

Attendance Policy

Ballyfeeney NS

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# Ballyfeeney National School

**Attendance Policy**

**Introduction**

This policy sets out the school’s procedures and practices to promote good pupil attendance. Regular attendance at school is critical to the rate of a pupil’s progression and achievement of learning.

**Policy Aims**

* Ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
* Ensure that pupil attendance is recorded daily
* Encourage full attendance where possible
* Enable pupils to avail fully of learning opportunities provided daily during school time
* Promote an awareness of the importance of creating and maintaining a positive learning environment in school
* Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance among all stakeholders
* Foster an appreciation of learning
* Ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
* Identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
* Identify and remove, 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.

**Legal Framework**

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” (Education Welfare Act)

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000 schools are obliged to

* Maintain a record of students attending the school
* Record school attendance and notify the relevant Educational Welfare Officer of particular problems relating to attendance
* Support students with difficulties in attending school on a regular basis
* Prepare and implement a school attendance strategy to encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school
* Prepare and implement a code of behaviour, setting standards of behaviour and disciplinary procedures for the school
* Liaise with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance on Aladdin and the school secretary makes returns to Educational Welfare Services section of the Child and Family Agency(Tusla)

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 9:20am. Class ends at 2pm for infants and 3pm for all other classes. All pupils are expected to adhere to these times.

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to maintain a record of children who arrive late to school, leave school early or are collected late. This can be recorded on Aladdin.

A child will be recorded as being late for school if they arrive after 9:40am.

Parents/guardians must provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. Where teachers see a pattern of poor punctuality, the teacher should bring it to the attention of parents/guardians at an early stage.

If punctuality continues to be an issue a meeting may be arranged to establish why there is a pattern of poor punctuality and what supportive actions may be taken to help break this pattern.

**Monitoring of Attendance**

Class teachers are required to call and mark the Electronic Roll Book on the school’s IMS(Aladdin) on a daily basis. The rolla is taken via Aladdin at 10 am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day.

An electronic copy of the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) is maintained on the Aladdin System.

The school secretary records the annual attendance of each individual pupil on the Primary Online Database together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil’s Name, DOB, Address)

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.

*Notes*

A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day.

Such notes will be given to the school secretary by the class teacher.

Individual notes and other written communication around attendance, such as Medical Certificates and other explanations for student absences will be given by the class teacher to the school secretary and should be filed in the school office These records are retained for inspection by the National Educational Welfare Officer.

Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher.

When a child is marked absent on Aladdin, teachers should ensure that they enter the reasons for the absence in the appropriate sections as soon as the information becomes available. This allows teachers to categorise the absence, such as Unexplained, Illness, Urgent Family Reason etc. This information will form part of the reporting procedure to the Educational Welfare Services section of Tusla-Child and Family Agency.

Each class teacher has a responsibility to monitor the attendance of the children in their care. Teachers should be aware of emerging patterns in relation to poor attendance.

The Educational Welfare Act 2000 requires schools to notify the Educational Welfare Services section of the Child and Family Agency(Tusla) of pupils who have been absent for 20 days and who are aged over 6 years of age.

Parents/guardians are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.

*At risk pupil*

At Risk students can be categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in a 20-day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians.

The class teacher informally contacts the parents to raise his/her concerns. Poor attendance patterns are more easily changed if attention is drawn to them at an early stage.

When a child reaches a total of 15 days of absence regardless of the reason for those absences, the class teacher writes to his/her parents notifying them of the absence.

When a child has been absent for 20 days regardless for the reason for absence the Education Welfare Services will be notified. The school has no discretion over handing this information onto Tusla-child and Family Agency, regardless of the reason for absence. However Tusla-Child and Family Agency will take account of explained absences e.g bereavement, illness .

Schools are obliged by law under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 to submit online reports on school attendance to the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency. There are two types of reporting required and they are

*Reports on individual students called Student Absence Reports*

Student Absence Reports

Schools are required to submit Student Absence Reports twice each year on those students with serious attendance issues that have been identified during the current academic year i.e students that have been absent from school for a cumulative total of twenty days or more falling within the following categories Illness, Urgent Family Reason, Holiday, Suspended, Other, Unexplained

Annual Attendance Report

Each recognised school in the State is obliged to submit a report to the EWS Child and Family Agency on the levels of attendance at the end of each academic year. Schools are required to provide the following data

* Total number of days lost through student absence in the entire school year
* Total number of students who are absent for 20 days or more during the school year
* Total number of students expelled in respect of whom all appeal processes have been exhausted or not availed of during the school year
* Total number of students who were suspended for any number of days during the year.

Attendance & 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.

When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the pupils 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 or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer form Primary to Second level Education.

The school updates POD accordingly.

Attendance and Transfer to our school

When a child transfers to our school confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child’s previous school and appropriate records sought.

The school updates POD accordingly.

**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

**Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance**

Ballyfeeney NS endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. 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 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.

New entrants and their parents/guardians are directed to our school website where our information booklet, general information, our school’s policies including procedures in relation to attendance are available.

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, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, 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/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her on this day, the school will do their best to provide lunch.

**Communication**

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Board (EWB) personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

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 BallyfeeneyNS to another school, the school may request appropriate records.
* When a child transfers into BallyfeeneyNS confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child’s previous school, and appropriate records sought
* The local post primary school contacts the senior class teacher annually in relation to pupils enrolled.

**Communication with Parents**

The school informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the *Education Welfare Act 2000*.

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 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 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.

**Evaluation**

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

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

**Implementation/Ratification and Review**

This policy was updated in 2021. It will be reviewed again in three years or prior to this if deemed necessary.

**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

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at its meeting

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Chairperson, BOM