

Attendance Policy



Dunboyne Senior Primary School

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**Principal: An tUas Liam Ó Laighin
Deputy Principal: Ms. Linda Manning**

Introduction

Regular attendance by pupils at school is key to educational attainment and success and must be actively encouraged within the school environment. Dunboyne Senior Primary School aims to foster a culture of regular attendance at school for all pupils. Furthermore, we seek to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing problems with attendance at school. Formal and informal structures are in place in our school to monitor, report and evaluate patterns of non-attendance amongst pupils. The provisions of the Education Welfare Act (2000) inform and support this policy on attendance.

Rationale:

Dunboyne Senior Primary School will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupils' attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents/guardians are contacted when reason for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.

School attendance statistics are reported to:

- Child and Family Agency(TUSLA)

Relationship to School Ethos:

Our school cherishes all pupils equally and respects the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society thereby encouraging a positive attitude towards school attendance and punctuality.

Aims and Objectives:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily(electronically)
- Encouraging full attendance.
- Identifying pupils at risk.
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation (Circular 0028/2013 and Circular 0033/2015)
- Fostering an appreciation of learning.
- To promote positive attitudes to learning.
- To enhance the learning environment where pupils can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend school.
- Identify obstacles to school attendance and remove where possible.
- To ensure all absences are explained by means of a note from parents/guardians.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management. Class teachers record individual attendance via the school's Aladdin system and the Deputy Principal prepares quarterly returns to TUSLA when pupils are absent for twenty days or more. [Circulars 0033/2015 and 0028/2013]

Punctuality

School begins at 9.20am. 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 Act, to report pupils who are persistently late to TUSLA.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

Individual pupil attendance is recorded daily electronically before 10.20 a.m. As per Circular 0028/2013, the annual attendance of each pupil is recorded in the Clárleabhar.

- Regular school attendance is actively promoted.
- Pupil absence from school is monitored by class teacher and recorded by the teacher with responsibility for attendance in compliance with TUSLA guidelines.

To comply with the Education Welfare Act, the following procedures will be respected:

- A note/medical certificate must be sent to class teacher explaining reason for absence for part/whole of any school day. All absences must be accounted for. Such communication should not be in the homework diary, but on a separate sheet of paper.
- These notes/certificates will be kept on file by the class teacher as a record of absences. These notes may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school.
- Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher.
- Any pupil who is absent for more than 20 school days (irrespective of reason) will be reported to TUSLA.

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of TUSLA relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. They are notified in writing on the end of year report of their child's attendance for 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 the Education Welfare Officer in writing, where a child has missed 20 days or more 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 3 days or more.

Whole-School Strategies for Promoting School Attendance

Dunboyne Senior Primary School endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils. Parents/guardians are consulted in the 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 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. 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. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians either via a letter or a note in the homework diary when this occurs. A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

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, the school will provide a sandwich and a drink.

Further examples of how the school promotes school attendance include the following:

- 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
- The school curriculum, as far as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school promotes the development of positive self-esteem in the children.
- Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
- A special reward system will be introduced for promoting good attendance at school. At the end of each school quarter any child with full attendance shall be congratulated in their class, have their photograph taken to be displayed in a special area of the school and rewarded with a homework pass. Certificates and medals will be presented to children who have full attendance for the academic year. Children who break the pattern of poor attendance will be given special recognition also.

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 pupil's 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 from primary to second-level education.

Communication with other Schools

When a child transfers to another school, school records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.

When a child transfers into Dunboyne Senior Primary School, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought.

Pupils transferring from Dunboyne Senior Primary School to a post-primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Communication with Parents

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

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- Working with the school and TUSLA to resolve any attendance problems.
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining, if possible, from taking holidays during school time, Section 21, paragraph 9 of the Education Act states that "a pupil's absence can only be authorized by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organized by the school or in which the school is involved". The school principal cannot authorize a child's absence for 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, if 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.

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 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 Education Board 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 TUSLA four times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted by the end of the first week in July detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year. This information will be communicated to the school community through the school’s website.

Evaluation

The success of any attendance policy is measured through:

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

Review

This policy will be reviewed at regular intervals.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on: _____

Signed: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

