



Attendance Policy

Introduction

Changing social habits and patterns necessitated the updating of the school's attendance policy. The redrafting was a collaborative school process involving staff and Board of Management, following initial drafting by a representative group.

Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarised as follows:

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
- The role of the TUSLA & Education Welfare Service

Aims and Objectives

The revised policy is geared towards:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- encouraging full attendance where possible
- identifying pupils at risk
- promoting a positive learning environment
- enabling learning opportunities to be availed of
- raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- fostering an appreciation of learning
- ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.



Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance and the Deputy Principal makes returns to EWS. The Deputy Principal also has responsibility for maintaining the Leabhair Tinreamh.

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

Punctuality

School begins at 9:30 am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Service.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) of each class on the Aladdin system on a daily basis. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is automatically recorded on the Aladdin system, together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents' Names and Parents' Occupations) and is stored in accordance with our GDPR policy.

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 10:30 am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Parents are requested to use the Aladdin system to communicate absences to the school. Parents/guardians must also communicate via Aladdin or phone the school if a child is to depart early during the school day. Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher.

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of the TUSLA/EWS particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. They will also be notified through the Aladdin system when their child has missed 10, 15 & 20 days. They are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal or Deputy Principal and are informed of the school's concerns.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing when:

1. a student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
2. a student has reached 20 days' absence cumulatively
3. a student's name is to be removed from the school register
4. for whatever reason a principal is concerned about a student's attendance
5. the Board of Management decides to expel a student



Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment
- displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early
- rewarding good attendance with certificates and medals

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

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 Junior Infants onwards.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually on our website and a reminder is published 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.

Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

Section 17 of the Education (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 EWS twice 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.



St. Joseph's N.S.

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.

Communication

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Service (EWS) personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

Communication with other Schools

- When a child transfers from St. Joseph's N.S. to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer
- When a child transfers into St. Joseph's N.S. confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from St. Joseph's N.S. to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Communication with Parents

The school informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the *Education Welfare Act 2000* on an annual basis.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems;
- making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance;
- discussing planned absences with the school.
- refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.



St. Joseph's N.S.

- encouraging them to participate in school activities.
- praising and encouraging their children's achievements.
- instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- informing the school via Aladdin of the reasons for absence from school.
- ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc.), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
- notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar rolla records and statistical returns
- Happy confident well adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Ratification

This Enrolment Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed: _____
Chairperson of BoM

Signed: _____
Principal/Secretary to the BoM

Date: _____

Date: _____

References:

Don't let your Child Miss Out - NEWB 2004
Education Welfare Act 2000
Education Act 1998
Section 29 Education Act