

# Scoil Lios Teilic Attendance Policy



# **Policy on Attendance**

## **Introduction**

This policy document was drawn up by the Board of Management in consultation with staff and parents/guardians:

- To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.
- To monitor and address the problem of poor attendance.

## **Rationale**

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation:
  - 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.
- To address the problem of poor attendance and poor punctuality.

## **Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Scoil Lios Teilic endeavours to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. The school wants to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and the staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance during the school year.

## **Aims**

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early.
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning, punctuality and good attendance.
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
- To foster a good and consistent work ethic.

## **Content**

### **Recording and Reporting of Attendance and Non-Attendance**

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded daily on the Aladdin Schools Software. Class attendance data is recorded in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) on Aladdin. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded on the Aladdin database together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents/Guardians names). The Primary Online Database (P.O.D.) is updated annually.

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 each morning. Any pupil not present by 10.30am will be marked absent for the day. Absences are recorded on Aladdin Schools Software. A note of explanation is expected from Parents/Guardians when the pupil returns to school explaining reason for absence. Parents/Guardians of pupils from 1<sup>st</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class record the absence in the special section for absences of the Homework Journals. Parents of Junior and Senior Infants write a note. Class teachers should make every effort to source explanations for each absence and record on Aladdin. Parents/Guardians must also provide a note if a child departs

early during the school day. Parents/Guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report card, of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the principal during parent/teacher meetings, and are informed of the school's concerns.

The Aladdin Software System alerts school secretary when a child has reached 15 days and 20 days respectively. A twice yearly report is submitted to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). The EWS is also informed of absences due to suspension/expulsion.

### **Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance**

- Scoil Lios Teilic, 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.
- While every effort is made to promote and expect punctuality a child who arrives late will be welcomed by teacher. Consistent lack of punctuality will be discussed with parents/guardians and improvement sought.
- 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.
- The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and is available on the website throughout the year. 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. Please retain the school calendar for reference.
- Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform. Should a pupil not have the school uniform a note of explanation from parents is required. When continual non compliance of uniform occurs a uniform will be given to the pupil until the issue is sorted.
- Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will provide a sandwich and a drink.
- Principal with assistance from class teachers will present award certificates to pupils who have full attendance during each term. Certificates are also available to pupils who improve their attendance over a short period of time, and to pupils who improve their overall attendance.
- Equality of participation is a central part of our philosophy. No child should miss school or other event due to lack of money. Teachers are encouraged to be mindful of this issue if a pupil is reluctant to go somewhere or is missing on a particular day.

### **Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance**

- The class teacher liaises with parents/guardians when there is a concern about absences. 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'.
- Parents/Guardians are sent a letter by the Principal when their child has been absent for 15 days and again when absent for 20 days (Appendix 1 & 2).
- Schools reporting obligations under Section 21(4) of the Education Welfare Act are fulfilled by the requirement to report school absences twice in each school year (in December and June) through the online system to the EWS.

- An annual report is submitted – not more than four weeks following the end of the school year – detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.
- When there is a concern about a pupil's attendance, for whatever reason, and in spite of all efforts at a resolution made at school level, and in collaboration with the home, a formal written and signed referral will be made to the EWS. A copy of this referral will be kept on file in the school. The EWS will prioritise the referral for an appropriate response in accordance with EWS case management procedure.

### **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.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

- **Principal** – overall responsibility, specific responsibility for informing EWS, responsibility for reporting to BOM.
- **Class teacher** – responsibility for creating a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom, for marking the roll book daily, for recording the reason for a child's absence
- **Parents/Guardians** – responsibility for ensuring child attends regularly and punctually and for informing the school for the reasons for any absences.
- **Education Welfare Officer** – responsible for following up and supporting all pupils reported to it by the Principal.
- **Board of management** – overall responsibility, responsible for funding the awarding of certificates.

### **Success Criteria**

The following will provide some practical indicators of the success of this policy:

- An increase in annual attendance rates with particular emphasis on the children who have a high rate of absenteeism.
- Board of Management, Staff and Parent/Guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

### **Ratification and Review**

This Attendance Policy was reviewed by Principal and staff and ratified by the Board of Management in April 2015. It will be reviewed as the need arises.

# SCOIL LIOS TEILIC

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## Appendix 1

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I wish to inform you that your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has missed 15 days to date this school year 201?/201?. We are required by law to submit all absences to the Educational Welfare Service (EWS). For more information on the EWS and the reporting procedure please see [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie).

It is important to note that regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. We therefore encourage all parents to make every effort to have their child in school every day.

Yours sincerely,

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Annette Dineen  
Principal

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## Appendix 2

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I wish to inform you that \_\_\_\_\_ has now missed **20 days** this school year 2017/2018. When your child is absent for 20 days or more we are required to send this information to the Educational Welfare Service (EWS). The EWS consider an absence of 20 days or more as a serious attendance issue. Under the law, every child must attend school regularly up to sixteen years of age.

For more information on the EWS and the reporting procedure please see [www.tusla.ie](http://www.tusla.ie).

It is important to note that regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils. We therefore encourage you to make every effort to have your child in school every day.

Yours sincerely,

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Annette Dineen  
Principal