

Newpark School Statement of Strategy for School Attendance.

Name of School – Newpark Comprehensive School,

Address - Newtownpark Ave, Blackrock, Co. Dublin

School roll number – 81001

The school's vision and values in relation to attendance

The aim of the school is to develop in our students: academic, intellectual, practical, manual and sporting abilities and skills: a capacity to deal with analytical and logical processes: to encourage a delight in spiritual, creative and artistic activities.

To foster respect, a sensitivity to the needs of others embracing diversity and to develop a sense of community in Newpark, family and in the broader social context.

We wish to develop in our students, self-esteem and self-confidence: to provide a supportive and caring community to enable our students to achieve their chosen goals, to equip them with a balanced outlook regarding life, work and leisure.

We are committed to creating an enjoyable environment in which the positive strengths of every person in this community are nurtured to the full.

The school's high expectations around attendance

The aim of Newpark Comprehensive School is to assist each student to reach their full potential by ensuring that as far as possible each student attends school to the greatest extent. The school strives to provide a welcoming and caring environment where each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

We recognise the clear and direct relationship between regular school attendance and student attainment. Overall good attendance engenders a positive attitude to school and learning while also recognising the impact of poor attendance on wider aspects of a student's life, such as weak peer relationships, risks of engagement in anti-social activity and poor family relationships.

In a recent survey carried out as part of an academic research paper the sense of belonging in the school is high and this helps toward improving the level of attendance in the school.

Parents / guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school on every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him / her not to attend. (section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000)

Only absences related to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the Principal. (Section 21(9) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000)
Therefore the school cannot give permission for holiday absences.

How attendance will be monitored

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Roll Books and electronically on VSWare by their Form Teacher every morning at registration at 8.45 am,

It is the role of the Form Teacher to take the roll carefully and accurately. At present the roll book is a manual backup.

The school will send a text message to the parents / guardians if a student is absent,

When a student returns to school a note from parents/guardians is given to the Form Teacher to explain the absence. The Form Teacher retains these notes. There is a designated section of the student's journal for absent notes.

Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early or arrives in late during the school day. These notes are kept in the Front Office.

Details of students with recorded absences of 20 days or more are reported to TULSA as required by law. In these cases, parents/guardians will receive a standard letter from the school explaining that a report has been made.

Parents / guardians are notified in writing on the Christmas report and the Summer report of the total number of absences for their child during the school year.

Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Attendance Officer / Year Leader / Deputy Principal / Principal and are informed of the school's concerns.

The school must also inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is expelled or is suspended for 6 days or more accumulatively.

Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance

Target setting and targets

Attendance will be monitored by the Year Leaders and is an item on the agenda for the weekly meetings between Year Leaders and Senior Management. Those at risk will be identified and brought up at the Student Support Team meetings. Specific interventions will be designed to meet the needs of the students.

The whole-school approach and promoting good school attendance

Newpark aims to - encourage students to attend school regularly and punctually, raise awareness of the importance of school attendance,

Accurately and effectively record student's attendance every day, notify parents / guardians by text of an absence of their child,

Monitoring student attendance and lateness, identify students, who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems,

Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance / participation, identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems

Encouraging Good Attendance

Attendance records are available to parents / guardians on VSWare and is recorded on Christmas and Summer Term reports

Importance of attendance is stressed at parents/ guardians meetings

Recognition at Year Assemblies with Certificates

Form Teacher interactions with students regarding attendance.

Year Leader / Management meetings, Student Support Team meetings and Attendance Officer discuss attendance and follow up on students with irregular patterns of attendance.

School roles in relation to attendance

Subject Teachers – mark attendance every class they teach or supervise and monitor absences to ensure they are legitimate.

Form Teachers - maintain attendance records in accordance with procedure, every morning during registration, keep records of absences and absence notes, contact parents / guardians when absences are not explained in writing, encourage students to attend regularly, inform the Year Leader of students that have caused concern regarding absences,

Year Leaders and Senior Management – review attendance at weekly meetings and meet with parents and guardians regarding attendance.

Student Support Team – discuss and follow up on students with attendance issues.

Attendance Officer – monitors attendance throughout the school in Years 1 to 6 and contact parents / guardians about absences, meet with students and parents/ guardians regarding their absences, report relevant absences to the NEWB and inform parents and guardians of this reporting by letter.

Statutory Involvement in Attendance Issues

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that ‘the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day’.

Section 21 of the Act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if a child is expelled, if a child is suspended for 6 days or more accumulatively, and if a child has missed more than 20 days.

The NEWB is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form, which is completed on-line four times a year.

Risk students can be categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in a 20-day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians via either a letter, a note or a telephone call when this occurs. A meeting between parents and the school may be set up if deemed necessary.

The Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child’s parents and the principal of the school) may serve a ‘School Attendance Notice’ on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the

child to attend the school. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)

Students have a responsibility to - attend school regularly and punctually, inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences, to promptly pass on absence notes to their Form Teachers, bring school correspondence home to their parents / guardians.

Parents / guardians can promote good school attendance by - ensuring regular and punctual attendance, informing the school in writing of the reasons for any absences, discussing planned absences with the school and if possible refrain from taking their children out of school during term time if possible, ensuring, insofar as is possible, that appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours, contacting the school immediately if they have concerns about attendance and working with the school and NEWB to resolve any attendance issues

The school – keeps in contact with parents / guardians regarding attendance and absences.

Transfer to another School - Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the principal of a child's current school must notify the principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school.

When a principal receives, notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress, as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between secondary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

Communication with other Schools - when a student transfers from Newpark School to another school, the school records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer. When a child transfers into Newpark, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought.

Visits by the Guidance Counsellors highlight poor attendance records in primary schools.

How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored – attendance reviewed weekly by Attendance Officer, Year Leaders and Senior Management.

Evaluation - The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through improved attendance levels as measured through records and statistical returns, happy confident well-adjusted children, positive parental feedback, teacher vigilance.

Review process and date for review – This policy will operate in the school year 2018-19. It will be reviewed at the end of each academic year.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management, Newpark Comprehensive School at its meeting on 17th October 2018.

Date of next review of this policy is October 2019.

