**Attendance Policy**



**Burgess National School**

**Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Burgess National School endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils, and the school hopes to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year

**Rationale**
The rationale underpinning the formulation of this policy is as follows:
To support all pupils and ensure their right to education.
To ensure all parents are aware of the necessity for regular punctual attendance at school.
To fullfil legislative requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

**Vision**
This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing the potential of every child in a caring environment where individual talents and difference are celebrated. This work is further enhanced where a level of understanding, openness and co-operation exists between the pupils, parents and staff.

**Aims**
The aims of this school policy are to:

* Foster an appreciation of learning.
* Encourage full attendance and punctuality.
* Raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.
* Identify pupils at risk.
* Promote a positive learning environment.
* Fulfil the legislative requirements of the Education Act 2000.
* To adhere to the guidelines of the National Educational Welfare Board.

**The Education Welfare) Act 2000**
The legislation governing school attendance in Ireland is the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
Parents are required to ensure that their children from the age of 6 to the age of 16 attend a recognised school on each day that the school is open and classes are in progress.

Where the child is absent from the school at which he or she is registered during part of the 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 notify the principal of the school of the reasons for the child's absence no later than the third day of the child's absence.

A record maintained shall specify where a student fails to attend, the fact of his or her failure and the reasons for such failure.

Schools are obliged to keep a register of the students attending the school. They must also maintain attendance records for all students and inform the relevant authorities ( Túsla) if a child is absent for more than 20 days in a school year.

The school must also inform the relevant authorities if a student is not attending regularly or if a student has been suspended.

**Túsla**
Túsla is the national agency established to ensure that every child attends school regularly, or otherwise receives an appropriate minimum education. The Board monitors school attendance and takes a range of measures where children do not attend school. Túsla strongly advises against taking children out of school to go on holiday during term-time. The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in September. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimizing the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

**School strategies to promote full attendance**:

1. School Environment:
Burgess N.S. provides a safe welcoming positive learning environment for our children and parents.

2. Communication:
An effective communication policy exists between teachers and parents. Regular contact on issues regarding homework, uniform, lunches, curriculum areas etc. ensures these issues do not contribute to the non-attendance of pupils
Early intervention: New parents to the school are made aware of attendance requirements and the importance of attendance at a meeting in September.

3. Information:
Parents will be reminded of the importance of regular punctual attendance in a letter at the beginning of each school year.
Parents will be discouraged from taking holidays during school time.
Planned schoolwork will not be assigned for the duration of the holiday period. The onus will rest with the parent to familiarise his/her child fully with the schoolwork missed during the period of the holiday.

Parents will be informed of their responsibilities and the responsibilities of the school with regard to the Education Act.
Teachers are asked to send names of children they identify with poor attendance to the Principal to ensure every effort is made to help children at risk as soon as possible.

4. Reports:
Every parent is provided with details of their child's total attendance for the year in the child's school report. Attendance patterns are also discussed at parent-teacher meetings.
Attendance figures for each child are recorded from year to year and kept on file in the school.

**Role of Parents**
The parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend school on each school day.

Where a child is absent from the school, the parent of the child is required under the Education Act to notify the school of the reason for the child's absence.

This information is required in writing. Copies of standardised absence notes are circulated to parents, in the school Homework Diary for their convenience at the beginning of each school year. Parents are asked to fill in the relevant information on these forms and return to the school in cases of absences.

Written permission from a parent is necessary for a pupil to leave the school for any reason during school hours. In that case the pupil must be collected by a parent / guardian or a responsible adult.

A child who is unwell should, in the interest of their fellow pupils, be kept at home until well enough to return to school.

How you can help your child to attend school regularly?

* Make education important in your home and let your child know it is not okay to miss school.
* Listen to your child and be interested in his or her news about school.
* Help your child to be proud of a good attendance record.
* Build your child's confidence by praising him or her when he or she does well.
* Read letters and reports from the school and know the school rules.
* Go to school meetings and get to know the teacher, staff and your child's friends.
* Be alert for reasons why your child may not want to go to school.
* Do not take family holidays during the school term.

**Role of the Teacher**
To record individual pupil attendance in the daily record sheet and to submit this information electronically to the D.E.S. each day before 10.30 a.m. (This also records the Leabhar Tinrimh),

To ensure all written communication re children's absences is placed in the child’s file.

To inform the Principal of concerns about individual children's attendance.
If a child has missed more than 20 school days all notes pertaining to that child will be brought to the Principal's attention.

**Role of the Principal**
To inform Túsla in writing;

- when a student is absent in excess of twenty school days in a school year.
- when a student is suspended for a period in excess of 6 school days.
- when a student's name is removed from the register
- when a student is not attending regularly.

To inform the Board of Management of school attendance.

To communicate to a school to which a student is transferring any problem relating to school attendance and other appropriate matters relating to the child's educational progress.

Information on all children who have missed 20 plus school days for any reason will be forwarded to Túsla in accordance with the rules and regulations of the D.E.S.

**Implementation**
The Board of Management, all parents, the Principal and class teachers of Burgess N.S. will be responsible for the successful implementation of this policy.

**Review**
This school attendance policy was ratified at a Board of Management meeting in 2015. There will be a review conducted on a regular basis.

Chairperson: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_