

Clashmore National School
Roll No. 02889 O
Policy on and Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Introduction

This policy document was drawn up

- to ensure and maintain a high level of attendance by all pupils.

It was drawn up by the Board of Management in consultation with staff and parents/guardians.

Rationale

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation, such as:
 - The Education Act, (1998)
 - The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Clashmore National School tries to enable every pupil to participate fully in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. The school hopes to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance throughout the school year.

Aims of the Policy

- To raise awareness of the school's high expectations around school attendance
- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
- To outline the main elements of the school's approach to monitoring and promoting good attendance and our response to poor attendance
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation

Content

Punctuality

School begins at 9:20am. All pupils are expected to be in their class line by 9:20am. Pupils arriving after 9:20am are considered late for school. The school roll call is taken at 10am each day. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late.

Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded electronically on the Aladdin system on a daily basis. This system has now replaced the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) and the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book). The annual attendance of each individual pupil is also provided through the Aladdin system. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded electronically by the class teacher. A note or a phonecall from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher until the end of the academic school year. Parents/guardians must also provide a note/phonecall if a child departs early during the school day.

Late arrivals and early departures are recorded electronically on Aladdin by the class teacher. Parents/guardians must sign the Sign Out Book in Reception when collecting children early from school.

Parents/guardians are informed 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.

If a child has been absent for a total of 10 days, a letter is sent home to parents/guardians. A further letter is sent after 15 days' absence and a third letter is sent after 20 days' absence. The second and third letters remind parents/guardians of the school's reporting obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing 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.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

As a school we endeavour 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.

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 punctuality and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.

Our school's 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 or earlier if possible 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. Pupils who arrive in school without a complete uniform must bring a note to explain why they are not wearing their school uniform. Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her the school will endeavour to provide a lunch for the child

Certificates are provided by the school to pupils who have full attendance. We will also award certificates to pupils with the greatest level of improvement in their attendance over the previous year- 2 pupils per class.

A Monthly Attendance Award will be given to the class with the best overall attendance for that month. A certificate will be given to the class for display on the classroom door and a chart recording the monthly winners will be displayed in a public area of the school- to begin in September 2023.

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's policy on Equal Opportunity and Gender Equity.

Communication

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

The school works with the local groups and other bodies in developing and supporting programmes. These programmes aim to minimise the risks of irregular or non-attendance and to maximise the opportunities provided to all pupils.

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

The school's policies, including this Policy on and Statement of Strategy for School Attendance are available for parents/guardians on application to the school.

Each term, the school's policy in relation to punctuality is published in the school's newsletter.

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 Education Welfare Board as required during the school year through an online system. 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. This information will be communicated to the school community through the school’s newsletter. Attendance is reported twice annually to Tusla

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.

Success Criteria

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

- An increase in annual attendance rates
- An improvement in punctuality
- Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

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.

Implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parents’ Association.

The policy was launched formally at the annual General Information Evening for parents/guardians. Term 1 2020-2021

Ratification and Review

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in May 2023.

It was ratified by the Board of Management on 23rd May 2023.