. Policy making too should be enhanced with the increased emphasis on planning, outcome measurement and the gathering of evidence on the impact of interventions. Further updates will be placed on the School / NEWB website as the work progresses.

USEFUL LOCAL CONTACTS

Big Brother/Big Sister Project Officers:	086 0412946 or 086 8513347
Carrigaline Family Support Centre:	021 4919299
Carrigaline Youth Initiative:	021 4919635
Children & Adolescence Mental Health Services (CAMHS):	021 4357447
Department of Education & Skills:	0906 483600
Department of Education & Skills Home Tuition:	0906 484187
Educate Together Head Office:	01 4292500
Garda (Carrigaline):	021 4919370
HSE Children First Information Department:	021 4923220
HSE Family Centre:	021 4923302
HSE Immunisation information line:	1850 24 1850
HSE Occupational Therapy:	021 4923194
HSE Speech & Language Therapy:	021 4927801
ISPCC Cork:	021 4509588
National Council for Special Education (NCSE):	021 4359209
National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS):	0761 108450
National Education Welfare Board (NEWB):	021 242 8611
School Transport Office (Bus Éireann):	021 4557137 or 021 4557129
Social Work Team (St. Finbarr's Hospital):	021 492 3001
Youth Work Ireland (Administration):	021 4399862
Youth Advocate Programme Cork:	021 4397752

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE?

After school every day:

- Make sure that the homework is done as early as possible
- Make sure that your child has a healthy and wholesome dinner



The night before:

Get the following ready

- School bag
- Lunch
- School clothes
- Get your child to bed at a reasonable hour every night
- Set the alarm on your mobile phone or the alarm clock for the morning



Before school every day:

- Get up on time in the morning so that you will not be rushing
- Don't allow your child to watch television in the morning
- Get your child to eat some breakfast every morning
- Talk positively about school
- If possible don't allow your child to go to the shop in the morning as this delays them and they could be late for school
- Let your child know that who will be there to collect him/her in the afternoon and/or who will be meeting them at home when they come in
- You know your child best. Only keep your child at home if s/he is really sick (See pages of this booklet for guidelines *When is a child too sick for school*)



Absences

- Don't forget, if a child misses a school day or part of a school day parents/guardians must provide the school with an explanation in writing (see *Absence Note docket in journal*). Note: your child will be marked absent if not present by 10a.m.
- Parents should refrain from taking their children on holiday during the school year

“Ready for School Routine” - Easy steps to get to school today

1. Get up on time
2. Breakfast
3. School clothes
4. Books
5. Journal
6. Bag
7. Leave home on time

WHAT CAN TEACHERS DO TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE?

- ✓ Welcome students every morning
- ✓ Praise each student for their effort
- ✓ Give students a reasonable amount of homework
- ✓ All teachers should give homework each night
- ✓ No homework at weekends
- ✓ Reward students for good attendance e.g. in-class reward at the end of term for best attendance



WHAT CAN SCHOOLS DO TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE?

- ✓ Give efforts to promote attendance and attendance successes a high profile within the school i.e. NEWB Certificate awarding ceremony at end of term/year assembly
 - **Terms 1 & 2 (end of each):** Any child with full attendance shall be congratulated in their class and shall have their photograph taken to be displayed near the entrance for parents/teachers/pupils in a communal area, thus encouraging full attendance amongst the rest of the school. A group photo will also be taken for the school website.
 - **Term 3:** At the end of the school year, the same shall be done with the photographs being displayed during the following year. Also, during the first assembly of the new school year, children with full attendance from the previous year will be given an official certificate from NEWB (6th class students will be given theirs at the graduation ceremony/last assembly of the school year). It is hoped that this will encourage similar attendance amongst others and that it ensures the children with good attendance know that their efforts did not go unnoticed
 - Children who missed one day only in the previous academic year will have a group photo taken to be displayed on the school website also.
- ✓ Create positive systems of reward for good and improved attendance
- ✓ Develop a greater awareness amongst students and their parents of the long-term benefits to be gained from a good attendance record
- ✓ Pay attention to lateness. Lateness is often an indication of the beginning of a problem and needs a rapid and intense response
- ✓ Ensure a consistent approach to attendance promotion throughout the school
- ✓ Involve all stakeholders in supporting high expectations for school attendance and attainment
- ✓ Monitor that stakeholder involvement from the perspective of students, parents, teaching and other staff, school management and the community at large
- ✓ Keep up to date attendance records that are reviewed regularly by the Attendance Care Team (principal & secretary, with the support of class teachers) in order to respond to patterns of non-attendance as well as patterns of good or improved attendance
- ✓ When any child reaches 15 days, the parents will be reminded in writing of the importance of good attendance by the Attendance Care Team
- ✓ Highlight children who have been reported to NEWB in the previous academic year for the new class teacher to be monitor
- ✓ Ensure that continued poor attendance is monitored. In a situation where attendance does not improve, invite parents to a meeting with the principal and class teacher to discuss strategies and identify problems for the poor attendance
- ✓ Make every reasonable effort to resolve the issue of persistent absenteeism through consultation with parents/guardians, school staff and NEWB.
- ✓ Make allowances for children with serious illness/specific reasons for poor attendance (at the discretion of the school)

