

## **Attendance Campaign Support Grant for Primary Schools in the Free Education Scheme**

### **1. Introduction**

The Attendance Campaign Support Grant is a once-off payment to promote regular school attendance of children and young people in schools, especially those from groups at risk of educational disadvantage, and those who may have been impacted by the disruption to school-based education during COVID-19.

### **2. Main features of the Grant**

Schools are best placed to understand the needs of their own community and identify how best to address those needs at a local level. Therefore, this funding is being provided directly to schools to allow the flexibility of utilising the funding to best suit locally identified needs of the most at-risk children and young people and developing strategies and targeted measures to improve overall levels of school attendance.

Schools are encouraged to cluster locally and work together to gain maximum benefit from the grant.

In considering how best to promote attendance, it is important that schools begin by gathering accurate data on the attendance levels of children and young people, with a particular focus on those most at risk of early school leaving.

Once the attendance data has been gathered and analysed, schools should devise clear targets and interventions designed to bring about improvements in attendance levels, particularly of attendance levels of children and young people whose attendance levels are a cause of concern.

Root causes for these trends should be probed through engagement with families and other stakeholders. Based on these insights, schools should develop targeted interventions, such as awareness campaigns or partnership programs with parents. These interventions should be integrated into the school's DEIS Action Plan for Improvement or School Self Evaluation Plan and monitored for effectiveness. Non Deis schools should ensure that the use of the grant supports the targets for improvement set out in their school improvement plan.

In considering appropriate interventions, it is critical that schools see promoting attendance as centrally linked to:

- School culture and environment.
- The quality of relationships between children and young people and their peers and between children and young people and school staff.
- The extent to which children and young people find classroom experiences engaging, interesting and relevant.
- The extent to which children and young people experience success in their learning.
- The extent to which children and young people experience high-quality and inclusive teaching and learning.
- The quality of the links between home and school.

**In general, therefore, this grant should be used to support the implementation of initiatives that will focus on one or more of the elements above and that have already proven successful in engaging children and young people in meaningful, challenging learning activities.**

Schools have the flexibility to utilise this one-time grant allocation either within the current academic year or to roll it over for up to three years, aligning with longer-term planning cycles.

### **3. Financial Oversight**

The grant income and expenditure should be recorded appropriately in the school's accounts. There is no new grant income code required to be added to the chart of accounts. The grant receipt can be recorded under nominal code 3290 Other Non-Capital DE Grant Income.

There is no new expenditure code required to be added to the chart of accounts. The expenditure can be recorded to the appropriate existing nominal account, for example 4635 Student Wellbeing Expense, 4770 Trophies and Prizes Expense, 1421 Capital Fixture Fitting and Equipment etc.

Any unspent amount must be included in the balance sheet at the year-end under the account code 2171 Other ring-fenced grants unspent.

#### **4. Queries**

Please note that detailed guidance to support the effective use of this grant will be issued by the Department of Education in the coming days.

Any queries in relation to the Attendance Campaign Support Grant should be emailed to [social\\_inclusion@education.gov.ie](mailto:social_inclusion@education.gov.ie).

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