



Maynooth Educate Together NS

Attendance Strategy

Introduction

Maynooth Educate Together National School drafted and revised this policy following collaboration between the Principal, the Board of Management, staff and parents/guardians.

Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of this 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 the Child and Family Agency/Túsla .

Aims and Objectives

The revised policy focuses on:

- ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- encouraging full attendance where possible
- identifying pupils at risk
- promoting a positive learning environment
- raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- fostering an appreciation of learning
- ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance

Compliance with School Ethos

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

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff, parents/guardians have an input into the implementation of the policy.

- Parents/Guardians undertake to have their child/children on time for school each day
- Parents/Guardians undertake to ensure that the attendance of their child at school is treated with paramount importance
- Parents/Guardians will provide reasons for all absences
- Class teachers record and monitor individual patterns of attendance
- The secretary oversees that attendance is taken daily
- The Deputy Principal completes attendance returns to the child welfare section of Túsla bi-



anually.

- The principal teacher links in with class teachers who highlight children with high levels of poor attendance or pupils at risk of poor attendance
- The principal subsequently contacts parents/guardians to highlight concerns and to encourage an improved pattern of attendance.
- The principal will organise meetings with parents/guardians as required in an effort to target poor attendance (attendance clinics)
- The principal contacts the Education Welfare Officer for advice and files reports as required
- It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Punctuality

School begins at 8.30am. All pupils and staff are expected to be on time. The children should be in their line by 8:30am each morning. The class teacher 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 Board Services section of TúsIa.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on the Aladdin system for each class on a daily basis. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded here, together with information provided in enrolment forms and any other notes/documents input by the staff (e.g. meetings/end of year reports). If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher.

The roll call is taken by 9:30 am each morning in line with circular 0033/2015 -

'Schools are also reminded that the roll should be called at the same time each day, normally within the first hour after the commencement of the school's 5 hour 40 minute day'.

Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. Latecomers should be marked in as late with an explanatory note. A note/email from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be stored in the pupil file in the office. Parents/guardians must also sign a pupil out in the Early Leavers book held in the office and provide a reason for their child's early departure during the school day.

All parents/guardians will be made aware of the requirements of the Education Welfare Services particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. They will be notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences accrued by their child during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is, or remains, a concern are invited to meet with the Principal during Parent/Teacher meetings and are informed of the school's concerns. The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment



- ensuring children are happy
- displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early
- rewarding good attendance/punctuality with certificates for class groups.

Education Welfare Services- Túsla

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

- The school has concerns regarding a pupil's attendance
- A child has missed more than 20 days schooling during any one school year
- A child has been suspended from school for 6 days or more
- A child has been expelled from school

The Education Welfare Services section of Túsla is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Maynooth Educate Together National School 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 among 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.

We hope to create a tradition of strong school attendance. However, the staff will remain vigilant so that 'risk' students are identified early. Risk students can be categorised as those who miss more than five days in a 20-day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians. This may be done via letter, a note in the homework folder/diary or, by personal message conveyed via email/text. A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

New pupils and their parents/guardians are furnished with copies of (or details of access to) school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance. There will be a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.

The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in May and a copy of this is sent with the end of year reports in June. The calendar can also be accessed through 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. The Child and Family Agency strongly advises against taking children out of school to go on holiday during term-time.

Certificates are also available to pupils who improve their attendance over a short period of time, and to pupils who improve their overall attendance. The **school attendance grant** is used to develop and support nurture groups as required in order to encourage attendance.



Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

Initially the class teacher will communicate with the parents/guardians of the pupil(s) in question outlining the importance of attendance and what the pupil is missing when not in school. Where appropriate, incentives to promote attendance will be implemented (positive oral feedback, sticker charts, certificates, rewards- desired job/task). When the pupils' non-attendance is approaching 20 days (17-18 days absence) the parents/guardians will receive an email from the office reminding parents of our duty to inform the Education Welfare Services. Continued absence following on from these steps would require the school Principal to communicate with the parents/guardians.

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day'.

Section 21 of the Act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent for more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis. In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parents and the Principal of the school) may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school. A case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the Education Welfare Services five 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. The Túsla leaflet, '*don't let your child miss out*' is available in 18 languages and will be provided to any parent/guardian whose attendance is causing concern.

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 he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school, and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second level education.

Communication with other Schools

When a child transfers from Maynooth ETNS to another school, the schools records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer

When a child transfers into Maynooth ETNS, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought

Pupils transferring from Maynooth ETNS to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Communication with Parent/Guardians

The school will circulate the information booklet [*Don't Let Your Child Miss Out*](#) to all parents in junior infants. The school also informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the *Education*



Welfare Act 2000. This information is disseminated by regular school circulars. Parents/Guardians of new children are informed on enrolment.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason
- working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems
- making sure their children understand that parents/guardians 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 in writing of the reasons for absence from school
- 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.

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- High attendance levels as measured through attendance records and statistical returns
- Happy confident well-adjusted children
- Positive parental/guardian feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Implementation/Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified on **21/3/2024** .

It will be reviewed by 21/3/2027 or earlier if new legislation/circulars are issued.

Ratified by: The Board of Management of Maynooth Educate Together NS

Signed: *Lorraine Murray* Principal: Lorraine Murray

Signed: *Niall Hare* Chairperson of the Board of Management: Niall Hare

Date: 21/3/2024