



St. Nicholas' Primary School Longwood Attendance Policy

Introduction

The drafting of St. Nicholas' Primary School Attendance Policy was a collaborative school process involving Staff and Board of Management, and in consultation with St. Nicholas' Parents' Association.

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 (Section 22) whereby The B.O.M. of each school must prepare and submit to TUSLA –Child and Family Agency a statement of Strategy for school attendance.
- The role Tusla, Child and Family Agency.

Aims and Objectives

The revised policy is aimed at:

- ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- encouraging and recognising 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 and mission statement of St. Nicholas' Primary School.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance, and the school Principal make returns to Tusla. Daily attendance is inputted on the Aladdin System.

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 9.00 am for the pupils. Staff are in school before 9.00 am, some of whom are timetabled for supervision duty from 8:50 until 9:00. The school will contact Parents/Guardians in the event of concerns regarding punctuality.

The Principal is obligated, under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of each individual pupil is recorded daily in the 'Aladdin System' .

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 9.50 am each morning.

Records are also kept of pupils who are present on the given day, but late arriving in class.

If a pupil is not present, that pupil will be marked absent for the day. The roll call record may not be altered once it has been inputted in the system. A note in the pupil's journal or communication from Parents/Guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the teacher.

Parents/Guardians must inform the school if a child will be departing early during the school day. In such instances, parents are required to sign out the pupil in a book at school reception, and also sign in the pupil on returning before end of school day.

Parents/Guardians are made aware of the requirements of the Tusla, particularly the by-law relating to reporting of absences of more than 20 days in any school year.

They are notified on the end of year school report of the total number of absences during the school year.

Parents of pupils whose school attendance is of concern are invited to meet with the Principal and are informed of the school's concerns.

The school follows the protocol as set out in Tusla reporting procedures continuum when dealing with communication with the child's home regarding attendance 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, and where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment
- ensuring children are happy
- displaying kindness, compassion, understanding, and respect.
- Regularly affirming pupils who have a good school attendance record.
- Awarding 'Full Attendance Certificates' to children who have not been absent for any day of either of the three terms in the school year.
- Awarding 'Full Attendance Certificate' at the first school assembly of the new school, (September assembly) to those pupils who did not have any school absences in the entire previous school year. (Qualifying sixth class pupils will receive their certificates at their Graduation Ceremony in June.)

Tusla (Child and Family Agency.)

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

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

'Tusla' is also furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line at the end of the school year.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

St. Nicholas' Primary School endeavors to create 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 school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

New entrants and their Parents/Guardians are invited to an induction event during the month of June, and receive an information booklet, and included in this booklet is information which includes the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance.

The calendar for the coming school year is posted on the school website in June. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising non-attendance due to family holidays during the school term.

Addressing Poor School 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.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the NEWB five times during the school year on an online return. 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. This information will be communicated to the school community through the school’s newsletter.

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 schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

Communication with other Schools

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

Communication with Parents

The school also informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the *Education Welfare Act 2000*. This information is disseminated by school letters. Parents of new children are informed on enrolment.

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through annual returns to Tusla.
- Happy confident children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Implementation/Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified in February 2014. It was reviewed in February 2017.

It will be reviewed again in Feb. 2019 or earlier if deemed necessary.

References:

'Developing The Statement Of Strategy For School Attendance' Tusla (Child and Family Agency)
'Don't let your Child Miss Out' - NEWB 2004
Education Welfare Act 2000
Education Act 1998
Section 29 Education Act

Signed:

Fr. Michael Kilmartin

John Smyth

Rev. Michael Kilmartin

John Smyth

Chairperson B.O.M

Principal

Date: 15th February 2017