



# Ballinteer Educate Together National School

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

The Board of Management of Ballinteer Educate Together National School recognises the clear and direct relationship between high and regular school attendance and pupil progress. The Board also recognises that high and regular attendance engenders a positive attitude to school and learning.

In light of the fact that absenteeism is often a complex matter, the Board of Management, from the beginning, views each child in the context of his/her family and a holistic approach to improving attendance will be followed.

This policy reflects and supports the school's approach to attendance as outlined in our Statement of Strategy for School Attendance.

### Aims and Objectives

The policy is geared towards:

- promoting a positive learning environment
- encouraging full attendance where possible
- fostering an appreciation of learning
- raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- identifying pupils at risk
- 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 complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

### Roles and Responsibilities

- All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy
- Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance.
- The Deputy Principal/school admin staff has responsibility for maintaining the Leabhar Tinreamh and making returns to the Túsla, the Child and Family Agency
- The Principal will prepare a report on attendance for the Board of Management on a term basis or as the need arises. An end of year report, all pupil names withheld, will also be made available to the parents.
- 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 8.15 am.
- 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 Túsla, the Child and Family Agency.

### **Recording Attendance**

- The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on the school administration software system, on a daily basis. 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 at or no later than 9.15 a.m. each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. The roll book may not be altered once it has been filled in. Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher.
- The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded on the school administration software system, together with information provided in enrolment forms.

### **Promoting Attendance**

The school promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment
- ensuring children are happy
- displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- collaborating in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils
- being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early
- inviting parents/guardians of new entrants to engage in an induction process, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained
- reminding Parents/Guardians of the importance of regular school attendance from Junior Infants onwards and the Board's obligations to report absences in school newsletters
- publishing the calendar for the coming school year annually in or before June and posting it on 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)

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems
- making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance
- discussing planned absences with the school
- refraining 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

### **Túsła, the Child and Family Agency**

Túsła is informed if;

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended for 6 days or more
- A child has missed 20 days or more
- The principal is concerned about a child's attendance

Túsła is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form.

### **Communication with other schools**

- 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.
- When a child transfers into Ballinteer Educate Together N.S. confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought

### **Communication with parents**

- Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of Túsła, the Child and Family Agency particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year.
- When a pupil has accumulated 10, 15 or 20 absences in any one school year, a standard text informing the pupil's Parents/Guardians is sent automatically. This text states the school's obligation to inform Túsła of all pupils who accumulate an aggregate of 20 school days in any one school year.
- Parents are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.

- Class teachers discuss individual pupil's attendance and punctuality during Parent/Teacher meetings and parents are informed where a pattern of non-attendance is a cause for concern.
- Parents/ guardians are informed in writing by the Principal where a pupil's cumulative absences and/ or punctuality are a cause for concern.
- Pupils whose non-attendance continues to be a cause of concern are invited to a specific meeting with the class teacher/ Principal to identify problems and agree interventions.
- The school's concerns and the agreements reached are communicated in writing to parent/guardian.
- Parents whose children continue to have poor attendance after this process of support has been implemented, will be referred to Túsla. Parents will be informed where a referral is made and will be contacted by a Túsla attendance officer/ social worker in due course.
- The Principal will have responsibility for all communications with Parents/Guardians re attendance.
- All pupil absence must be explained by the parents/guardians by email or written note. This explanation is then inputted into the school administration software system by the school secretary/ class teacher.
- When such an explanation is not forthcoming, the class teacher will seek clarification from the parents/guardians.
- Parents/guardians must also provide a note/ email if a child departs early during the school day.
- These notes/ emails are dated and kept in a central location (administration office).

### **Implementation/Ratification and Review**

This policy was ratified by the BoM of Ballinteer Educate Together NS on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The policy will be reviewed in the school year 2020/2021.