

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Rationale

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff and the Board of Management in order to highlight the strategies and measures in place in Waterpark National School to foster an appreciation of learning among pupils and encourage regular attendance at school as an essential factor in our pupil's learning.

It was formulated in line with legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998.

Aims and Objectives

The policy is geared towards:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Encouraging full attendance where possible
- Promoting a positive learning environment
- Fostering an appreciation of learning and education
- Enabling equal access to learning opportunities for all pupils
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Developing links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance difficulties
- Identifying and addressing obstacles to school attendance
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation

Roles and Responsibilities

In co-operation with parents and guardians, we strive to help each pupil achieve his/her full potential and so we will promote a positive attitude towards good attendance and punctuality.

The Principal and Staff will insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among children and parents/ guardians.

The Principal will:

- ensure that the school register of children is maintained in accordance with regulations
- ensure that the Education Welfare Service is informed where necessary when 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
- when a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days
- when a pupil has been expelled
- inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Service when concerned about a pupil's attendance

The class teacher will:

- record attendance in accordance with procedure
- monitor pupil attendance and punctuality
- encourage children to attend regularly and punctually
- promote a reward system, where necessary, for children with exceptional and improving attendance records
- keep a record of explained and unexplained absences
- monitor patterns of absenteeism in respect of individual children about whom they may be concerned
- inform the Principal of concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil

Parents/Guardians can support regular attendance by:

- ensure their child/children attend school regularly and on time
- notify the school if their child/children cannot attend for any reason
- inform the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school
- ensure, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc.) are arranged for times outside of school hours
- refrain, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- show an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- encourage their children to participate in school activities
- praise and encourage their children's achievements
- contact the school immediately, if they have concerns about school related matters which may impact negatively on their child's attendance

Punctuality

- School opens to receive pupils at 8.40am.
- All pupils and teachers 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 Board.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

- Attendance of individual pupils is recorded on the Aladdin computerised system each day.
- Attendance is recorded at 10.10am each morning.
- Pupils not in attendance at this time are recorded as absent.
- Although pupils arriving after 10.10am have been recorded as being absent, their arrival time will be noted on the Aladdin computerized system.
- Parents/ Guardians are required to provide an explanation in writing to explain absences.
- Reasons for absences may be written in pupil's homework journal.
- Reasons given for absence or late arrival will be recorded on the Aladdin computerized system.
- If pupils leave during the school day it will be recorded on the Aladdin computerized system.

- All notes pertaining to absences will be retained for the duration of school year.
- Parents/Guardians are notified of the total number of days missed in the end of year report card.

Strategies to Promote Good Attendance

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard the school will endeavour to ensure that:

- the school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child
- Waterpark National School will promote the development of good self-esteem and self-worth in its pupils.
- 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 on the Aladdin computerised system.
- The Principal will promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
- The Principal will inform the NEWB:
 - When a pupil has been missing for twenty or more days during the course of the school year.
 - When a pupil has been suspended from school more than once under the Code of Behaviour.
- New entrants and their parents/guardians may be invited to an induction meeting through which the school policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained.
- The calendar of closures for the school year is communicated with parents/guardians at start of school year.
- Reward systems are in place to encourage and reward good attendance
These may include:
 - Certificates for good attendance
 - Raffles
 - Highlighting most improved attendance
 - Attendance competitions between class groupings
 - Acknowledging good and improved attenders
- The awarding of "Full Attendance" certificates by the Mayor is celebrated annually. We also present children with excellent (missed 1 day), very good (missed 2 days) and good (missed 3 days) attendance in a school year.

Responding to Poor Attendance

- Attendance of individual pupils will be recorded on the Aladdin computerised system daily.
- Aladdin will alert the class teacher when absences of 15 and 20 days have been reached
- When a pupil has missed 15 days, following a discussion with the class teacher, the Principal may send a letter to parents informing them of situation.
- This may be followed up by a meeting with the Principal and Parents/Guardians to discuss and address concerns.
- At 20 days accumulative absence, a formal letter will be sent to parents informing them of the school's statutory duty to inform the Education Welfare Service.
- A formal meeting may be arranged between parents/guardians, class teacher and Principal to address concerns.
- Where the school has made all efforts to address attendance difficulties, the Principal may seek assistance from the Education Welfare Service (TUSLA).

Communication

- When a pupil transfers from Waterpark National School to another school, appropriate records sought by school authorities will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers into Waterpark National School, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought.
- Pupils transferring from Waterpark National School to a post primary school will have appropriate records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.
- The Education Welfare Service is informed of the total attendances in the school year annually.
- The Education Welfare Service is informed when:
 - A child has missed more than 20 days.
 - A child has been suspended
 - A child has been expelled

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Aladdin computerised records and statistical returns
- Happy confident well -adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

This Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management on April 11th 2018.

The Statement of Strategy was submitted to TUSLA