

School Attendance Policy

Introduction

This Policy is the result of a process of collaboration between Principal, Staff, Board of Management, NEWB/TUSLA, students and parents. The Policy was originally drafted in 2009, reviewed again in 2014 and again in September 2016 and 2017. This review contains adjustments in accordance with TUSLA guidance. It is to be read in conjunction with the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance.

Rationale

This Policy was reviewed in line with the school's development of the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance in line with TUSLA Guidelines.

Aims

- To foster an appreciation of learning by having good attendance practises.
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act, 2000.
- To raise awareness of importance of school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early.
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

Defining and Recording Non-Attendance

"A parent is obliged to cause a child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend at 'a national school or other suitable school' on each day that the school is open for instruction". Education Welfare Act, 2000.

- A child is expected to attend each day.
- Non-attendance is recorded on Aladdin.
- A note is provided by parents explaining the absence in accordance with the Education Act, 1998.
- A telephone call to the office explaining the absence will be accepted. The secretary will ring the Teacher who will record the absence and reason on Aladdin.

Procedures in relation to the Removal/Transfer from another School

The school is aware that 'a *Principal may only remove a pupil's name from a school register where they have been informed that the child has been enrolled in another school or when the Welfare Board notifies them that the child has been registered by it as in receipt of out-of-school education*'.

The Board of Management may in exceptional circumstances suspend a child (see Code of Behaviour).

Transfer to another School

Where parents remove a child from a school the Principal will share information with the new school in line with GDPR Guidelines.

Transfer from another School

When School of the Holy Spirit receives a new student, the Principal will notify the Principal of the child's last school attended that the child is now registered in our school "as soon as may be".

Parents/Guardians can Promote good attendance by: -

- 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.
- 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 in writing or by phone of the reasons for absence from school.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with therapists, 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, are to be collected by someone not known to the school.

Communication

- Parents who fail to send in a letter of explanation of absence will be contacted by the school secretary. Failing this, the absence will be reported 'unexplained'.
- When a child reaches 12 days absence, a letter will be automatically sent to parents informing them of this and the responsibility of the school to report to TUSLA should the child reach 20 days absence.
- A report is sent to TUSLA as required.
- A letter will be sent to parents when pupils have missed 20 days or more.
- All attendance is reported in the end of year school reports to parents.

Removal of a pupil during the School day

Aims:

- To highlight the importance of remaining in school for a full day.
- To ensure the safety of all pupils in our school by having all visitors and parents report to the school office.
- To ensure accountability of all pupils during any emergency evacuations.
- To retain a record of pupils regularly leaving school early.

Rationale:

Pupils are expected to remain in school for a full school day. Pupils should only be removed early from school in cases of emergency or unavoidable medical appointments.

Unavoidable medical appointments/withdrawing a sick child from school

If a pupil needs to leave early for an unavoidable medical appointment, there must be a letter or phone call beforehand from his/her parents or guardian

If a child is sick during the school day, the secretary will firstly ring the parent and if uncontactable, will ring the emergency contact number. Ensure all phone numbers are up to date.

When collecting the child, the parent should ring the school office and the child will be signed out in the Early Withdrawal Book. The parent can then wait in the car while an SNA brings the child from the classroom.

On returning the child after the appointment, the same procedure will occur in reverse.

No child will be allowed to leave the school with any other adult other than his/her parent or guardian unless a letter has been received beforehand naming the person who is to collect the child.

Arriving late to school due to Medical Appointment or Emergency

Our school day begins at 9.15 am. If a child has a medical, dental or unavoidable morning appointment, a letter should be sent in beforehand from his/her parents. The school roll is taken daily at 10.25 am. In this case the roll will be kept open for this child until 12pm (maximum). After this time, the child has missed half of the school day and will be marked absent.

Emergencies

The parent should ring the school enroute and explain the situation. The secretary can then phone the class teacher and have the child brought from the class and ready to meet the parent.

No child will be allowed to leave the school with any adult other than his/her parent or guardian unless the parent/guardian themselves has been in an accident. In such cases, the child will only be released to an immediate family member known to the Principal and staff, and on record as the named Emergency Contact person.

TUSLA

TUSLA is informed if:

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended for more than six days
- A child has missed more than 20 days

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

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

Implementation/Ratification and Review:

This policy was re-ratified by the Board of Management on 30th September 2020.

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management in September 2021.

Signed: _____
Chairman Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____