



Attendance Policy

Introduction and Rationale

The Board of Management of Scoil Na Mainistreach NS wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning. The Board recognises the clear and direct relationship between regular school attendance and pupil progress. Overall, good attendance helps to promote a positive attitude to school and learning. The Board also recognises the impact of poor attendance on a pupil's development, both socially, emotionally and academically. The Board of Management of Scoil Na Mainistreach acknowledges the fact that absenteeism is often a complex matter and seeks to give clear guidance to staff, pupils and parents of the holistic approach to improving attendance that will be followed in the school. This policy was written in consultation with staff, parents and pupils.

Relationship to School Ethos

Scoil Na Mainistreach is a Roman Catholic school with a strong Catholic Ethos that values the full and harmonious development of all of our pupils, in an environment that promotes mutual respect, safety, dignity and fairness. Scoil Na Mainistreach's Attendance Policy has been developed to provide clear guidance on procedures to promote attendance in the school so as to ensure the holistic development of our pupils.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the Attendance Policy in Scoil na Mainistreach are to:

- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Promote a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected.
- Raise awareness within the school community of the school's attendance expectations.
- Share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- Ensure that records are kept accurately and efficiently.
- Ensure awareness of and compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
- Inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

- Use attendance data to identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.
- Provide guidance to the Scoil Na Mainistreach Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Policies and Procedures

School Hours and Punctuality

The school gates open each morning at 8.50am and pupils can proceed to line up once they have entered the school grounds. The official school day begins at 9.00am. All children 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 Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Service at TUSLA.

The infant day ends at 1.40pm with the older classes finishing at 2.40pm.

The school calendar is agreed upon and shared with the whole school community prior to the end of the previous academic year. It is also published on the school website.

Recording Attendance and Punctuality

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on Aladdin school administration software, on a daily basis. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 10.00 am each morning, insofar as is possible and practical. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. Late arrivals and early departures are discouraged by the staff unless absolutely necessary. They are monitored by the class teacher and records are kept on the Aladdin school administration software. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded by Aladdin. In the event of a teacher being absent, the substitute teacher or teacher covering the class in the morning should take note of all absences and forward them to the office.

Late Arrivals to School

Arrivals of children after 9:20am must be explained by a parent. Reasons for lateness will be recorded by the secretary on the Aladdin system. A report on punctuality will form part of the Parent/Teacher meeting and end of year report. Persistent lateness should be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal and endeavours will be made to develop a plan to improve

punctuality at the earliest possible stage. Where no improvement is seen, the Principal is obliged under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 to notify TUSLA Child and Family Agency.

Procedures for Reporting Absences

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 [s18], parents/guardians have a responsibility to notify the school of their child's absence as soon as possible, for each absence. Parents can notify the school for a reason of absence by, emailing the class teacher, by using the Aladdin Connect reason for absence feature or by contacting the secretary in the office by telephone. The class teacher should be contacted for any foreseen reason for a child being late or collected early from school.

Please note, Section [(21) (9)] of the Act states that: "a pupil's absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved". The school Principal cannot authorise a child's absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Unexplained Absences

It is essential that each individual absence is reported to the school. In the event that a child is absent without explanation, the Aladdin Connect system will be used to issue an automated text/phone notification to remind parents to notify the school of the reason for that absence, as soon as possible. This policy is intended to support the immediate welfare of the child, ensuring that all children who are expected to arrive in school are present and accounted for. This also ensures that the school is aware of the reasons for absences as soon as possible. It is essential that parents/guardians current contact details on the school system are accurate and parents/guardians should notify the school office if there are any changes to same.

Promotion of Good School Attendance

Promotion of School Attendance by the School

The school will:

- Create a yearly 'Statement of Strategy for Attendance' which will identify target areas to improve on and strategies to achieve the same.
- Monitor the attendance rates of pupils (by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal/Deputy Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child).
- Provide a variety of activities in the school that help to encourage attendance.

- Insofar as is practicable, support pupils in an effort to improve their attendance.
- Will create a safe and welcoming environment.
- Endeavour to ensure children are happy.
- Develop mutual trust and respect with students.
- Promote the pupils voice in school matters via the Student Council.
- Discuss School Attendance at school assemblies.
- Regularly update parents on the importance of attendance via school newsletters.
- Have high expectations of students' attendance.
- Display kindness, compassion and understanding.
- Collaborate in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.
- Remain vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early for individual children.
- Intervene early with personalised support and engagement with families and their children when attendance issues arise.
- Invite parents/guardians of new entrants to engage in an induction process, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained
- Publish the calendar for the coming school year annually in June and posting it on the school website (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).
- Involve parents in discussion and reflection about attendance.
- Notifying parents when their child has reached 15 days of absences. (see Appendix)
- Monitor progress or lack of and noting when the threshold is met for a referral to TUSLA's Educational Welfare Services.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- Working with the School and TUSLA Child and Family Agency 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 of the reasons for absence from school promptly
- 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

Reporting Attendance

The school is obliged by law to record and compile data on the attendance of all pupils enrolled in the school. This data is compiled using the Aladdin Software System for Schools. The records stored must be made available to Department of Education officials and inspectors, when requested.

Monthly Attendance reports are compiled by the senior leadership team of the school and are reported to the Board of Management.

Compulsory reports, that are mandatory by law, are made to the relevant Child Welfare Agency (TUSLA) and the relevant Education Welfare Officer, for all pupils that are absent for 20 days or more in a school year. It is essential that the school can provide accurate data in these reports on the reasons for any absences. Failure to provide accurate details on absences will result in said absences being reported as 'unexplained'.

The Principal must also notify TUSLA if a child has been expelled or suspended for 6 or more days.

Any referrals made to TUSLA are kept indefinitely.

Transfer to/from the School

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act, attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer and permission from the parent/guardian.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed and permission of the parent/guardian has been received.

Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

- To monitor the attendance across the school by examining monthly and end of year reports.

- To provide tools, such as Aladdin, to support staff in maintaining accurate records.
- To review efforts to resolve attendance issues regularly.
- To review the Attendance Policy and Statement of Strategy for Attendance, regularly.

Principal

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
 - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
 - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
 - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
 - If a child is expelled.
 - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.

Deputy Principal

- Support the Principal in the promotion of attendance across the school community.
- Support the Principal in reporting duties.
- Monitor attendance trends and compile monthly attendance reports.
- Support teachers in identifying attendance trends.
- Lead the annual review of the Statement of Strategy for Attendance and the school's Attendance Policy.

Class Teachers

- To accurately record absences and late arrivals using the Aladdin system daily.
- To record any reasons for absence reported by parents.
- To record any unexplained absences.
- To retain any written explanations for absences and file in the student file at the end of the school year.
- To work with the Principal to develop targeted strategies to improve attendance/punctuality, as required.
- Encourage attendance and punctuality amongst pupils.
- Inform the Principal/Deputy Principal of any concerns for a pupil regarding attendance/punctuality.

Parents/Guardians

- To support your child's good attendance and punctuality.
- To inform the school of any absences or late arrivals as soon as possible, preferably by using the Aladdin app or by emailing the class teacher directly.

Pupils

- To endeavour to be punctual and in attendance as much as possible.

Implementation and Review

This policy was reviewed in full in February 2023 in consultation with staff, parents and pupils. It will be reviewed in 2026.

Ratification and Communication

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management.

Parents will be notified of this policy via the school newsletter and it will be available on the school website.

Signed: Martina Murphy
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Date: 27.3.23

Signed: Matthew H. P.
(Principal)

Date: 27/3/23

Date of next review: May 26

