

*Ratified by BOM  
June 2016*

## **Attendance Policy**

*Revised April 2016*

# **Clarecastle National School**



## **Attendance Policy**

*January 2016*

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## **Introduction**

The Board of Management, in consultation with staff and parents/guardians drew up this Policy on Attendance.

This policy document was drawn up:

- To ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils.

The policy was revised in April 2016 in order to reflect changes in practice within the school in line with the provisions of sections 2(i), 2(ii) and 2(iii) of Department of Education and Skills primary circular 0033/2015.

## **Rationale**

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation, such as:
  - The Education Act, 1998
  - The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
  - The role of the NEWB - TÚSLA - Child and Family Agency
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

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

We in Clarecastle National School endeavour to enable every pupil to actively participate in all school activities. Regular attendance helps to create a stable learning environment for all pupils, and the school hopes to promote co-operation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year. We endeavour to afford each pupil the opportunity to reach their full potential spiritually, socially and academically in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

### **The aims of our policy are:**

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance
- To encourage full attendance where possible
- To encourage punctuality
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning
- To foster an appreciation of learning
- To identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.

### **Roles and Responsibilities:**

All staff members have an input into the encouragement of good attendance habits. Class teachers are aware of individual patterns of attendance and request a note from parents to cover absences. The school Deputy Principal, Ms. Teresa Nugent, is the School Attendance Officer. The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered on the Primary Online Database (POD) in an accurate and efficient manner.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents/guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance, lateness and early leaving are monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to TUSLA

## **Content**

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

Individual school attendance is recorded electronically on our pupil management system “Aladdin” in line with the terms of Department of Education & Skills Primary Circular 0033/2015.

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 by 10.30am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent. (*See section re Late Arrivals*)

Class totals are transferred electronically via Aladdin and the Leabhar Tinreamh is generated. This is maintained by the Attendance Officer and signed monthly by the Principal. A hard copy is retained on file.

With effect from the commencement of the 2015/2016 school year the Clár Leabhar is no longer maintained for pupils entering Clarecastle National School. The relevant detail required for pupils is entered and maintained on the Primary Online Database (POD).

Pupils whose non-attendance/punctuality is a concern will be invited to meet with the Attendance Officer in the first instance and subsequently with the Principal should the need arise.

Parents are made aware of the requirements of TÚSLA, particularly the law relating to absences of more than 20 days on enrolment.

The school must inform TÚSLA in writing where:

- A child has missed 20 or more days in a school year.
- Where attendance is irregular.
- Where a child is suspended for 6 days or more.
- Where a child is expelled.

### **Punctuality**

All pupils and school staff are expected to attend school punctually.

#### **Being punctual:**

- Gets pupils day off to a good start and puts pupils in a positive frame of mind, so that they can make the most of their learning.
- Sets positive patterns for the future.
- Leads to better achievement.
- Leads to understanding that school is important and education is valuable.
- Helps you develop a sense of responsibility for yourself and towards others.
- Is respectful to your teacher and to your classmates.
- Builds good habits for later in life.

Research shows that **attendance and punctuality are essential factors in school success.**

### **Late Arrivals**

Pupils who present in school at or after 9.10am must be signed in at the school office by a parent/guardian. Pupils who present late will have the length of time they are late by recorded on Aladdin.

Where a pupil attends school after the roll has been called the attendance record for that pupil may be adjusted by the class teacher once an explanation for the change is recorded on Aladdin.

Late arrivals will be monitored by the class teacher. The Attendance Officer will monitor the records to ensure there are no blatant patterns of late coming. Where there is a clear pattern of late coming the school, through the Attendance Officer, is obliged to inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

### **Early Leavers**

Pupils who need to leave school prior to 1.45pm in the case of infants and 2.45pm in the case of all other pupils must be signed out in the school office. Pupils who leave early will have the length of time they are missing recorded on Aladdin.

