

Policy for Promoting Good Attendance 2017/18

At Gaelscoil Aodha Rua, it is our aim to encourage all children to reach their maximum potential, to enable them to grow into well-rounded individuals. Good attendance at school is essential so that children can progress with the curriculum and can develop socially and emotionally, in forming relationships with their peers and teachers. In an Irish medium setting, we deliver the curriculum through the medium of Irish and therefore as well as teaching the curriculum, we are also assisting the children in acquiring proficiency in Irish on a daily basis. Good attendance at school is essential in ensuring that the children have regular exposure to the Irish language and build up their own proficiency on a gradual basis.

Here at Gaelscoil Aodha Rua, we commend the parents and children of our school on our attendance record to date:

2012/13 95.3% (176 days attended out of a possible 185)

2013/14 96.9% (179 days attended out of a possible 185)

2014/15 95.9% (177 days attended out of a possible 185)

2015/16 96.3% (178 days attended out of a possible 185)

2016/17

We also pay tribute to the staff of the school, who dedicate themselves to making the school day an enjoyable and stimulating experience for the children. This in turn, encourages children to want to attend school and instils in them a thirst for learning.

However, we remind parents that a 95% attendance rate is equivalent to a child having missed **nine** school days, which is in effect almost two full school weeks. So we definitely still have room for improvement!

Illness

If your child is ill, please keep them at home. This allows them sufficient time to rest and recuperate and also prevents the spread of infections and viruses among the other pupils and staff. It is recommended that a child suffering from a vomiting bug should remain at home for 24 hours after the vomiting / loose bowel movements have ended. If they have been prescribed an antibiotic, it is recommended that they remain at home until they have taken the medicine for two full days.

On your child's return to school, we ask that you send a short note to explain their absence to their class teacher. Please read the enclosed guidance from the Public Health Agency regarding infectious illnesses. (Appendix 1)

Appointments

If your child needs to see the dentist, doctor or other health professional, please try to schedule the appointment outside school hours. We recognise that this is not always possible and ask that if your child needs to leave school early to attend an appointment, that you call with our secretary at the school office and **'sign'** your child out.

Extra-Curricular Activities

We delight in celebrating the diverse achievements of many of our pupils in sporting activities, Irish dancing, Speech & Drama, Cheer-leading and many other activities. We recognise that once or twice a year, some children may have to attend drama / music exams or special competitions and that it is

unavoidable to keep these outside of school hours. In these instances, please write a short note to your child's teacher explaining their absence or if they are due to return to school later that day, please follow the '**signing out**' procedure as detailed above.

Family Holidays

Having consulted with parents, we have retained the decision to take a full week of holidays on or around the May bank holiday each year. We are aware that holidays tend to be substantially cheaper at this time of year, in comparison to the peak times in July and August. Our rationale behind this decision was to avoid the practice of children missing days at school in June to go on a family holiday, when we are busy in school doing end of year assessments. If a child misses their assessments, particularly the standardised tests such as PIE (Progress in English) and PIM (Progress in Maths) and has to sit the test on a different date, it is difficult to compare the scores fairly as the test was not sat under the same conditions. We also feel that children benefit from ending the school year together with their classmates and that they feel a great sense of success from taking part in the end of year Sports Day and prize-giving events. Therefore, we respectfully ask parents to confine family holidays to the week period at the end of May and to remain within those dates, ie. not a few days before / after that week period.

Awards for Attendance

At Gaelscoil Aodha Rua, we do not give awards for full attendance. We took this decision based on the knowledge that we have a number of children in our school with persistent health conditions, which means that they are likely to miss school due to ill health, particularly during the cold winter months. We also place the responsibility for pupils' attendance with the parents, not the child.

Punctuality

It is very important that your child arrives at school on time each morning. The school day begins at 9am. Children who arrive late often become distressed as they have missed out on their play choices (in Rang1/2) or on the introduction to the first lesson of the day, in older classes. In order to facilitate working parents, we accept children from 8.45am and ask that parents respect this flexibility by not leaving children to school before this time. Children who wish to practise hurling / camogie skills at the ball-wall before school, must be accompanied by their own parent / guardian.

The school day finishes at the following times:

Rang 1 @ 1.45pm

Rang 2 @ 2pm (siblings in Rang 1 can wait until 2pm with class-teacher)

Rang 3-7 @ 3pm

Please try to be punctual at home-time, as children often become distressed when they are not collected on time. School staff have daily planning commitments / meetings which have to be delayed if they are supervising children who have not been collected on time. We appreciate that on occasion, we all get held up or stuck in traffic. Please give us a ring and let us know that you are running late.

Partnership with Parents / Educational Welfare Officer

We aim to work in partnership with parents on the issue of good attendance / good punctuality and ask that you inform us if there are particular reasons why your child is often absent from school. The Educational Welfare Officer visits the school once per term and asks to see records of attendance for all children and in particular those whose attendance rate has fallen below 85%. The EWO is also interested in speaking with us about any unexplained absences; therefore it is important that you send a note to your child's teacher explaining all absences on your child's return to school.

If a child is being brought to school late or collected late on a regular basis, we may need to speak to the EWO or Social Services regarding the issue.

We thank you the parents of our school for your efforts in ensuring good attendance and good punctuality to date and hope that we can improve upon our current record in the coming year.

Please read this policy carefully and the Department of Education flyer attached.

As DE have said:

'Every School Day Counts! Miss School = Miss Out'

Appendix 1

Infection / Illness	Treatment / Action	Period of recommended absence from school
Vomiting & Diarrhoea (tummy bug)	Inform school. Keep hydrated.	48 hours after last episode of vomiting / diarrhoea.
Conjunctivitis	Inform school, seek medical advice / treatment. Ensure regular hand-washing.	None
Glandular Fever	Inform school & visit GP.	No statutory period.
Head Lice	Inform school & apply lotion / treatment as recommended.	No statutory period.
Meningitis	Inform school and visit GP urgently.	Until fully recovered. GP will provide guidance on safe return to school and public health advice.
MRSA	Inform school & visit GP.	GP will provide guidance on safe return to school and public health advice.
Mumps	Inform school & visit GP.	5 days after onset of swelling.
Threadworm	Inform school and seek medical advice / treatment. Ensure good handwashing & hygiene practises.	No statutory period.
Tonsillitis	Inform school & visit GP.	No statutory period.
Chickenpox	Inform school in case of pregnant staff members. Visit GP.	Until all spots are dry and have 'crusted' over.
German Measles	Inform school in case of pregnant staff members. Visit GP.	4 days from onset of rash.
Hand, foot & mouth	Ensure good handwashing & hygiene practises.	No statutory period.
Impetigo	Inform school and visit GP.	Until lesions are crusted and healed or at least 48 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment.
Measles	Inform school and visit GP.	Four days from onset of rash.
Ringworm	Inform school and visit GP.	No statutory period.
Scabies	Inform school and visit GP.	Child can return after first treatment.
Scarlet fever	Inform school and visit GP.	At least 24 hours after commencing antibiotic treatment.
Slapped Cheek	Inform school in case of pregnant staff members. Visit GP.	No statutory period.
Shingles	Inform school and visit GP.	Child should remain absent from school if rash is weeping and cannot be covered.
Flu	Inform school.	Until fully recovered and temperature is stable.
TB	Inform school and visit GP urgently.	GP will provide guidance on safe return to school and public health advice.
Whooping Cough	Inform school and visit GP urgently.	48 hours from commencing antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of illness, if not taking antibiotics.