



School Attendance Policy

St. Nessian's N.S.,
Mungret, Co. Limerick.
Roll no. 14409N

Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarised as follows:

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998.
- The role of TUSLA and their Guidelines for Schools on Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance.
- Changing attitudes to education.
- It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Vision and Values

- **To work closely with parents to ensure our pupils attend regularly and punctually thus enabling children to avail of the educational opportunities provided for them.**
- To encourage full attendance where possible.
- To inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- Identifying pupils at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- To develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Promoting a positive learning environment based on positive interactions and fostering an appreciation of learning.
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.



Our Targets for Improved School Attendance under this Strategy

- To reduce the number of children who are absent in excess of 20 days in a school year.
- To reduce the number of pupils who take holidays during term time.
- To reduce the number of pupils with unexplained absences.
- To reduce the number of pupils who are absent for half days.

Roles and responsibilities in monitoring and promoting attendance.

The Role of the school.

- The school has high expectations around attendance.
- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school by creating a safe, supportive, positive and welcoming environment based on mutual trust and respect, by displaying kindness, consideration, compassion and understanding, and by being vigilant in regard to issues that may affect attendance such as bullying etc.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Class attendance is recorded daily on the Aladdin Schools database system and on the system's Leabhar Tinrimh.
- If a child is not present by 10.15 a.m., the child is marked absent. A note is required explaining the absence on their return to school or the absence will be recorded as unexplained.
- The Aladdin System will be programmed to alert teachers when a pupil has missed five, fifteen and twenty days.
- **Children are only permitted to leave if they are collected by parents /guardians or if there has been a written or verbal request made to the teacher or the school office. Parents/Guardians are expected to sign their child in and out in the Reception area and to state the reason for leaving the school during school time e.g. Dental Appointment. Pupils are to be collected from and returned to their classroom by their Parent/Guardian.**
- Parents / guardians will be contacted after 5 or more days when reasons for absences are unknown. A standard letter, available will be sent by email to the parents by the class teacher.
- Pupil attendance and tardiness is monitored and the



Principal/Deputy Principal will contact parents if there are concerns.

- A subsequent letter, will be sent by email to the parents of children who miss more than 15 days requesting that the child's attendance improve and informing them that the Education Welfare Officer (TUSLA) will be notified if the child misses twenty or more days. A further letter will be sent if a child misses twenty or more days informing them that the report to Tusla has been made. These documents will be available on the Aladdin System.
- School attendance statistics are reported at the end of each term to TUSLA and the Education Welfare Officer. These will include any child who has missed 20 or more days, any child who has been suspended or any child who has been expelled.
- TUSLA is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form, which is completed on-line.
- If the child's attendance is still a concern, a meeting will be set up between the Principal/ Deputy Principal and the parents/guardians. A copy of the booklet "Don't let your child miss out" will be given to parents at this meeting.

Role of the Principal.

- To provide leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance.
- To lead on the review and implementation of the school's attendance strategy.
- To put arrangements in place for monitoring and evaluating the school's attendance strategy.
- Ensure support is in place for pupils with special educational needs.
- To provide opportunities for staff to engage with the school's attendance strategy.
- To initiate links with other relevant bodies and schools on school attendance issues.
- To notify TUSLA and the EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensure support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties.
- To inform parents of a decision to contact the EWO in



- relation to concerns regarding the attendance of a pupil.
- To ensure the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with school regulations.
 - To furnish pertinent attendance documentation to officers of relevant government departments.
 - In the instance of a child transferring from another school, inform the previous school once the child has been transferred to the school roll.
 - To promote the importance of regular attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
 - Promote the sense of personal responsibility among pupils for their own learning and their responsibility to their parents and teachers to be at school every day.

Role of the Parent / Guardian.

- Instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- **Parents have an obligation to send their children to a recognized school and engage in full time education between the ages of 6 and 16.**
- **Parents are encouraged to communicate any concerns they may have regarding their child's education and welfare and to support plans to address the problem.**
- **Parents are encouraged to emphasize the importance of attendance in school every day and the importance it plays in a good education.**
- **Parents are expected to set high standards in relation to attendance and punctuality, have their children in school every day and on time.**
- **Upon the child's return to school, parents are expected to inform the school, by note or letter, the reason for the child's absence.**
- **If an absence is planned beforehand, the school should be notified of the intended absence.**
- **When possible appointments for children should be made outside of school hours.**
- **Parents should avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason.**
- **Parents should avoid taking their child on holidays during school times.**



Role of the Class Teacher.

