

# SCOIL MUIRE GAN SMÁL



## ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

### 1. SCOPE

This strategy applies to the students, staff and parents of Scoil Mhuire gan Smál and relates to all aspects of school attendance and punctuality. This strategy was drawn up in consultation with all the school partners, including the Board of Management, staff, parents and students.

### 2. RELATIONSHIP TO THE SCHOOL'S MISSION, VISION AND AIMS

At SMGS Blarney, we are committed to encouraging our students to develop a pattern of regular and punctual attendance in order to benefit fully from the education provided. Without such a pattern of regular attendance, it is not possible to “*Develop desirable qualities such as self-esteem, enthusiasm for learning, leadership, caring and consideration for others*”

(Ref: School Mission Statement)

The Attendance Policy of SMGS involves helping each student develop to his / her full potential, both socially and educationally. In SMGS we believe this can only happen where each student is encouraged to attend punctually every day.

### 3. RATIONALE

In SMGS we have identified attendance and punctuality as an area of focus. This strategy is intended to foster a good mature attitude towards attendance and punctuality.

## 4. OBJECTIVES

Through implementation of this strategy SMGS expects to:

- To encourage full attendance at school.
- To highlight the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents.
- To positively enforce punctual attendance for all classes throughout the day.
- To maintain an effective attendance record-keeping system through our admin system Vsware
- To develop suitable intervention strategies to improve school attendance and punctuality.

## 5. POLICY CONTENT

### 5.1 National Educational Welfare Board

Under legislation every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age or complete at least three years education in a post primary school; whichever comes later. The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.

**As a parent you must notify the school if your child is absent and the reason why. It is school policy that explanations must be given in writing. The school will notify the Educational Welfare Board if a child is absent for 20 days or more or where the absence gives rise for concern. This is outlined below:**

### 5.2 The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 18

Where a child is absent from the school at which he or she is registered during part of the school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parent of such child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the Code of Behaviour, prepared by the school under section 23, notify the Principal of the school of the reasons for the child's absence.

### **5.3 The Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Section 21 (4)**

The Principal of the school concerned shall inform, by notice of writing to the Educational Welfare Officer,

#### **Where:**

- 1) A student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than 6 days.
- 2) The aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognized school during a school year is not less than 20 days.

**SMGS recognises the importance of good attendance and punctuality.**

**Regular or prolonged absences will have a negative impact on a student's learning and development and therefore should be avoided whenever possible. The school has an Attendance Strategy in place, the aim of which is to promote good attendance in the school. Poor punctuality has a similarly negative impact on the learning of the student, and has the further effect of disrupting the class into which the student is arriving late. The guidelines below should be adhered to by all students.**

1. The school day begins at **08.35am**. Students are expected to be in their classrooms by **08.30am**. Lunch is from **12.50pm**. to **1.30pm**. (exception being Wednesday) and students are expected to be in their classrooms by **1.25 pm**. upon their return from lunch. Time in between lessons should only be used to prepare for the next lesson.
2. Students arriving late to school (after 08.30am) must report to main reception, sign the Late Book and have their journal stamped with a late pass by the Principal / Deputy Principals / secretary before they can be accepted into class. Regular offenders are noted and followed up by Year Heads on a regular basis with students/parents.
3. **Parents / Guardians should use the 'late with note' option on VShare to outline the reason for a student's lateness. (See appendix 1)**
4. Students will receive sanctions for unexcused absences and lateness in accordance with the SMGS Code of Behavior. Parents/Guardians and

students are requested to avoid where possible, making medical /dental appointments during school hours.

5. A student may not leave school during the school day without permission; **If a student needs to attend an appointment, their parent/guardian must submit the request in advance on VSware using the ‘partial day’ feature** so it can be approved prior to the student leaving school by office staff/relevant Year head. The student must still present at the main office and sign the OUT BOOK. If returning on the same day, the student must sign back in at the office in the OUT BOOK.
6. Any contact with parents/guardians in relation to leaving school must be made through the office.
7. **In the event of a student becoming ill during the school day the student must inform the Principal or Deputy Principals. Contact with home can only then be made through the main office.** It is expected that students will follow the mobile phone policy and not use their mobile devices to contact home unless permission has been received @ main office. A parent / guardian must collect the student and the student **MUST** sign the Out Book before leaving the school.
8. **If a pupil is absent from school, the student’s parent/guardian must notify the school using the absence for a ‘individual date’ or multi-date’ feature.** The National Education Welfare Board requires this.

