



Attendance Strategy

Claregalway Educate Together
National School



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Educate Together
NATIONAL SCHOOL

Draft Attendance Strategy

Version	Date First Ratified/Amended by BOM	Date Reviewed by BOM
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V2.0		25/04/24

School Name: Claregalway ETNS
Address: Lakeview, Claregalway, Galway.
Roll Number: 20211B

Vision and values in relation to attendance

This Attendance Policy was a collaborative school process, involving teachers, staff, parent representatives, Principal, the Deputy Principal and Board of Management. This document is being reviewed to strengthen work on attendance and to ensure the school's practice is in line with:

- Arrangements for management of rolls and registers to conform to Circular 0028/2013
- Maintaining pupil enrolment and attendance records (Clárleabhar, Leabhar Rolla and Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil) following the introduction of the Primary Online Database (POD), to conform to Circular 0033/2015
- Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools (Educational Welfare Services, Túsla – Child and Family Agency 2015).

High expectations re: attendance

In Claregalway ETNS, we recognise the importance of school attendance. It is the aim of all stakeholders that all pupils have full attendance at school if no understandable illness/sickness or urgent family situations have occurred e.g. funerals etc. To this end our school aims to be a safe, caring and stimulating place of education for all pupils. We endeavour to develop a supportive, positive and welcoming school environment where the needs of every individual child are met.

Aims of this Strategy

The aims of this policy are:

- to ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently guarantee that pupil attendance is recorded daily in roll books
- by using Aladdin software raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- promote full attendance where possible to ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- to give all the partners in the school community a sense of responsibility for school attendance
- to identify pupils at risk of learning disadvantage through poor attendance
- to foster links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- to identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

Punctuality

School begins at 9:20am. All pupils are expected to be on time. The school will contact the parent(s)/ guardian(s) in the event of pupils being consistently late. The staff monitor pupils who are persistently late. The Class Teacher will remind the child's parents of the importance of punctuality. If the situation persists, the teacher will report this issue to the Principal. If there are ongoing concerns, the Principal may report them to the Educational Welfare Services, if deemed necessary.

How attendance will be monitored

Daily roll call input electronically by class teacher 9.45 -10.00 The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) on the 'Aladdin' database of each class on a daily basis. This automatically updates the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) which is held on 'Aladdin' along with the annual attendance of each individual pupil being recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register) which is also available and updated automatically on 'Aladdin'.

- Once the roll is recorded it should not be changed (Rules for National schools under the Department of Education/1965). Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as absent albeit late arrival.
- Attendance added to database is checked by the secretary at 10.15am each morning.
- Attendance monitored by class teacher.
- General school attendance as well as individual attendance is monitored by the post holder.
- Reason for absences are recorded on the school database.
- Arriving late at school is recorded on a daily basis by the class teacher and addressed on the School Report Card in June each year. Leaving school early is recorded in a sheet at the classroom door for analysis and tracking purposes.
- Report made to TUSLA after 20 days absence according to Section 21 of Education Welfare Act using Referral Form.
- The principal meets regularly with the School Attendance Officer from TUSLA to monitor attendance practices and procedures in the school.

Reporting Attendance

The end of year student's report provides the pupil's parents with his/her school attendance record for that year. The school Principal must inform the Educational Welfare Services, when:

1. a student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively.
2. a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively.
3. a principal is concerned about a student's attendance.
4. the Board of Management decides to expel a student.

School Attendance Reporting to the Educational Welfare Services involves two separate elements:

1. A reduced Student Absence Report requirement now applies. The Student Absence Reports for Period 2 (end-Dec) and Period 4 (end-June) are mandatory. These reports must include the student absences from the start of the school year and will be submitted online to the Educational Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency (TUSLA).
2. An Annual Attendance Report (AAR) on the attendance level is submitted to the Educational Welfare Services, TUSLA at the end of each school year. If the school is concerned about a student's attendance, a formal written and signed Referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service (EWS). The school is required to complete a pre-referral checklist as part of a formal Referral. The Referral Form (encompassing the pre referral checklist) is available online at www.tusla.ie



Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:

- *Target setting and targets
- *The whole-school approach
- *Promoting good attendance
- *Responding to poor attendance

Our DEIS plan sets out clear targets in relation to attendance both full and partial day. Attendance data is reviewed termly by Principal and ISM member and targets are reviewed against baseline data.

Promoting Attendance

- CETNS will promote development of good self-esteem and self worth in its pupils (see Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy).
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs in accordance with DES guidelines.
- Attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- The class teacher will encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- The class teacher will ensure that contact is made with parents/guardians in instances where absences are not explained.
- The class teacher will keep a daily record of attendance in Aladdin. When a teacher is absent the secretary will record the attendance.
- When a child misses a day, an on-line Declaration Form is completed by the parent/guardian and reason given for the absence.
- Attendance files are requested upon a child's transfer from another school. The Principal will contact the child's last school to inform them that the child has enrolled in this school.
- Pupils who move to another school and who have had a record of poor attendance will have this fact relayed to the Principal of their new school.
- Parents of children who have a poor attendance record are made aware of the consequences for the child because of the school work they miss and for themselves who have to accept responsibility.
- Every effort is made to facilitate a child's good attendance.
- The principal will meet with the parents of children who are continually late to discuss strategies to improve punctuality. If following school intervention and strategies punctuality does not improve, the principal will report the case to the Education Welfare Officer for further intervention and action

