

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

This policy operates within the context of the **School Mission Statement** and the **Education (Welfare) Act 2000**.

Mission Statement

Meánscoil Iognaid Rís, Drimnagh Castle operates within the context of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust (ERST) Charter. The legacy of Edmund Rice, founder of the Christian Brothers, challenges our school to be inclusive and to be especially mindful of the disadvantaged. It challenges our school to focus on the importance of a value based, Christian education in the Catholic tradition. The school embraces the vision of promoting in its pupils full personal and social development in a caring Christian community of learning and teaching. It subscribes to a holistic vision of education which is expressed in the following five key principles:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel based values.
- Promoting partnership.
- Excelling in teaching and learning.
- Creating a caring school community.
- Inspiring transformational leadership.

Aims of Policy on Attendance and Punctuality

- To have a positive impact on pupil attendance and punctuality in order to maximise the individual potential and performance of each pupil
- To increase motivation for both parents/guardians and pupils to improve school attendance and punctuality.
- To improve the quality of participation and educational attainment for each pupil in the educational process.

Objectives of Attendance Policy

- Maintain an effective attendance tracking system through the use of the school administration system.
- Provide Year Heads and Class Tutors with regular computerised reports on pupil attendance.
- Encourage good attendance at school and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance amongst students and parents/guardians. To encourage parents/guardians to send children to school in all but exceptional circumstances.
- Communicate concerns to parents/guardians regarding an individual pupil's attendance and punctuality record, and develop suitable intervention strategies.

Rationale of Policy

- A good education gives a child the best possible start in life.
- A child who goes to school regularly and punctually will be better able to keep up with school work and gain from the school ethos and environment.
- A child who consistently attends school is less likely to be drawn into anti-social behaviour.
- The school must meet its obligations in compliance with the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.

Education (Welfare) Act, 2000

Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, the school must maintain a register of all students attending the school.

Under Section 21 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school must record the attendance or non-attendance of students registered at the school on each school day.

Under legislation, every child between the ages of 6 and 16 must attend school regularly up to 16 years of age or complete 3 years' education in a post primary school; whichever comes later. The Child and Family agency TUSLA was set up to support school attendance and Educational Welfare Officers were appointed to follow up on children who are not attending school regularly. Under the Act, a school is obliged to report to TUSLA every time:

- It decides to expel a student.
- A Student has been absent for 20 days or more cumulatively.
- A student who is, in the opinion of the Principal, not attending school regularly
- A student's name is removed from the school register.
- A student has been suspended for not less than 6 days in the course of a school year.

The school must prepare two student absence reports and one annual attendance report. These can be submitted online on www.schoolreturn.ie.

If there is a concern that a child is missing out on his education, the Educational Welfare Officer may visit the family home to discuss the matter. He or she will work with the family and the school to identify what needs to be done to ensure that the individual child gets every chance to enjoy school.

Attendance and Student Responsibility

- Pupils are expected to be present and punctual for school and all classes. Pupils are required to be in class every morning at 8.55am and every afternoon by 1.45pm. School begins at 8.55am sharp and ends at 3.45pm or 1.05pm on Wednesdays. Lunch break is from 1.05 - 1.45pm.
- Pupils are required to report to the Deputy Principal's office if late. This will be recorded and sanctions may be imposed for late attendance.

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- In the event of an absence the student must present a written note of explanation in his homework journal to his class tutor and to the individual subject teacher (when requested) from his parent/guardian.
- A pupil may not leave the school before the time of dismissal without presenting a written request to the Class Tutor from his parent/guardian.
- Any pupil leaving the school during the school day must sign out in the school office having received permission from his Class Tutor and his parents/guardians. First, Second and Third year pupils may only leave if collected by a parent/guardian.

Attendance and Parental Responsibility

The primary responsibility for a student's attendance lies with the parents (The Education Welfare Act 2000).