**Pupils will not be released into the care of anyone other than a parent/guardian unless the school has been notified of same in advance by the relevant parent/guardian.**

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

We in Clarecastle National School, endeavour 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. As a school we strive to ensure that the school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.

#### **Promoting Attendance:**

The school promotes good attendance by;

- Creating a safe and welcoming environment which encourages attendance.
- Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding towards children.
- Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early.
- Informing children at intervals throughout the year of good attendance and complimenting them on this achievement.
- Presenting pupils with certificates and specially commissioned school pens for full attendance.
- Presenting pupils with certificates and specially commissioned school pencils for near full attendance.
- Alerting parents if a child is approaching absences of more than 20 days.
- Encouraging the attitude that good attendance is a valuable goal.
- Encouraging punctuality among all children - children should be at the school at 9.00 am each morning.

The Attendance and punctuality of pupils will be monitored and addressed if necessary by the class teacher in the first instance, the class teacher will inform the Attendance Officer of any continuing concerns regarding attendance/punctuality. The Attendance Officer if unsuccessful in resolving attendance issues will subsequently inform the Principal of any continuing difficulties and following consultation appropriate action will be decided upon.

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 September and is available to the general school community on the school website which can be accessed at [www.clarecastlens.com](http://www.clarecastlens.com). The school calendar is also included in pupil's homework journals for ease of reference. Parents are also supplied with the dates of the Standardised School Year as supplied in advance by the Department of Education and Skills. 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.

### **Guidance for Parents**

Section (21) (9) of the Education Welfare Act states that:

*“a pupil's absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”*

Parents/guardians can promote good attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notifying the school if their child(ren) cannot attend for any reason.
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
- Working with the school and Education Welfare Officer to resolve any attendance problems.
- Ensuring that pupils understand that parents support and approve of regular school attendance and punctuality.
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- Encouraging pupils to participate in school activities.
- Instilling in their children, a positive self concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- Ensuring, insofar as possible, that children's appointments are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Notifying the school if their child/children are being collected by someone other than a parent/guardian.

### Pupils:

- Have a clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Should inform a member of the teaching staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
- Are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
- Are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents on the specified day.

### Communication

The school maintains a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

### Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

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’**.

On return from a planned/unplanned absence, parents/guardians must supply a communication indicating the reason for absence.

Section 21 of the act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis.

In cases where the school continue to be concerned about the non attendance of pupils an individual referral will be made to TÚSLA. Parents will be informed that this referral is being made in writing.

In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts to consult with the child’s parents and the Principal of the school) may serve a ‘School Attendance Notice’ on any parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment.

Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to TÚSLA five times during the school year through an online system. An annual report is submitted – not more than six weeks following the end of the school year - detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

### **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.

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act, attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the receiving school as soon as written notification of enrolment has been received.

Notification will take place via the Primary Online Database (POD) in line with the four step procedure as detailed in Appendix 2 of Department of Education and Skills primary circular 0033/2015.

Parents of pupils who cease to be enrolled in Clarecastle National School must complete a School Leavers Form, see **Appendix 1**.

### **Success Criteria**

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

- Maintenance of high annual attendance rates
- Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

### **Implementation**

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and will be reviewed at regular intervals.

**This revised policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Clarecastle National School at a meeting held on the 20/06/2016.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Mr. Liam Barry  
Chairperson BOM**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Appendix 1

School Leavers Form

School Year: September 2015 to June 2016

Pupil Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Class Level \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

*Reason for leaving: Please select one option only*

1. **Transfer to another primary school within the state:**

Destination School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Emigrating:**

Destination School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Other:** *(Please specify)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I/We consent to Clarecastle National School forwarding records/reports held on the above named pupil to the school specified once confirmation of enrolment has been received.**

**I/We are aware that, if we wish to re-enrol the above named pupil in Clarecastle National School, normal enrolment procedures, as per School Enrolment Policy, will apply.**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_