

Gaelscoil Uí Néill Attendance Policy



Attendance Policy Summary:

Gaelscoil Uí Néill recognises that punctual and regular attendance alongside high standards of behaviour is an essential prerequisite to effective learning and is, therefore, committed to maintaining high levels of attendance, punctuality and positive behaviour. To this end, we in Gaelscoil Uí Néill actively promote a teaching and learning ethos which encourages all pupils to attend whatever their level of ability or need. High levels of attendance will be recognised through the presentation of certificates to pupils. In accordance with other school policies, all members of the school community should be able to thrive, feel respected, safe and secure.

Schools have a legal responsibility to report any pupil to the Educational Welfare Office whose absence falls below 85% or where there has been an absence of more than 10 days and where it is proved impossible to make contact with a parent or carer.

Schools are required to take an attendance register each day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved activity off site, or absent. If a pupil is absent, every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. Only the school can authorise the absence, not parents/ carers. This is why information about the cause of each absence is required in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping pupils off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained

It is hoped that parents/carers, school staff and statutory authorities can work closely to overcome any problems which may affect a pupil's attendance. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This will only give the impression that attendance does not matter, and may make matters worse.

PROCEDURES

Registration:

Morning registration begins at 9.00 a.m. promptly and will be taken by the class teacher. Pupils who are late will be recorded as such in the register. Any pupil who is late on more than two occasions in a half term will be referred to the Principal

Absence:

Please note that it is no longer permitted to inform the school about a child's absence in person or on the phone. Instead, pupils must bring a written explanation of the absence from his/her parent/carer to the first registration on returning to school. This note should include:

- the pupil's full name and class
- the date(s) of the absence
- as full an explanation as possible for the absence
- the name of the parent / carer in block capitals along with their signature

If a pupil fails to bring a note within two days of returning to school, a reminder will be sent to the parental contact. Pupils who persistently fail to bring absence notes will be brought to the attention of the Principal who will make contact with the home. Parents/Carers who persistently fail to inform the school in writing of the reason for their child's absence may be referred to the Educational Welfare Office.

Absence for Medical reasons:

Parents/carers are asked, whenever possible, to make appointments outside school hours. If an appointment has to be made during school hours a written explanation must be provided stating clearly the time of the appointment. If there are frequent absences for medical reasons, parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence in the form of a doctor's certificate. Pupils are expected to return to school following their appointment, whenever possible. If a pupil has a medical condition that may affect attendance and punctuality parents/carers are asked to contact the school to discuss possible arrangements with their child's class teacher.

Family Holidays during Term Time:

Gaelscoil Uí Néill strongly discourages holidays during term time due to the impact that they have on pupils' learning. Parents/carers must contact the school, prior to booking any holiday to explain the need to remove a pupil from school during term time. The contact should be in the form of a letter addressed to the Principal.

Currently there is no legislation in the North of Ireland with regard to holidays in term time (as there is in Britain). However, if a pupil's attendance falls below 85% in a school year, the school concerned is obliged to contact the Educational Welfare Officer.

Thanking you in anticipation of your co-operation with this updated policy.

TEMPORARY ABSENCE SLIP

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

The above pupil has an appointment to attend:

(Date)/...../..... at (Time).....

She/He will/will not return to school. *(Please mark as appropriate).*

Parent/Guardian (Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

ABSENCE NOTE

To be given to your child's teacher on the day your child returns to school following any absence.

Pupil's Name: _____ Class: _____

Reason for Absence

From _____ to _____

Parent/Guardian (Print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____