

Our Lady of the Wayside NS  
Kilternan



School Attendance Policy

### Introduction:

There is a very strong tradition of good attendance in Our Lady of the Wayside N.S. However, it is very important that parents are aware of the absolute necessity for regular punctual attendance at school and the actions the school take to encourage and monitor attendance.

### Rationale:

This policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation, such as:  
The Education Act, 1998  
The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

### Aims:

- To foster an appreciation of learning by having good attendance practices.
- To foster good attendance practices for the child's future.
- To comply with requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- To raise awareness of the 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.
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

### Defining and Recording Non-Attendance:

- The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on the Aladdin System on a daily basis.
- Class attendance is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) on the Aladdin System.
- The annual attendance of each individual pupil is also recorded, together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupils' name, gender, PPS Number, Date of Birth, Nationality, Religion, Student ID Number (POD))
- A child is expected to attend each day.

- The roll is called each day by 10.00 am. Any pupil not present at this time will be marked absent for that day. If they arrive later, there is provision for this to be recorded, also on Aladdin.
- Parents are requested to explain all absences using the categories on the Aladdin System or by e mail to the class teacher. If an absence is left 'unexplained', the class teacher may contact parents to seek a reason.
- The categories are defined as: Illness, urgent family reason, holiday or other. Absences that are not accounted for will remain as 'unexplained'.
- If a child misses a half-day a verbal or written explanation is required.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

#### **Class Teachers:**

- Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms.
- Take roll daily and record on Aladdin System.
- Contact parents directly if an absence is unexplained.
- Contact parents when a pupil has missed 10 school days.
- Monitors for patterns of attendance and makes a record (document) on Aladdin of any conversations with a parent relating to poor attendance.
- Meet with parents, pupil, principal as required to address attendance issues.
- Notify the principal or Deputy Principal if there is a particular reason for ongoing absence of a pupil (eg. Hospital stay, etc).
- Assist the Principal with completion of the checklist if an Education Welfare Referral is being made.

#### **Deputy Principal:**

- Maintains the overall Leabhar Tinrimh daily on Aladdin.
- Ensures attendance is taken in the event that the mainstream teacher is absent or delayed.
- Remains vigilant about recurring absences or pupils being late/leaving early.
- Arranges for letters to go to parents as per agreed policy.

#### **School Secretary:**

- Prepares the returns for Tusla Education Support Services.
- Sends Mail Merge letters to inform parents of number of absences.
- Remains vigilant about recurring absences or pupils being late/leaving early.
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#### **Principal:**

- Confirms final TESS (Tusla Education Support Services) returns.
- Will formally speak to parents if informal talks with the class teacher do not appear to impact attendance.
- Contacts EWO and makes Education Welfare Report Referrals if required.
- Notify Tusla Education Support Services and EWOs of particular problems in relation to attendance and seek support if students have attendance difficulties.

All staff must implement this policy and be extra vigilant so that children at risk are identified early. The class teacher ensures that there is a written explanation for absences.

### Regular Returns to Tusla Education Support Services (TESS):

- Schools are required to return Student Absence Reports to Tusla Education Support Services twice a year for pupils between the ages of 6 and 16 years. All pupils who have been absent from school for a cumulative total of 20 days or more will be included in these returns.
- Reasons for absence are recorded using the Aladdin System. When making a return to Tusla Education Support Services, the school reports absences under the following categories: Illness, urgent family reason, holidays, suspension, other, unexplained.
- An annual report is also 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.

### If there is a difficulty with punctuality or poor attendance:

- The class teacher will talk/meet with the parent about their concerns regarding attendance. The teacher will make a record of this conversation/meeting on Aladdin.
- If there is still no improvement the class teacher will inform the principal.
- The emphasis will be on working together to help improve the pupil's attendance.
- The Principal will formally meet the parent outlining that the Board of Management of the school will be informed about the poor attendance, and/or the potential for an Education Welfare Referral taking place.
- An **Education Welfare Referral** may be made to Tusla Education Welfare Support Service (TESS) where the Principal has significant cause for concern over a student's attendance. Please note, this is different to the regular returns for pupils with 20 or more absences which are made twice a year.

A school is obliged to inform the Tusla Education Support Services when:

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child is placed on a reduced school day

### Promoting Attendance:

- We promote good attendance by creating a safe and welcoming environment and ensuring children are happy.
- By displaying kindness, compassion and understanding.
- By being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying, etc. are identified early.
- Through ongoing praise to attendance.
- Class teacher will highlight good attendance in the classroom.
- At the initial meeting of parents of any new pupils, the Principal will speak about the importance of good attendance.
- With older children we have discussions about improving time keeping.
- The calendar for the coming year is published annually in June and is available on our school website. 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.
- Please note that in the interest of health and safety of the children, parents are reminded that external doors are closed at 9.00a.m each morning.

**Procedures in relation to the Removal from Register/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'

**Transfer to another school:**

Where parents remove a child from a school the Principal is obliged to give them and the new school a certificate stating the child's record of attendance and absences in the school, the last class the child attended, and any other relevant information pertaining to the education of the child when the school requests it.

**Transfer from another school:**

When Our Lady of the Wayside 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. 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/she considers appropriate.

**Communication:**

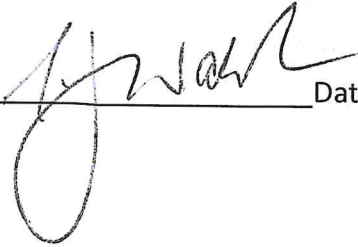
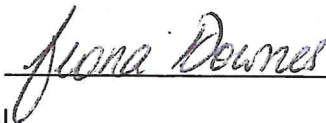
- Where absences are unexplained, parents will be contacted first by the class teacher and then by the Principal.
- When a child is absent 10 days, the class teacher will speak to the parents.
- When a child is nearing 20 days, the parents will receive an e-mail.
- When a child has been included in any statistical returns made to Tusla Education Support Services, parents will be e-mailed.
- A copy of the policy will be given to members of staff, Board of Management, and available to parents to view on the website.

**Links to other policies:**

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance – Updated March 2023  
Code of Behaviour  
Child Protection Guidelines  
Admissions Policy

**Ratification**

October 2011	This policy was formulated.
May 2016	Ratified by the Board of Management.
February 2023	Policy updated.
March 2023	Ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed:  Date: 1/3/2023 Signed:  Date: 1/3/23  
Chairperson Principal