

**To: Parents/Guardians**

**Re: Education (Welfare) Act 2000**

### **The importance of a good education**

As you know, a good education gives your child the best possible start in life. A good education helps young people to develop into mature and responsible citizens and to obtain secure employment. The purpose of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 is to encourage regular school attendance and participation in education and training for as long as possible. It is desirable that every child stays in school and completes the Leaving Certificate.

### **TUSLA (Educational Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency)**

Under the Act, 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. TUSLA was established to support school attendance **and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly.**

### **School Policy**

**It is school policy that you must inform the class teacher in writing of the reason your child was absent (please use the templates in the Homework Journal). Verbal explanations or telephone calls to the school office are not acceptable.** The school will notify TUSLA if your child is absent for 20 days or more. The school will also notify the TUSLA if an absence of less than 20 days is giving rise to concern.

### **Reporting**

If your child has been absent through illness or for other good reasons the school will still be reporting the absence in the normal way but will be informing the TUSLA that it is not concerned about your child's educational welfare. In these cases no action will be taken by the TUSLA. Therefore, it is advisable to attach a Medical Certificate to your explanatory note if your child is absent on medical advice. However, if there is concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given, you may be visited by the Education Welfare Officer who will discuss your child's education with you. The Officer will work with you and take full account of the circumstances of the child and the family before deciding what further action is necessary to ensure that the child receives his/her entitlement to an education. Parents/Guardians can be prosecuted under Section 25 of the Act.

Further information concerning the new service and about school attendance matters generally can be obtained from the national Lo-Call Education Helpline (Telephone 1890 36 36 66) which is staffed by an Education Welfare Officer.