WHEN IS A CHILD TOO SICK FOR SCHOOL?



There are three key reasons to keep a child home from school:

1. **Fever over 100.4°F or 38°C**
2. **The child may have a contagious illness or rash.**
3. **The child is not well enough to participate in class.**

- The average child has 6 to 12 illnesses per year, so sickness is a part of normal childhood. It can be difficult to balance the child's school attendance with the risk of spreading the illness to others in school.
- Fever is a symptom which usually indicates that the body is fighting an infection. A child with fever over 100.4°F or 38°C needs to stay home until the fever is gone for 24 hours.
- Rashes that are itchy or scaly may be contagious and need to be checked by the nurse or doctor. If a child with a rash is ill-looking, is having trouble swallowing or breathing, they need to be seen by the doctor.
- A cough need not keep a child from school unless it is interfering with sleep or ability to take part in activities.
- Coughs and runny noses can persist for up to two weeks after a cold. Children can return to school once they no longer have a fever.
- Children can attend school with a mild sore throat unless they have other symptoms as well, such as fever, vomiting or abdominal pain.
- Children with a vomiting illness (repeated vomiting) need to stay home until the vomiting stops and they are eating normally.
- Children with diarrhoea also need to stay home until stools have been normal for at least 24 hours.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the most important and effective way of preventing the spread of contagious diseases.

GUIDELINES FOR COMMON CHILDHOOD ILLNESSES

Illness	Symptoms and Signs	What to do
Fever	100.4°F or 38°C	Stay home, must be fever free for 24 hours before returning
Headache	If the child can't do normal activities	Stay home
Vomiting	More than twice in 24 hours or if diarrhoea also	Stay home until 24 hours after last vomit
Diarrhoea	More than 3 stools in 24 hours	Home until 24 hours after last bout
Sore Throat	If not eating or fever	Return as soon as well or 24 hours after starting antibiotic if prescribed
Cold Symptoms	Stuffed or runny nose, sneezing, mild cough	No need to stay home
Cough	If the cough disrupts normal activity	Return to school after the doctor has cleared child of serious illness e.g. whooping cough
Asthma	If the child can't do normal activities. If coughing a lot.	Needs to see the doctor or asthma nurse to review treatment.
Conjunctivitis (Red Eyes)	With yellow or green pus	May return 24 hours after treatment started
Chicken Pox	Some children have a fever, abdominal pain, sore throat, headache, or a vague sick feeling a day or two before the rash appears	Return when the blisters are all dry and crusted over. Please notify school office immediately.
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Not infectious once rash appears	No need to stay home unless drooling
Impetigo	Patch of red, itchy skin. Blisters develop on this area, soon forming crusty, yellow-brown sores	May return 24 hours after starting antibiotic medicine, 48 hours after starting antibiotic cream. Sores must be covered with dressing.
Ringworm	Ring- or oval- shaped patch of scaly red skin	Return once started on treatment. Keep area covered.
Head Lice	Spread directly from head to head so short and tidy hair may help	They are a nuisance, not a reason to stay home. However, you must notify the class teacher or office.
Doctor or dentist visit		Back to school immediately afterward unless the dentist or doctor says stay at home.

DAY / DATE	No. of days missed	Reason for absence	Medical cert or note given to school?

To date _____, your child has missed _____ days from school.