***Scoil Náisiúnta Bhaile Uí Dhuibh,***

***Ballyduff National School***

***Kilmeaden, Co. Waterford.***

***Tel.(051) 384414 E-mail: info@ballyduffns.com***

**School Attendance Policy**

**The aims of the Attendance Policy in Ballyduff National School are:**

* To encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
* To share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
* To inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
* To identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
* To ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance and participation.
* To develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
* To identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

**The school will ensure that**:

* The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
* Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
* Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
* Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
* Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.

**School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:**

* The Education Welfare Board.
* The Education Welfare Officer
* The Board of Management

**Punctuality:**

Children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9.20 a.m. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. Parents should note that children who are constantly late are missing the start of class where instructions and lessons have already begun disrupting class and class teacher. Children may feel embarrassed if coming in late as attention can be focused on them. The Principal is obliged under The Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

**Guidance for Parents:**

Section [(21) (9)] of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 states that: “a pupil’s absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. The school principal cannot authorise a child’s absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for pupils’ absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child’s name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school.

**Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:**

* Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
* Notifying the School if their children cannot attend for any reason.
* Working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems;
* Making sure their children understand that parents support and approve of school attendance;
* Discussing planned absences with the school.
* Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time.
* Showing an interest in their children’s school day and their children’s homework.
* Encouraging them to participate in school activities.
* Praising and encouraging their children’s achievements.
* Instilling in their children, a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
* Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
* Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children’s appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
* Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
* Notifying the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

**Pupils:**

* Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
* Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
* Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
* Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

**A strategy for promoting good school attendance:**

* The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard, the school will create a safe welcoming environment for the pupils and their parents.
* At the new parent induction meeting in May the Principal shall inform parents of procedures in relation to attendance as well as the importance of good attendance.
* Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
* Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
* Attendance Certificates are awarded for pupils who have full attendance on the day of the school holidays in June.
* On the end of year school reports teachers will include number of absent days if absences are consistently high.
* The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
* The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
* In the event that the principal is concerned about poor attendance of a pupil she will discuss the absences with the parent.
* Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

**The School Principal will:**

* Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
* Inform the Education Welfare Officer if a pupil is not attending school regularly, if a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year or if a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days
* Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
* Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
* Use the on-line system to record the Annual Report Form to the National Educational Welfare Board.

**The class teacher will:**

* Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with prescribed procedure. Roll call to take place by 10.20 a.m.
* Input attendance into the Aladdin system every day
* Keep notes from parents explaining absences
* Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
* Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

**Record/Communication:**

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act, attendance and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer.

Attendance and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

Attendance and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed.

This Policy was reviewed in October, 2013 and is available to all parents of pupils currently enrolled in the school on the school website. A copy of the policy may be viewed in the school office on request.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Rev. Micheal O’ Byrne, P.P. (Chairperson, BoM)