



*Scoil Mhuire Ógh 1  
Loreto Senior Primary School  
Attendance Policy Revised December 2023*

### *Rationale*

Our school decided to review our attendance policy because:

- It is a requirement under The Education Welfare Act 2000.
- As a DEIS school we pay particular attention to attendance throughout the school.
- Formally setting down the various procedures and strategies which we have in place would help us to focus on areas which may need more attention.
- We want to acknowledge the positive strategies in place and the commitment by the school community to improve school attendance.

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

We aim to provide a safe, happy and caring environment for our children where the potential for spiritual, intellectual and physical growth is recognised and respected. We believe that an effective Attendance Policy will help to foster an appreciation of the importance of regular attendance and the major contribution it can make to all aspects of a child's development.

### *Aims*

By introducing this statement we hope:

- To raise awareness of importance of school attendance
- To identify pupils at risk of recurring bad attendance
- To promote positive attitudes to attendance
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards, and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend school
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/TUSLA Child and Family Agency

### *Defining and Recording Non-attendance*

Attendance is recorded using Aladdin. Our school defines non-attendance as not being present in school for roll call at 10am. If a child arrives after the 10am roll call, the roll may be amended with a reason for the absence supplied.

Once a child has missed twenty consecutive school days, he/she will be removed from the electronic roll. They will remain as a 'former pupil' on the electronic register. This is in keeping with Rule 64(2) regarding valid enrolments. In order to satisfy the requirements of TESS these children will be retained on the school register until such time as notification is received from another school of their enrolment. If a child is withdrawn from school during the school day for any reason (illness, appointment etc.), he/she must be collected by the parent/guardian. The class teacher or secretary must record the 'early leaving' using Aladdin.

### *Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance*

1. As a school we create a welcoming environment for all pupils and their parents.
2. Children who arrive late are greeted by their class teacher. Where children persistently arrive late the class teacher/HSCL informs the parent/guardian of this and explains the importance of the child being on time for school and the consequences of their late arrival for their education. We understand that the late arrival of students is most often out of the control of students themselves and therefore do not make an issue of it with the student themselves.
3. Children who arrive at school with an incomplete/incorrect uniform are given the missing item(s) from a stock kept in the school. This ensures that children do not stay away from school merely because they have not got a uniform. Where class teachers feel the school needs to provide items of uniform, this is done discreetly.
4. Issues regarding school attendance are discussed at Care Team Meetings.
5. The HSCL coordinator runs a school-wide attendance and punctuality initiative with the winning class each month receiving a pizza party.
6. Weekly attendance updates are announced at the weekly zoom assembly.
7. Awards are given discreetly to pupils whose attendance has improved.
8. Children (who are targeted under the School Completion Programme) who arrive in to school without breakfast are catered for in our breakfast club. All pupils receive a very generous free hot lunch provided by Glanmore. These are paid for from a grant received from the Department of Social Protection.
9. Target children receive support from the School Completion Programme project workers who facilitate whole class, small group or one-to-one interventions for children who are at risk of early school leaving.
10. At the parent meetings at the beginning of the school year the Principal and HSCL inform the parents/ guardians of the procedures related to attendance and they receive written details of these. Parents/Guardians are updated on their child's attendance at Parent Teacher meetings. Cumulative absences are communicated at various intervals (10, 15 and 20 days) to parents/guardians via phone calls, meetings, letters and Aladdin texts. Attendance for the school year is printed on each child's report card in June.

Attendance procedures are listed below:

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

#### **Stage 1: For each day a child is absent**

An automated text message is sent to the parent/guardian for each day that a child is marked absent on Aladdin provided that a valid reason has not been received by the school.

#### **Stage 2: 10 Days Absent**

- An automated text is sent via Aladdin to inform parents/guardians that their child has been absent for 10 days so far this school year.

#### **Stage 3: 15 Days Absent**

- An automated text is sent via Aladdin to inform parents/guardians that their child has been absent for 15 days so far this school year.
- The deputy principal sends a letter to inform parents/guardians of the accumulated absences (See Appendix A). A record of the letter is kept on Aladdin.
- The HSCL makes contact with the parents through phone call/home visit to discuss any issues that may be contributing to absences and to offer support.
- The HSCL informs the parents/guardian that a referral may be made to the School Completion Co-ordinator (SCP) if there is no improvement in the child's attendance.
- The pupil may be involved in discussions/decisions, if appropriate.
- The deputy principal informs the principal of the absences.

#### **Stage 4: 20 Days Absent**

- An automated text is sent via Aladdin to inform parents/guardians that their child has been absent for 20 days so far this school year.
- The deputy principal sends a letter to inform parents/guardians of the accumulated absences (See Appendix B). A record of the letter is kept on Aladdin.
- The deputy principal notifies the principal.
- The principal makes a phone call or meets with parents to discuss attendance and offer support.
- The pupil may be involved in the discussion if appropriate.
- If all 20 absences are unexplained, the deputy principal completes the TUSLA referral form (See Appendix D) in consultation with the principal, class teacher, HSCL teacher and the SCP Co-ordinator.
- The HSCL Coordinator informs the parents/guardians of the referral via letter.
- Referrals are recorded in the child's profile on Aladdin by the principal and a copy of the referral form is kept on the child's file in the office.

## Stage 5: 20+ Days Absent

- The deputy principal notifies the principal/HSCL of absences in excess of 20 days.
- If appropriate, the principal refers the case to the SCP Co-ordinator using the referral form (See Appendix C).
- The SCP Co-ordinator meets with/phones the parents/guardians to discuss the issues and to decide on the appropriate intervention. The parent/guardian is informed of the possible referral to the Education Welfare Officer, if the child's attendance does not improve.
- The SCP Co-ordinator informs the principal of the outcome of the meeting. Decisions are recorded in the 'Log of Actions' on Aladdin by the principal.
- The child's attendance is monitored daily by the deputy principal and if the child is absent again, the SCP Co-ordinator is informed.

*All medical certificates, hospital appointment letters etc. are stored in the child's file and will be taken into account if a referral to TUSLA is being made.*

*If a child is absent from school due to illness the school does not provide work packs while the child is recuperating. In addition, if parents/guardians choose to remove a child from school for holidays during term time, work packs will not be provided.*

## *TUSLA Education Welfare Service*

- TUSLA is informed twice a year (December and June) of attendance reports when absences have reached 20 days. This is a statutory requirement.
- TUSLA is furnished with the total attendance for the school year.

## *Procedures in relation to the Removal from Register/Transfer from another school*

- In the case of intended expulsion of a child, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified immediately and asked to advise the parents about finding another school for the child.
- Once the school receives notification from another school that a child has been enrolled in that school, the child is removed from the Primary Online Database (POD), with notation made in Aladdin of the details of their new school.
- Once the school receives notification from the Education Welfare Officer that a child is in receipt of education outside of the regular school system (e.g. home, moved to another country) or has enrolled in a special school, the child's name is removed from the Primary Online Database (POD), with notation made in Aladdin of the details of where the child is now receiving their schooling.
- Transfer to another school: Where parents remove a child from a school the Principal gives them and the new school a certificate stating the child's record of attendance

and absences in the school, the last class the child attended, and any other relevant information pertaining to the education of the child.

- Transfer from another school: The Principal notifies the Principal of the child's last school attended, as soon as possible, in writing, that the child is now registered in our school.

### *Annual Reporting*

The Deputy Principal completes and returns attendance reports on 31/12 and 30/6 every year via the School Returns website. In addition she/he also submits the Annual Report for school attendance online via the School Returns website at the end of the school year.