- Provide a positive classroom support system for engagement and participation especially for pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms.
- Agree punctuality and attendance standards with students as part of their class rules.
- Set examples by their own punctuality.
- Ensure that attendance is taken daily before 10.15am.
- Ensure attendance data is recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures.
- Make written contact by way of a standard letter(s) with parents if a pupil has five or more unexplained absences or a pattern of non-attendance on specific days is emerging. Make further written contact after fifteen and twenty days where applicable. These documents will be available on the Aladdin System.
- Alert the Principal or Deputy Principal if there are concerns about student absences.
- Support students having difficulty attending school regularly and support students on their return having missed school.
- Encourage and acknowledge good /improved attendance at classroom level.

Role of the Pupils.

- Pupils should have a sense of responsibility for their own learning and the will to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teachers.

Strategies used for Promoting Good Attendance.

School.

- The school promotes good attendance by fostering an environment that encourages children to attend school and participate fully in the life of the school.
- The school promotes the development of self-worth in



children.

- The school ensures the curriculum is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school supports pupils with special educational needs in accordance with departmental guidelines.
- The school utilizes the assistance of TUSLA and the Education Welfare Officer when needed.
- Pupils with poor attendance records are supported insofar as is practicable.
- Strategies will be based around the Response to Intervention model (RTI) as outlined in the Guidelines for Schools on Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance (pg. 10). Namely, this involves Tier 1 support for all, Tier 2 support for some as outlined above.
- Tier 3 support may be necessary for the “few pupils” whose needs are complex or where brief or one off supports have not been successful. For these pupils an Individual Attendance Plan may need to be drawn up in consultation with the Parents, the pupil themselves depending on age and in some instances with outside agencies such as NEPS, CAMHS, SESS or NCSE.
- All efforts to solve the problem at school level will be documented.
- Where this Attendance Plan does not result in an improvement in attendance a Pre Referral Checklist will be completed for the pupil involved and a Referral to TUSLA’s Educational Welfare Services will be made if the school considers it has exhausted all other efforts to resolve the attendance problem
- **Parents of children who miss 15 or more days will be contacted by letter and informed that a report to Tusla must be made by the school if the pupil misses 20 or more days.**
- **Parents of children who miss 20 or more days will be informed by letter that a report to Tusla will be made.**
- New entrants and their parents/guardians will be made aware of the school’s policy on attendance, pupils leaving the school during the school day and term time holidays. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards. The booklet “Don’t let your child miss out” will be given to all new entrants each year. This note will be emailed to parents of existing pupils in September 2017 only. This will be accompanied by a note outlining the main points of this strategy. A copy of the full Attendance Policy will be published



on the school website.

- The calendar for the coming school year is published in September on the school website and a paper copy given to each family. 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.
- General awareness raising strategies that form part of the school ethos, climate and culture are communicated on a regular basis. These include highlighting the importance of regular school attendance at parent teacher meetings, at Junior Infant initial meetings and positive affirmation of attendance when the school roll is being taken.
- Records of attendance are recorded on the school database and in the students' school reports.

Parents.

- Ensuring regular school attendance by their child(ren).
- Ensuring that their child(ren) is/are punctual each morning.
- Notifying the school if children are unable to attend
- Working with the school, NEPS and the education welfare service to resolve any attendance difficulties.
- Ensure that their children understand that parents support and approve of school attendance.
- Discuss planned absences with the school.
- Refrain if possible from taking holidays during school time.
- Show an interest in their children's school day and work.
- Praise and encourage their achievements.
- Encourage participation in all school activities.
- Contact the school if they have concerns about absence or any other school related matters causing difficulty.

Reviewing and evaluating the Statement of Strategy.

The policy should be reviewed and evaluated every two years. Ongoing review and evaluation should take cognisance of changing information or guidelines from the Department of Education and Skills or Tusla, legislation and feedback from parents/guardians,



students, school staff and others. The policy should be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning as part of "The End of Year Review." This evaluation of the strategy will form part of the Principal's End of Year Report to the B.O.M and the Parents' Association.

Signed: _____

For and behalf of board of management.

Date: June 19th 2017

Submission to Tusla.

Date: 30th June 2017