



Attendance Strategy

Wicklow Educate Together N.S. updated January 2023

Introduction

This policy document was drawn up to ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

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

Wicklow Educate Together endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils, and the school hopes to promote cooperation amongst pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance throughout the school year.

Aims

- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Identify pupils at risk
- Promote a positive learning environment

Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance

All children enrolled (and parent information) are recorded on the Aladdin Schools online software service

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on a daily basis using the Aladdin Schools online software service and the annual attendance of each pupil is also recorded using the Aladdin Schools online software service

Individual, class & whole school attendance data is also generated by this software service. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, their non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher.

The roll call is taken at 9:00am each morning. Any pupil not present when the roll is called may be marked absent for the day. Parents/Guardians are required to explain each absence on Aladdin.

Parents/guardians are informed in writing (in their child's end of year School Report of the total number of absences during the school year. The school calculates the attendance of each child three times a year.

At these times parents/guardians of pupils who have missed 15 -19 days will be contacted by the Assistant Principal detailing number of days missed and the fact that Tusla may be informed of these absences. The Assistant Principal will see if the school can be of any assistance in enabling the child to attend. Parents will be reminded of the community support services should they need any additional support.

Also, at these times parents/guardians of pupils who have missed 20+ days are informed by letter, detailing number of days missed and the fact that Tusla will be informed of these absences.

The school must inform Tusla where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and/or where a child is suspended or expelled.

Punctuality

Our experience is that pupils who arrive on time for school have a more rewarding learning experience and benefit from the early morning routine, including social time with their peers.

The bell sounds at 8.50 am indicating the start of the school day, and formal teaching has begun and each teacher calls the roll at this time. Any pupil arriving after this time is recorded as late on Aladdin, this is recorded as minutes late. This will enable you to keep an eye on your child's punctuality, and if necessary, take steps to improve punctuality.

Lateness disturbs the learning of others and as in the case of absence, a child can miss fundamental concepts, particularly in subjects such as Maths, which are frequently taught first thing in the morning.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of staff have a responsibility to implement this policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance, and the school's Assistant Principal makes returns to Tusla. After submitting the Tusla return, if there is a concern about a child's serious non-attendance, the Deputy Principal will contact the local Educational Welfare Officer regarding this attendance. If a child's non-attendance is thought to be linked to Child Protection issues, the Designated Liaison Person will be informed and the school's Child Protection Policy will be implemented.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Wicklow Educate Together NS endeavours 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 amongst 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 on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.

School Strategies

A) Communication with Parents

- The school also informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act 2000 (This information is disseminated at least once a year in the school newsletter)
- Specific reference at the Beginning of Year Welcome Meetings is made to the consequences of long absences on children's progress and also to the fact that children can become unsettled and find it difficult to readapt to their class situation after a long absence.

B) Early identification of children at risk

The Assistant Principal will be vigilant, so that risk students are identified early. These pupils will be identified on receiving information from the Aladdin Schools online software service on the dates before the submissions are required. The actions to be taken are described above.

Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to Educational Welfare Officers, (through the Tusla Absence Returns.)

- Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to Tusla three times 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 may be communicated to the school community through the school newsletter.

School Reports: Guidelines for teachers

Teachers are aware of the following attendance patterns when writing pupils' end of year School Reports

0-4 days absent: Well above average

5-10 days absent: Above average

11-13 days absent: Average

14-19 days absent: Below average

20+ days absent: Well below average

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 they must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as they 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 indicators of the success of this policy:

An increase in annual attendance rates

Implementation

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management, and communicated to the Parent-Teacher Association and wider school community.

Ratification and Review

This document was ratified by the Board of Management as school policy on **1st February 2023**.

It will be reviewed as required