*Responding to poor attendance

- Class teacher will talk to parent about the matter and remind them of their statutory duty as to ensure that their child is sent to school and to see if the school can assist.
- When a child has missed 10 days a standard text will be sent as a reminder, highlighting this, regardless of absence.
- If there is no improvement after this communication the principal along with class teacher will have further discussion with parent.
- A standard text will be sent when a child is 15 days absent to highlight this and encourage improved attendance.
- The principal may formally contact a parent if improvement is not seen following this communication.
- A letter will be sent to parents of pupils who have missed 20 days or more, regardless of reason for absences, informing them that this information will be reported to TUSLA and the Board of Management.
- The Education Welfare Officer (EWO-TUSLA) and principal will work together to support families of children with particularly poor attendance if necessary.
- All attendance will be reported to parents half way through the school year and on the end of year school report.



School roles in relation to attendance

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 patterns of attendance. An ISM member has responsibility for monitoring daily attendance on Aladdin. The Daily Attendance Book (Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil) records summary information in relation to daily and monthly attendance of pupils. The Leabhar Tinrimh is printed through Aladdin at the end of each month and signed by the Principal.

Roles and Responsibilities in relation to Attendance

The Board of Management:

- Ensures that a comprehensive attendance policy is in place in the school and that this policy is reviewed regularly.
- Ensures that all school records are established and maintained in accordance with the Education Act and the Education Welfare Act. Under sections 20 and 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, recognised schools are required to:
 - establish and maintain a school register and school attendance records
 - monitor the attendance of all pupils enrolled.

School Principal

Under Section 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the school Principal must maintain a record of the attendance or non-attendance on each school day of each student registered at that school.

The school attendance record should contain the following information for each student whose name is on the School Register:

- Attendance or non-attendance on each school day. A student is in attendance if he/she is present when attendance is checked under the school's normal procedures i.e. when the school roll is taken.
- If a student has been suspended for any number of days these should be recorded as absences in the normal way, and categorised appropriately.
- Reasons for failure to attend on each school day.
- Report on student attendance in certain circumstances

Under the Act, a school is obliged to report to the TUSLA every time:

- a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
- a Principal is concerned about a student's attendance
- the Board of Management decides to expel a student
- a student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
- a student's name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason
- All schools are asked to submit information about individual student absences twice a year on designated dates, and only if they have students in the categories stated above.
- Reporting dates are circulated at the beginning of each school year.

Teachers

- Class teachers ensure children in the class are registered on the electronic roll book at the beginning of the school year.
- Teachers take the class roll 9.45 -10.00 each morning. Attendance is recorded immediately on Aladdin.
- When a teacher is absent the school secretary records the roll for that class.
- The class teacher monitors attendance in the class closely.
- The class teacher records strategies in use in the classroom to promote good attendance and to improve individual attendance.



Parents / Guardians

- Parents/guardians make every effort to ensure that the child attends school every day and is on time for school.
- The school will be informed in advance of planned absences.
- Parents/guardians will complete the on-line Declaration Form outlining the reason for absence immediately following the absence of the child.
- Parents/guardians will make every effort to schedule appointments and holidays outside of school time.
- The importance of school attendance should be communicated to the child by parents/guardians on receipt of newsletters, brochures and general information.
- Parents/guardians will make every effort to co-operate with the school in relation to all matters on school attendance.

Contacts with other Schools and Outside Agencies

- If a parent hopes to enrol a child in CET from another primary school in the state the principal contacts the principal of the other school to inform them of the request. It is hoped that the principal would then pass on any concerns regarding attendance. Once the child is enrolled in our school the principal will contact the other school informing them that the child has now enrolled in the school.
- If a child transfers to another school details about the child are passed onto the other school. These details include attendance figures, results of standardised tests (where applicable) and any other relevant educational reports.
- When a child transfers to secondary school the school passport information from parents and pupils, the school report showing attendance for the previous year including standardised test reports are passed on to the principal in that school.
- Returns are made to TUSLA twice yearly outlining the number of children who have missed 20 days. Pre-referral forms are also completed by the teachers and returned to the NEWB when there is a concern about a child's non-attendance at school.
- TUSLA will also be informed if a child has been suspended for 6 days or more and also if a child is being expelled.
- The principal may also contact Social Workers (if involved) to discuss children's long term absences or repetitive absences in the best interest of the child.

Evaluation The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- maintenance and improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar Rolla records and statistical returns.
- Improvement in punctuality of children.
- Positive parental feedback and cooperation with policy.

Partnership arrangements (parents, pupils, other schools, community groups)

The school emphasises parents' prime responsibility for ensuring attendance by asking parents to inform them as soon as possible if their child will not be attending school on a particular day.

How this Statement will be monitored

- Specific actions linked to actions are set out in our DEIS plan. These actions are discussed at regular intervals at staff level. Parents are regularly reminded via monthly Updates about the importance of attending school regularly and on time.
- Roles and responsibilities of those working with the school are clearly defined in relation to attendance. Attendance and its importance is emphasised at the enrolment evening and to those whose attendance is being monitored.
- The staff record and monitor attendance on a daily basis.

