



*St. Nicholas' Parochial School*

# **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

**Last reviewed December 2021**

## **Introductory Statement**

An attendance committee was set up to monitor attendance – this committee consisted of: Wendy Lynch (Principal), Paul McCavera (NEWB Officer) and all class teachers. The first draft of the statement was amended by, all school staff and the Board of Management.

## **Rationale**

St. Nicholas' Parochial School decided to review its attendance because:

- It is a priority area identified by the parents, pupils and staff
- The existing statement is due for review and amendment
- It is a requirement under Education Welfare Act 2000
- School needs to encourage pupils to be in attendance.

## **Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school**

Our school aims to provide a happy, secure learning environment where children, parents/guardians, teachers, ancillary staff and Board of Management work in partnership, where each individual is valued, encouraged and respected for their uniqueness and facilitated to reach their full potential in a positive atmosphere.

## **Aims**

- To foster an appreciation of learning.
- To raise awareness of importance of school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of school leaving early.
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To promote positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend school
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines from NEWB

## **Guidelines (content of Statement)**

### Defining and Recording on Attendance

- Non-attendance is defined as: a parent is obliged to cause a child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend at "a national school or other suitable school" on each day that the school is open for instruction.
- Non-attendance is recorded daily in the school roll books and via a daily tracking system.
- These records are kept in the school office.
- Non-attendance is communicated daily via or phone call to parents/guardians.
- Teachers will inform parents of attendance record at parent-teacher meetings and in end of year school reports.
- After 15 days of non-attendance, a reminder letter is sent to parents stating the implications of missing 20 days in accordance with the Education Welfare Act.
- 20 days of non-attendance or irregular attendance is noted by the NEWB.

- Parents are required to state the reason when collecting children early from school.
- Parents are required to explain non-attendance by a note or email.

#### **Whole school strategies to promote attendance:**

- Environment: As a school, and within the classroom, we strive to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents through our Code of Behavior, our Anti-Bullying policy, SPHE curriculum
- Late arrivals: If there is a persistent issue, the teacher will raise it with the parent.
- Early intervention: New parents are invited to a welcome meeting and are informed of procedures in relation to attendance and the importance of attendance.
- Curriculum: We seek to create an active learning environment where all types of learners are catered for based upon a child-centered curriculum
- Parents: We communicate the requirements of schools and of parents under the Education Welfare Act to parents via parent-teacher meetings, text messaging, and reminder letters.
- Support: To encourage good attendance the school liaises with supporting agencies such as National Education Welfare Board.
- Learning Support teachers in the school to cater for the learning needs of pupils.
- Staff development: Mainstream teachers receive a termly tracking record of their pupils' attendance. Attendance is discussed with all staff regularly at the termly staff meetings.

#### **Communication with other schools/other providers**

##### The school maintains regular links with:

- Post primary schools- Colaiste Einde, Jesus & Mary Secondary, St. Joseph's Patrician College, Dominican College
- The Educational Welfare Officer, Paul McCavera – monthly meeting of Attendance Committee.

#### **Strategies in event of non-attendance**

- Parents are asked to send a note explaining absence when the child returns.
- If a parent has a literacy problem, contact will be made via a phone call or a home visitation (to support the family).
- A written explanation of absence is expected to be recorded by email or a letter given to class teacher.
- If a child is absent from school for 15 days a reminder letter is sent to inform the parents of the Education Welfare Act requirements.
- The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, and where attendance is irregular
- Referrals will be made to relevant agencies if there is a family /pupil having difficulties.

#### **Procedures in relation to the Removal from Register/Transfer from another school**

- The principal will 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: A letter of transfer from the school will be provided to the new school.
- Transfer from another school: A letter of transfer from the previous school will be obtained.

### **Annual Report**

- An annual attendance report is completed at the end of the school year and is sent to the Education Welfare Officer.

### **Success Criteria**

Improved attendance will determine the success of this statement.

The attendance committee is responsible for evaluating the success of this statement.

- Increase in attendance levels, check rolls, registers, etc.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils

### **Roles and Responsibility**

The people who have particular responsibilities for aspects of the statement:

- Principal
- Class teacher
- Resource, Learning Support,
- Parents
- Pupils
- Education Welfare Officer
- Visiting Teacher for Travelers
- Board of Management
- Special Needs Assistants
- School secretary

### **Success Criteria:**

There are many partners who can ensure the success of the school's Attendance policies:

### **Roles and Responsibilities of all partners:**

#### The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Parents or guardians may be contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
  - The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB)/Tulsa

- The Board of Management

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 Tulsa Education Welfare services 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
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school (this is required by the NEWB)
- Notify the class teacher if their child/children are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher

Pupils:

- Are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher
- Are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents

The Class Teacher will

- Maintain the school's roll books in accordance with procedure
- Keep a record of lateness
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained
- Inform the principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil

The Principal will:

- Ensure that the roll books are maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform TUSLA Educational Welfare Services:
  - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
  - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
  - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
  - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform the parents in writing of absences of 15 days or more in the school year.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) with concerns regarding a pupil.
- Promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents, and staff.

**Punctuality:**

School is open from 8:30am and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 8:40am. All pupils and staff are expected to be on time. For Health & Safety reasons

the doors are closed at 8.40am. Should a child arrive late regularly, the teaching and learning of other pupils is being affected. 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.

Parents are requested to contact the school by phone/email if their child is absent. The school will contact parents if an explanation for the child's absence has not been received.

**Ratification and Review of Policy**

This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal