

Attendance and Attendance Strategies Policy

Introduction

Since 2000 the Education Welfare Act states that it is the statutory obligation of parents to ensure that their children attend school regularly once registered, and if absent from school the parents are obliged to notify the Principal.

Children who miss more than 20 days of school are reported automatically to TUSLA. Parents/ Guardians receive a warning note when the child reaches 15 days absent.

This policy document was drawn up by the Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians.

Good attendance at school should be encouraged from the first day and the habits laid down in these early years will stand to children at second level and beyond.

If children are taken out of school during term time for holidays, teachers do not supply work for them. If a child is out for a long period due to illness, teachers will use their discretion in regard to supplying a programme of work for them to follow while they are absent.

Letters and Medical Certificates will be held in the child's report folder.

Pupil Attendance Strategy

Rationale

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation, such as:
 - o The Education Act, 1998
 - o The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning. Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit and ethos as espoused in our Vision Statement which places the pupils at the centre of all our endeavours.
- To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.
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- 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.

Aims

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
 - To identify pupils at risk of developing school attendance problems and develop links with such families in this regard.
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning

- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
Content Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

1.The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) on Aladdin for each class on a daily basis.

It is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) on Aladdin. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register) on Aladdin, together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents' Names and Parents' Occupations). This complies with our Policy on Information and Record Keeping and with General Data Protection Guidelines. (GDPR)

2. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, her nonattendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken between 9.50 and 10.10 a.m. each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. The roll book may not be altered once it has been filled in.

The Aladdin system does show if a child has arrived late, but after roll call the child is considered to be absent unless advance warning has been given to the teacher about a hospital appointment, for example. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the school for the relevant school year.

Parents/guardians must also provide a note or sign the Attendance Book at the office if a child is to be collected during school hours.

Late arrivals and early departures are recorded in the book by the office for that purpose.

Parents are informed when the child reaches 15 days absent.

Parents/guardians are informed in writing at the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.

Parents of pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal/Teacher during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school's concerns.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing:

- where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year,
- where attendance is irregular,
- where a pupil is removed from the school register without knowledge of a school to which the child is going.
- where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance and Punctuality in School.

Scoil Mhuire is dedicated to the following:

- creating a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community.

- The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.
- New entrants and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction process, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained.
- There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from third class onwards.
- Encouraging children at the Thursday Assembly which is all about the children, their birthdays, achievements and we include good attendance
- 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 minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- Parents are reminded of the availability of Morning Care as provided by the Board of Management to assist those parents who need to be in work before Scoil Mhuire opens and they are facilitated in this by having a safe set up for care rather than leaving children at the gates unsupervised in the early hours.
- Parents who have difficulty with homework are also advised that they can apply for assistance for their child/ren to attend the Homework Club.

Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance Strategies used include

- Identification of pupils who are good attenders at class level and during class assemblies
- Contacting parents on an informal basis when a child is absent regularly.
- Reporting sightings of children who are absent unbeknownst to parents to parents.
- Providing morning care for working parents at a reasonable cost
- Informing parents and guardians that the (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day'. Section 21 of the act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parents and the Principal of the school) may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the EWB five times during the school year through an online system.

An annual report is submitted – not more than six weeks following the end of the school year - detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

Transfer to Another School Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school.

When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school, of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

Success Criteria

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

- An increase in annual attendance rates
- Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principal and class teacher to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Parents:

Parents have a role to play in the promoting and ensuring regular and punctual attendance at school. Parents should show an interest in their children's school day, the homework and the activities of the school in general. Praising and encouraging children regarding their participation in school will all go to developing the child's attitude to school and school attendance.

Parents, should if at all possible, avoid taking holidays during school time. Parents should be vigilant about informing the school in writing about absences in order to avoid confusion or misinterpretation of records.

If in difficulty regarding school attendance, parents should work with the school in order to find a solution.

Pupils:

Pupils have a responsibility to attend school regularly and on time. School doors open at 8.50 a.m. and Classes begin at 9.10 a.m. Junior and Senior Infants finish at 1.30pm and 1st – 6th at 2.30pm. Children should be encouraged to tell their teachers if there are problems regarding coming to school and being on time for school. Pupils need to be encouraged in their responsibility to give notes up at home and to ensure that the Homework Journal is properly signed and used as a means of communication between parents and teachers. Most communication with home is now sent by email, but some notes need to be signed.

School Principal/Deputy Principal

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.
 - o When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year
 - o When a pupil's name is removed from the school register
- 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.

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book on Aladdin in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
 - Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupils

Implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents' Association in October 2016

Ratification and Review

This policy was further amended and ratified by the Board of Management in November 2017 to include the provision of Morning Care and Afternoon Care

Signed: *Barry Fitzpatrick*

Chairperson,

BOM Review Date: November 2020