- When a student is absent from school for any reason, parents/guardians must notify the school by telephone or email, on or before the third day of absence. If no communication is received the school will endeavour to contact the parents/guardians of the absent student.
- Parents/guardians are required to provide a note of explanation for any absence in their son's homework journal. These notes are checked by the Class Tutor on the child's return to school.
- Parents/guardians must provide written notes in the student's Journal explaining reasons for lateness.
- The Department of Education and Science recommends that parents must try to ensure that family holidays are scheduled during holiday times and that any appointments where possible are made outside of school hours.

Punctuality

Parents/guardians are expected to cooperate with the school in ensuring punctuality, which is essential for the smooth running of the school. It is an important discipline that is vital for the teaching and learning environment of the school. Poor punctuality causes disruption and contributes to the loss of class time.

- Students are expected to be in class every morning at 8.55am and every afternoon by 1.45p.m.
- Students are expected to be punctual for every class throughout the day and may not leave class without the permission of the incoming teacher.
- Sanctions will be imposed for persistent lateness to school and lateness to individual classes.

Going Home For Lunch

First, Second and Third year pupils are required to remain on the school premises during lunchtime. The school cannot accept any responsibility for their safety if this instruction is ignored. Only senior students (Transition, Fifth and Sixth years) may go home (time permitting) or go to the local shops at lunchtime. Pupils who need to cross the road should only cross at the pedestrian lights if there are no wardens present. If a student is unable to return to school for afternoon classes due to illness/family

circumstances it is very important that the parents/guardian notify the school immediately.

Procedures For Monitoring Attendance

- Each teacher takes a morning and afternoon roll call using a computerised registration system. Teachers also have the facility to take individual class roll calls on this system. Parents/guardians of absent students for the morning roll call are notified by SMS. Lists of students who will be absent on any activities are recorded on the administration system.
- The Deputy Principal records late-comers and these are recorded on the attendance tracking computer programme.
- The parents/guardians of absent pupils may be contacted by phone and/or letter to check/verify attendance.
- Class Tutors are informed on a daily basis of student absences. In addition, each Class Tutor receives weekly/monthly reports and where there is a concern contact is made with a parent/guardian.
- The Deputy Principal writes to parents/guardian if a student has 10 days' absence from school, outlining the consequences of further absences. This is followed by a further communication to parents/guardian once a student reaches 20 days absence from school. This letter informs parents that these absences will be notified to the Educational Welfare Officer.
- A record of absent days and late attendance is given to parents/guardians as part of the Mid-Term, Christmas and Summer school reports.
- As part of the School Completion Programme the school liaises with the school completion coordinator. The role of the coordinator is to monitor pupil attendance, prepare attendance reports and communicate with the Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Heads and Class Tutors on matters relating to attendance. He/she also liaises with the Educational Welfare Officer and prepares reports for TUSLA.
- Returns are made to the TUSLA on a regular basis and the school liaises frequently with the appointed Educational Welfare Officer.
- The Home School Community Liaison Officer provides support to parents/guardians in order to improve the educational outcomes for the pupils. The scheme aims to promote partnership and co-operation between home, school and relevant community agencies to ensure every child attends regularly and receives an equal educational opportunity in our school.

Sanctions

Disciplinary actions consistent with the school's Code of Behaviour will be imposed by the Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Heads for absences from school without permission.

School Refusal/ Prolonged Absence

In exceptional or sensitive circumstances, a student may be absent for a prolonged period. Prior to the student's return, the Care Team will set individualised procedures

or support structures to meet the needs of the student and to facilitate the student's return to school.

Rewarding Students for Good Attendance:

Pupils with good attendance records are presented with certificates of attendance each term and at the end of year awards ceremony.

Evaluation of Policy

The Attendance and Punctuality Policy will be monitored by the Principal and Deputy Principal in conjunction with staff on an annual basis and will be formally reviewed in 2019/2020 academic year.

Adopted By the Board of Management

On Thursday 24th January 2019