

Killeshin N.S., Killeshin, Carlow. Guthán: 059/9147852

## E-Mail: principal@killeshinns.ie

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

**Introduction**

Changing social habits and patterns necessitated the updating of the school’s attendance policy. The redrafting was a collaborative school process involving staff and Board of Management, following initial drafting by a representative group.

**Rationale**

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarised as follows:

* To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils’ learning
* Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
* The role of the Education Welfare Service (TUSLA)
* Levels of disadvantage

**Aims and Objectives**

The revised 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

**Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School**

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.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

**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 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

**The Deputy Principal may**:

* support parents in their role to ensure regular and punctual school attendance
* alert parents by text message when absences of 15 days or more have accumulated
* notify parents/guardians by phone call when absences of 20 days have been reached
* Hold a meeting with parents to discuss concerns regarding school attendance

**Parents/Guardians can support regular attendance by:**

* ensuring their child/children attend school regularly and on time
* notifying the school if their child/children cannot attend for any reason
* informing the school, preferably on Aladdin, 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 begins at 9.20am with staggered arrival from 9am.
* 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 before 10:30am each morning.
* Pupils not in attendance at this time are recorded as absent.
* If pupils arrive late, their arrival time will be noted.
* Parents/ Guardians are required to provide an explanation, preferably by message on Aladdin or in writing to explain absences or late arrivals.
* 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.
* Children leaving during the school day are required to inform the class teacher on Aladdin and are logged in the school office.
* 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
* 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:
  + Praise and encouragement from principal and staff
  + Highlighting most improved attendance
  + Acknowledging good and improved attenders at School Assemblies
  + Due to lessons learned during the Covid experience, Killeshin National School **no longer presents awards for full attendance because of the importance of keeping pupils with contagious infection at home for the protection of pupils and staff.**
* art, music, drama and sporting activities may be scheduled for times of the week when poor attendance may arise i.e. Mondays/ Fridays
* programmes to support pupils in their social, emotional and personal development are utilised. These may include :
* Wellbeing (whole School)
* Talk About Programme (SET)
* Incredible Years (SET)
* Zones of Regulation (SET)
* Cognitive Behavioural Training (SET)
* Student Committees: Green School Committee, Amber Flag for Wellbeing Committee
* Outdoor Learning
* Internet Safety Workshop – Friends for Life Programme (Senior Classes)
* Creative Mindfulness (Middle Classes)
* Amber Flag for Wellbeing (whole school initiative)
* Continuum of Support Model
* Walk Tall Programme (whole school)
* Weaving Wellbeing
* G.A.A. training initiative (junior infants-second class))
* Rugby training initiative (third class-sixth class)
* Cycling Road Safety Initiative (senior classes)

• School subsidised swimming lessons – 8 week block for all pupils (first and second class)

• Healthy Eating Policy (whole school approach)

• Whole-school assemblies

• Themed Weeks (e.g. Maths Week, Science Week, Book Week, Art and Craft etc)

• Promoting the Arts – Instrumental Music, School Choir, School Musicals, Art and Craft Display

* Active Schools week

• After School Clubs

• Communicating with National Council for Special Education (NCSE) to gain SNA access for pupils

• Communicating with CAMHS for advice and support when required

• Barnardos – referral from school for support for pupils and families

• Education Welfare Officer – support for pupils with poor attendance

• Links with HSE personnel e.g. Spraoi Centre in Portlaoise (Speech and Language, OT, Psychology)

* programmes to encourage and develop the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills which support student life skills are availed of. These may include:
  + Junior Achievement
  + Junior Entrepreneur Programme
* the school works in partnership with local bodies to promote good school attendance and promote equal access to learning opportunities for all pupils. These bodies may include:
  + Killeshin GAA
  + Killeshin Soccer Club
  + Carlow Rugby Club
  + An Taisce
  + Laois County Council
  + RSA
  + St. Abbans Athletic Club
  + Junior Achievement Programme
  + Junior Entrepreneur Programme
  + Carlow I.T.
  + Carlow Library
  + Laois First Responders
  + Local Dance Groups
  + Graiguecullen Swimming Pool

**Responding to Poor Attendance**

* Attendance of individual pupils will be recorded on the Aladdin computerised system daily.
* Aladdin will alert the teacher, the Deputy Principal and the Principal when absences of 15 and 20 days have been reached
* At 15 days the Deputy Principal will meet with the class teacher to discuss reasons given by parents for absences.
* Following this, the Deputy Principal may alert parents by text message or a phone call as to the number of days missed to date.
* The Deputy Principal or Principal may arrange to meet parents/ guardians informally to discuss concerns if necessary.
* At 20 days accumulative absence, a message 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 Killeshin 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 Killeshin National School, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child’s previous school and appropriate records sought.
* Pupils transferring from Killeshin 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 in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The Statement of Strategy was submitted to TUSLA**

*Fr, John Dunphy*                                                                    *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*  
Chairperson of the Board of Management​​​​​

*Nicola McGuill*

*Principal*                                                            *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*