

St Andrew's Ns
St Edmundsbury Lucan Road
Lucan Co. Dublin

Roll No. 12014D

Attendance Strategy

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, following initial drafting by a representative group.

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 the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB)
- Levels of disadvantage
- 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
- identify 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 and the school secretarial staff make returns to NEWB.

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 8.30am. All pupils and school staff are expected to be on time. Pupils arriving after 8.45am must go to the main office. Parents/Guardians must accompany pupils who are late and complete a late arrival form available in the school office.

Where pupils are consistently late the school will contact the parents/guardians. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded by class teachers online using the Aladdin school software. Erolls are recorded in each class on a daily basis. Class attendance data is automatically calculated daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) section of Aladdin. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded using this software and an individual attendance report is available at any time, together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents' Names and Parents' Occupations).

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. The roll call is taken before 9.30am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. A school absence note should be completed from parents/guardian to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. These notes are dated and kept by the teacher. Late arrivals are recorded by the teacher on his/her roll and early departures are recorded in the sign-out book in the front hall of the school.

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of the NEWB 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.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer through NEWB on Aladdin System 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

National Education Welfare Board

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

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

The NEWB 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 Andrew's NS endeavours 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 referred to the Education Welfare Officer via NEWB on Aladdin school system twice yearly.

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 September/October. 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 the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) 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 the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the EWO 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 the NEWB 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 Andrew's NS to Post Primary School pupil 6th class passport will be forwarded upon request from Principal of Secondary School with written permission by parents.
- When a child transfers into ST Andrew'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 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 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 Andrew's NS. It will be reviewed again in 2020

Date the Statement strategy was approved by the Board of Management: _____

Date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla: _____

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