

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction:

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

Rationale:

This Policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- ◆ The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation (Education Act 1998, Education Welfare Act 2000).
- ◆ The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils learning.
- ◆ Staff wishes to clarify Roles and Procedures for recording attendance and communicating concerns.
- ◆ The Board of Management wished to incorporate the use of “Aladdin” management software in the recording of school attendance.
- ◆ The Board of management wished to incorporate the use of the Primary Online Database (POD) in the recording of school enrolment.
- ◆ The Board of Management wish to review our attendance policy in response to the publication of Developing the statement of strategy for school attendance. Guidelines for schools, by TUSLA (2015)

Relationship to Ethos:

St. Kilian’s S.N.S. 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 co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year.

Aims:

- ◆ To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.
- ◆ To identify pupils at risk of failure to transfer to a Second Level School.
- ◆ To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning.
- ◆ To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

Recording and Reporting:

- ◆ Information provided in enrolment forms is recorded on Aladdin and POD.
- ◆ The attendance of each class is taken at 9:50am each morning and entered on Aladdin by 11:30am. Any pupil not present at 9:50am will be marked absent for the day.
- ◆ The attendance may not be amended without the permission of the principal/deputy principal. A child marked absent, who subsequently arrives late (whether notified in advance or not) will have late added to their attendance record. When a written explanation for an absence is received by the class teacher, the reason for absence should be entered on Aladdin. A – Illness, B – Urgent family reason, C – expelled, D – Suspended, E – Other (religious observance, death of student, holidays, emigration) F – Unexplained, G – Transfer to another school. A written explanation from parents/guardians is required to explain any absence. (email or phone call is not sufficient). A perforated detachable form is provided in the homework diary for this purpose. All notes should be retained by the class teacher until the end of the school year.
- ◆ Any pupil absent for a cumulative total of 20 days is reported to the TUSLA.
- ◆ The class teacher should monitor the children's' attendance and/or bring any irregular or erratic patterns of non attendance, persistent early collection and/or punctuality to the attention of the Deputy Principal.
- ◆ St. Kilian's S.N.S. will make online returns as requested by TUSLA.
- ◆ An Annual Report will be submitted to the TUSLA.
- ◆ This Report will be delivered at the Parents' Association A.G.M.
- ◆ Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year Report of total number of absences during the school year.
- ◆ Parents/guardians are informed in writing if their child's attendance is included in the Annual Final Report to the TUSLA.
- ◆ Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern may be invited to meet with the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- ◆ 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 child is removed from the Register and where a child is expelled or suspended for 6 days or more.
- ◆ TERM TIME HOLIDAYS:

Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure that their child who is attending a recognised school is at school on every day that the school is open, unless

there is a genuine reason for their child not to attend (section 17 of Education (welfare) Act 2000)

Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal/deputy principal (section 21(9) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Therefore, the school cannot give “permission” for holiday absences during term time.

The Board of Management strongly discourages parents from taking students on holidays during term time. If a parent intends to take a child out of school for holidays in excess of 5 consecutive school days they must provide a letter to the principal/deputy principal to say that they are doing so and are aware of the educational and potential legal impact of removing students from school for periods of time.

Strategies to Promote Attendance:

St. Kilian’s S.N.S. 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.
- ◆ Our Child Protection Policy informs all staff of procedures and communications pertaining to concerns about a child’s attendance.
- ◆ The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and a reminder is published in September.
- ◆ Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.
- ◆ Pupils are consistently encouraged to be in school and on time.
- ◆ Pupils are consistently encouraged to eat healthily and practice good respiratory hygiene.
- ◆ Presentation of awards for attendance are made annually to pupils that have been absent for no less than two days during the school year.

St. Kilian’s S.N.S. maintain proactive communications with Second Level Schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible

Strategies in the event of Non-Attendance:

St. Kilian's SNS recognises that early dialogue with parents/guardians is critical to ensure that habitual late arrival, early collection, non-attendance or unexplained attendance does not persist. We recognise the value of positive informal/formal communication with parents to gain an understanding of home situations that may affect attendance. A shared focus between home and school will aid the development of individual supportive and pragmatic solutions to maximise attendance.

If the principal/deputy considers that the school has exhausted all efforts to improve attendance and there is no improvement, a written referral will be made to TUSLA'S Educational welfare services.

On receipt of a referral from the school, Túsła will allocate an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to the student and their parents/guardians. The EWO will devise and lead a plan to resolve the presenting attendance issue.

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 pupils former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress and welfare as he or she considers appropriate.

This information must also be entered on the POD.

Success Criteria:

- ◆ A maintenance of annual attendance rates above 92%.
- ◆ Board of Management, staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Roles and Responsibilities:

It is the responsibility of the Principal, Deputy Principal and staff to implement this Policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management and with the support of the TUSLA, parents and guardians.

Implementation:

This Policy will be implemented immediately following ratification of the Board of Management and communication to the Parents' Association.

Date:-

References:-

- Child Protection Policy, St. Kilian's SNS
- Communication Policy, St. Kilian's SNS
- Developing the Statement of Strategy for school attendance: Guidelines for schools, TUSLA
- Rule 55, Rules for National Schools 1965, D.E.S.
- Circular 0028/2013, D.E.S. Circular 0033/2015, D.E.S.