## **PUPILS ATTENDING CLASSES IN SMGS**

1. Pupils should go to and return from these classes in an orderly and prompt manner.
2. Students must respect the authority of the Principal and teachers of SMGS.
3. Attendance at classes in SMGS is always recorded and is monitored on a weekly basis by the Year Head.

## 6. ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

SMGS will recognise students' who achieve full attendance in the school year by presenting the students with a certificate of full attendance

## 7. DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Disciplinary actions consistent with the Code of Behaviour will be imposed by the Principal, Deputy and Year Heads for unexcused absences. Individual class teachers will impose sanctions for lateness consistent with the Code of Behaviour.

**The remaining content of this policy outlines in detail the whole school approach to the following attendance and punctuality procedures:**

- Daily monitoring of attendance at 08.35am and throughout the day.
- Daily monitoring of punctuality at 08.35am and throughout the day.
- Recording of daily attendance.
- Recording lateness.
- Noting communications through VShare re 'late with note' and absences.
- Recording early departures and SMGS school attendance.
- Sanctions for lateness.
- Sanctions for unexcused absences.
- Informing parents when concerns arise.

## 8. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

SMGS acknowledges the contribution of all members of the school community in the implementation of this Attendance and Punctuality Strategy.

### 8.1 PRINCIPAL AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

- The Principal and Deputy Principals carry out spot checks on absences and are on hand at reception each morning to monitor punctuality etc.

- Apply disciplinary procedures to students for unexcused absences and lateness, consistent with the SMGS Code of Behaviour and the National Education Welfare Board legislation on attendance.
- In conjunction with Year heads, monitor VShare communication from parents/guardians regarding explained punctuality (late with note), leaving during school day (partial absence) or explaining absent days (individual date/multi date)
- Record all student groups away on school activities on Vshare as SA

## **8.2 YEAR HEAD**

- Review student absences on a weekly basis with reference to VShare records and consultation with DPs/main office.
- Regular contact with parents regarding correct procedure for recording attendance and punctuality issues.
- Apply Behaviour Management procedures (in consultation with Management) to students for unexcused absences consistent with Code of Behaviour and the National Education Welfare Board legislation on attendance.
- Contact parents' where appropriate, re student's number of absences
- Record the number of days a student is absent in student reports to parents.
- Good attendance and punctuality will be acknowledged in the reports issued to students and parents/guardians at the end of the first term and at the end of the academic year.

## **8.3 CLASS TEACHER**

- All teachers will keep individual class attendance records for every class taught on Vshare.
- Class teachers will follow up on student absences and report to the Year Head if necessary
- Students away for school activities must not be marked absent. They are recorded as SA by the DP as soon as lists are made available.
- Promote and encourage good attendance in class.
- Teachers may communicate with parents/guardians at parent teacher meetings on the importance and value of good attendance.

## 8.4 STUDENT

- Students arriving late to school (after 08.30am) must report to main reception, sign the Late Book and have their journal stamped with a late pass by the Principal / Deputy Principals / secretary before they can be accepted into class.
- Students will receive sanctions for unexcused absences and lateness in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.
- A student may not leave school during the school day without permission; **If a student needs to attend an appointment, their parent/guardian must submit the request in advance on VShare using the 'partial day' feature** so it can be approved prior to the student leaving school by office staff/relevant Year head. The student must still present at the main office and sign the OUT BOOK. If returning on the same day, the student must sign back in at the office in the OUT BOOK.
- **In the event of a student becoming ill during the school day the student must inform the Principal or Deputy Principals. Contact with home can only then be made through the main office.** It is expected that students will follow the mobile phone policy and not use their mobile devices to contact home unless permission has been received @ main office. A parent / guardian must collect the student and the student **MUST** sign the Out Book before leaving the school.
- **If a pupil is absent from school, the student's parent/guardian must notify the school using the absence for a 'individual date' or multi-date' feature.** The National Education Welfare Board requires this.

***Ratification by BOM -***

***Review of this policy to take place***