



Attendance Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was drawn up in consultation with the staff, parents and Board of Management of St. John the Apostle. Knocknacarra NS. Knocknacarra NS is a 16 classroom Primary School which caters for boys and girls from Junior Infants to Sixth Class.

Rationale

This policy was drawn up to enhance the attendance of pupils in Knocknacarra National School and to promote improved levels of attendance by all children especially those who miss more than 20 days per year and to ensure parents are aware of the absolute necessity for regular, punctual attendance at school. The school values attendance highly and expects high rates of pupil attendance daily and annually.

Aims

- To foster an appreciation of attendance as good practice in the lives of children for both living and learning.
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000
- To raise awareness of importance of school attendance throughout the school community.
- To identify pupils at risk of missing school, without good reason.

Defining and Recording Non-Attendance:

“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 2000.

- A child is expected to attend each day.
- Non-attendance and attendance is recorded on the school’s database system daily.
- A letter is requested from parents/guardians explaining each absence in accordance with the Education Act 1998.
- All explanatory notes are held by the class teacher.
- The category of absence is also identified.

Commented [1]: ? change to required

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: See Appendix 1

Promoting Attendance:

- School Statement of Strategy for Attendance reviewed annually
- Whole School Approach –all classes take a roll call before 10am daily. Each child’s attendance is available in graph form with a table of the data relating to reasons for absences etc.
- At an annual assembly certificates are awarded for good attendance to pupils with unbroken attendance (0 days) and excellent attendance (2/3 days absence) throughout the year.
- Class teachers highlight good attendance in the classroom but stress that occasionally it is acceptable to miss school due to illness etc.
- Parents are reminded to issue a written explanation for absences at the school’s Curriculum Meetings each September.
- Specific incentives may be offered to particular children to encourage attendance.
- Each child’s absence is identified by number, on pupil’s annual school report.
- When a student’s poor punctuality impinges on learning, parents will be contacted directly by phone and if necessary by letter.
- Class teachers are regularly reminded to look out for patterns of absence and to report these to the Assistant Principal with responsibility for Educational Welfare & Attendance

Summary of main elements of the Attendance Strategy:

- Initially, Class teacher will speak to parent regarding non-attendance and remind parents of their statutory duty to ensure children are sent to school.
- A letter is issued to parents by Assistant Principal when a student has missed more than 16 days in a year. This serves as a reminder that we have a duty to inform TUSLA once the child misses 20 days or more.
- If no improvement is evident, the principal/ AP will meet the parent.
- Any child with more than 20 days absence is included in the School Return which is made at least twice during the academic year.
- Specific referrals may be made to TUSLA regarding pupil absence when the school believe it is warranted for a child in its care.
- The regional EWO will be contacted for advice and consultation with parents should this be required.

Roles & Responsibilities

- The Principal has overall responsibility for promoting and monitoring attendance.
- Assistant Principal, Aedín Geary has responsibility for monitoring and alerting the principal to patterns of non-attendance, contacting parents to alert them to the number of absences and issuing letters to parents of children who have missed more than 16 days without due cause (long-term illness etc.)
- Class teachers have a duty of care to ensure that the children in their care are attending school unless there is a genuine reason for absence. Where appropriate, teachers will make the initial contact with parents personally or by phone.

Success Criteria

- Our current attendance rate is approximately 95% annually. We wish to maintain and aim to increase this rate through our Strategy. Attendance is measured by the data collected on the Aladdin Database system, for each reporting period of the year.
- A reduction noted in the number of children who are habitually absent over 20 days each year.
- A culture of awareness of the importance of attending school among all members of the school community - children, teachers, parents and Board of Management.
- In improvement in the number of unexplained absences marked on the School Roll because parents have been diligent in informing teachers about reasons for absence..

Timetable for Review

- This policy will be reviewed each year, in line with our review of our Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Ratification & Communication

- This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS on January 16th 2018 and subsequently communicated to the school community via the school's website.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Frank Laffey, Chairperson,
Board of Management.