

**REPLY BY THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION, SPORT & CULTURE  
TO QUESTIONS ASKED PURSUANT TO RULE 14 OF THE RULES OF  
PROCEDURE BY DEPUTY LESTER QUERPEL**

**Question 1**

I believe I'm right in saying that some of our schools reward students who attend on a regular basis, so can you please tell me whether that is the case or not?

**Answer 1**

The Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture, in line with the commitments of the Education Strategy, empowers leaders to lead. In the context of this question, the Committee affords Headteachers & Principals complete autonomy over how they promote - and raise the awareness of learners and their parents/carers about - the important connection between high attendance levels and learners' educational outcomes.

School leaders also have autonomy over how they celebrate and/or reward learners, including for good attendance.

Some of our schools use celebratory rewards as part of their approach to raising and maintaining high attendance levels. The rewards vary from setting to setting and include certificates, 'shout outs', small treats, and vouchers when 100% attendance is maintained for a sustained period of time.

The School Attendance Service encourages schools to recognise improvements in attendance with learners and their families as this incentivises and reinforces positive progress.

**Question 2**

If it is the case, is there not a danger of children who aren't able to attend school on a regular basis, through no fault of their own, feeling undermined and undervalued?

**Answer 2**

As with all learners' development and attainment, our schools recognise that it is necessary to celebrate progress against each learner's starting point, and this includes in relation to their school attendance. Our schools' teachers and support staff understand the needs and personal circumstances of their learners. They strive to be sensitive to those learners who are experiencing medical or other issues that prevent consistently high levels of attendance.

Our schools aim to develop and promote inclusive practices and cultures, where individual and group success can be celebrated for all sorts of school and extra-curricular activities. If it is not possible to celebrate and/or reward some learners for their attendance record, they can be celebrated and/or rewarded for other successes and achievements to ensure they feel a sense of personal pride when progress is made.

If our schools do not encourage and promote good attendance there is a danger that attendance is not valued and the link between attendance and educational outcomes is not made. Therefore, it is essential that the benefits of good attendance and the evidential impact of attendance on educational outcomes is regularly reinforced to learners and parents/carers.

**Date of receipt of the Question: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024**

**Date of Reply: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2024**