

School Attendance Policy

St Ailbe's N.S.– School Attendance Policy

Rationale

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

- Response to our school SPHE curriculum.
- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils learning.
- To take account of our growing numbers .
- St Ailbe's has now been awarded Rural Deis Status . It is a requirement to ensure at risk children will be closely monitored and encouraged to attend regularly.
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act 1998
- Changing attitudes to education.

The aims of the attendance policy in St Ailbe's National School are to:

- (1) Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- (2) Share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- (3) Inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Welfare Act.
- (4) Identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- (5) Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- (6) Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- (7) Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.
- (8) promote a positive learning environment enabling awareness of the importance of 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.

Promoting Attendance

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently. Children are also recorded on the POD system.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily on Alladin
 - Attendance will be recorded before 11 a.m daily (In the event of internet being down attendance will be recorded later)
- Parents or guardians are informed at start of each school year of the importance of providing written explanation regarding their child's absence. They are regularly reminded of this throughout the school year.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
 - At Assembly children are informed of their class attendance record. This is encouraging children to attend school regularly.
 - At the end of year celebration mass children are given gold/ silver/ bronze attendance certificates congratulating them on their excellent attendance.
 - Parents are informed of the importance of regular attendance . (Overall attendance for the 2016/ 2017 school year was 95%.)
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - ü The Education Welfare Board.
 - ü The Education Welfare Officer.
 - ü The Board of Management.

Punctuality

The school day begins at 9.20am. As an act of goodwill the teachers bring in the children to their classrooms and will supervise the children from 9.10a.m. Children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9.20 a.m. 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 Board.

Guidance for Parents

Section [(21) (9)] of the Education Welfare Act states that: "a pupil's absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved". The school principal cannot authorise a child's absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements. Reasons for pupils' absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. To facilitate this, such communications may be written in the homework diary, or on a separate page or sheet of paper. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. The teacher will keep these notes in a separate folder for the year. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The class teacher will contact parents when a written explanation for the child's absence is not received by the school.

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 and approve of 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 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.
- Attending end of year celebration mass and celebrating their child's successful year.

Pupils

Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.

Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.

Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.

Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

A strategy for promoting good school attendance

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- 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 along with the SNA staff collaborate in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all the pupils.
- 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.
- Our 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 published annually in June and a reminder is published in September. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/ guardian to plan family events around school closures , thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's policy on Equal Opportunity and Gender Equity.
- The school will ensure that supports for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
- The school will ensure that internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- A special reward system has been introduced for promoting good attendance at school e.g. special certificates awarded to all children in the school at the end of year celebration for children who have a full attendance record or up to 5 days absence.
- Assembly. Principal will commend children for being punctual, in proper uniform, and in school every day unless they are sick or due to some other unavoidable absence.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an

effort to improve their attendance.

School Principal

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:

- ü If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - ü When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - ü If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - ü When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
 - Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
 - Liase early with parents if there is evidence that a child is beginning to show signs of irregular attendance .

Class Teacher

The class teacher will:

- Record the daily attendance on Alladin befor 11a.m. in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
- Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

Record/Communication

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, once enrolment has been confirmed in compliance with Department of Education and Science Regulations.

Evaluation

The success of the Attendance policy is measured through

Improved attendance levels .

Happy confident well adjusted children

Positive parental feedback

Teacher vigilance.

Policy was initially drawn up in November 2015

Policy was reviewed in September 2017

Policy will be reviewed again in 2020