

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Introduction:

Our school Attendance Policy has been updated by the staff, parents' association & the Board of Management. Our Policy was previously reviewed on 3rd March 2014 and required updating to comply with Circular 33/2015.

Rationale:

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

- a) Circular 33/2015
- b) The changing fabric of society
- c) The role of Túsla Child & Family Agency
- d) Levels of disadvantage
- e) Legislative requirement such as the Education Welfare Act 2000
- f) Changing attitudes to education

Aims and Objectives:

The revised policy is geared towards:

- ◆ Encouraging full attendance where possible and improving levels of punctuality
- ◆ 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

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 teachers have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers input individual level of attendance daily on Aladdin (School Administration Database). Class attendance is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) courtesy of Aladdin. This is printed off each month and signed by the school Principal who observes the pattern of attendance in the school. The Principal, Ms. Rafferty makes quarterly returns to Túsla Child & Family Agency.

School Strategies for Attendance:

In Scoil Mhuire na nGael we endeavour to create a warm welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. While parents are requested to make an appointment to see the class teacher/ Principal we will of course meet with the parents if the matter requires urgent attention. Our school environment is a friendly and open place with many attractive bulletin boards displaying the children's work and photographic displays of school activities and pupils' achievements.

The teaching staff collaborate in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all our pupils. We endeavour to give our pupils a holistic education and provide learning opportunities outside the classroom e.g. coaches (GAA/Sportshall athletics/rugby/soccer), field trips to educational workshops, visits by Junior Achievement personnel, Intergenerational Project with St. Oliver's Community Hospital.

At our Open Night the parents/guardians of new entrants to the school are made aware of the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good punctuality habits from Junior Infants onwards. Parents are regularly reminded through the school newsletter of the importance of regular attendance and good punctuality habits for their children. At our school assemblies our "SUPER RULES" are discussed (P = Punctuality).

The school's homework policy clearly outlines the school's expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.

The calendar for the coming school year is printed on the school web site and an e-mail is sent to parents/guardians. 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.

It is a condition of enrolment that parents sign up to our school's Code of Behaviour. In this policy it is clearly outlined that pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform. The wearing of the school uniform is also highlighted at school assemblies when we discuss our "SUPER RULES" (U = Uniform). Random uniform checks are conducted in the school to encourage the discipline of wearing the correct school uniform.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will accommodate same.

Strategies in the event of non-attendance:

A note from parents/guardians of pupils in 1st – 6th class is requested to cover each absence. Pre prepared absence notes are contained in our school homework notebooks. Parents are required to complete same indicating the date of absence and the reason for same. Parents verbally communicate the reason for absence for their children to the teachers of Junior and Senior Infant classes. The class teacher records the reason for absence on Aladdin. (A- Illness, B-Urgent Family Reason, C- Expelled, D- Suspended, E- Transfer to another school) and this allows the Principal to inform the Duty Care Social Worker of the nature of the child's absence if there is a concern of the child's attendance. Our Aladdin database generates the % attendance for each pupil and this is recorded on the pupil's report card at the end of the year.

Staff has agreed at a staff meeting to record punctuality on report cards as follows –

- For children who are never late : Very Good
- For children who are persistently late : Causing concern

When a child is leaving the school throughout the course of the school day e.g. medical appointment/or other family reason, the parent/guardian must record the date, time, child's name, reason for departure and the class teacher's names in the Sign Out/Sign In Book at school reception.

In our school newsletters parents are regularly made aware of Túsla requirements particularly the byelaw relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. A courtesy text is sent to the parents when a child has missed 15/20/25... days from school in the course of the year. Our school Principal will make direct telephone contact with parents when there is a concern over a child's attendance and invite the parents to the school to discuss the matter. Where the Principal has a serious concern over a child's attendance she will make contact with the school's attendance officer Nicola Keenan. These procedures are also outlined to the parents of new infants and pupils transferring to our school on Open Night.

Communication with other Schools:

- ◆ When the Principal, Ms. Rafferty receives notification that a child has been registered in another school she will notify the Principal of the new school of any problems in relation to attendance and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress. Registration in another school will be noted in our school Clárleabhar.
- ◆ When a child transfers into Muire na nGael confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school (see Appendix B) and appropriate records sought.
- ◆ Reports & educational passports for 6th class pupils who have enrolled in Secondary School will be forwarded to that school upon receipt of written confirmation of their enrolment.
- ◆ Records of 6th class pupils receiving Learning Support/Resource hours, who are transferring to a Post-Primary school, will be forwarded on request.

Promoting Attendance:

The school promotes good attendance by:

- ◆ Creating a safe and welcoming environment
- ◆ Ensuring children are happy
- ◆ 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 at end of year assembly. Pupils who have missed only one or two days receive certificates of attendance. The Parents' Association also sponsor vouchers for pupils who have 100% attendance throughout the year.
- ◆ Encouraging and acknowledging good attendance at school assemblies.
- ◆ The school has adopted **SUPER RULES** (**S**=Safety **U**=Uniform **P**=Punctuality/Property **E**=Effort and **R**=Respect). A Reward system is in place in the school to promote all aspects of our **SUPER RULES**.

Túsla Child & Family Agency:

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

- a) A pupil is expelled
- b) A pupil is suspended for a cumulative total of 6 or more days in any school year.
- c) A pupil has missed more than 20 days in a school year.
- d) A pupil's name is removed from the register for any reason
- e) The Principal is concerned about a pupil's attendance.

Túsla is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form.

Evaluation:

The success of any Attendance policy is measured through:

- ◆ Improved attendance levels
- ◆ Happy, confident and well /adjusted children
- ◆ Positive parental feedback
- ◆ Teacher vigilance.
- ◆ Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

This policy was ratified by the B.O.M. on 13/03/2018

Signed: Maighread Ní Ghallchóbhair (Chairperson BOM).

