



ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Changing social habits and patterns necessitated the updating of the school's attendance policy.

The redrafting was a collaborative school process involving staff and Board of Management

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 and the Education Act, 1998
- The role of Tusla (The Child and Family Agency)
- Changing attitudes to education.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The revised policy is geared towards:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Encouraging 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
- Identifying pupils at risk of leaving school early
- 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 of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance each day on Aladdin.

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 8.50am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of consistent, unexplained lateness. The principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late to Tusla.

RECORDING AND REPORTING ATTENDANCE

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded by class teachers on Aladdin daily and termly. It is the responsibility of our Deputy Principal to return the attendance totals to Tusla twice a year.

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. A school absence note should be submitted by email or Class Dojo parents/guardian to explain each absence. Absence notes will be kept in a secure electronic file in the office.

Parents/guardians must also sign a child out at the office if a child departs early during the school day/ sign a child in if they return later in the day.

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of Tusla particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. They are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school's concerns.

The school must inform Tusla 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 and understanding
- Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early

SICKNESS

If your child is suffering from diarrhoea and / or vomiting please stay at home as your child could be infectious to others. Stay off school for 48 hours after the last symptoms occurred.

TUSLA

Tusla are informed if:

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

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

WHOLE SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ATTENDANCE

St David's NS endeavors to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

Traditionally, school attendance is strong in our school. However, the staff remains vigilant so that 'risk' students are identified early. A meeting between parents and the principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to Tusla.

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.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June. 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.

STRATEGIES IN THE EVENT OF NON-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 Tusla 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 Tusla (following all reasonable efforts 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. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to Tusla twice during the school year through an online system if there are pupils who have been absent for the 20 days or more.

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.

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.

COMMUNICATION

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

- When a child transfers from St David's NS to Post Primary School, pupil's 6th class passport will be forwarded upon request from Principal of Secondary School.
- When a child transfers into St David's NS, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought from parents/guardians.

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 Officer 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 by email or Class Dojo 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, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

EVALUATION

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

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

IMPLEMENTATION/RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This policy has been formulated in St David's N.S. It will be reviewed again when required.

Ratified by Board of Management on: 28-10-22 .

Signed: Rev Ruth O'Kelly Vivienne Rank
 Chairperson Principal

Date: 28-10-22 28-10-22

References:

- Don't let your Child Miss Out* - NEWB 2004
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Education Act 1998
- Section 29 Education Act
- Empty Desks* - CDU Mary Immaculate