



LUCAN EDUCATE TOGETHER

ATTENDANCE STRATEGY POLICY

Introductory Statement:

This statement was developed by the staff of the school and presented to the BOM for ratification.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

Our attendance strategy aims to ensure our excellent attendance record is maintained. Parent/Guardian participation is an important aspect of our school. Our strategy for school attendance aims to encourage parents and children to understand that regular attendance helps children to become more fully involved in school life.

Aims:

- to highlight the importance of education in the life of a child.
- to raise awareness of the importance of the academic and social aspects of education for a child
- to foster a positive attitude towards learning in the school community.
- to raise awareness of importance of school attendance and forming good patterns of attendance in early years.
- to identify pupils at risk and identify strategies to support their attendance at school.
- to enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- to make parents/guardians aware of their responsibilities around attendance, under the Education Welfare Act.
- to comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines form TUSLA.

Recording Attendances / Absences:

Our expectation is that, as far as possible, every child will be in school every day the school is open.

All children are expected to arrive at school for 8.50 a.m. and be collected promptly at 1.30pm (infants) 2.30 pm (all other classes).

Daily attendances of pupils are recorded on the ALADDIN system. The roll is taken each day before 10.30 a.m. It is the parents/guardians' responsibility to inform the class teacher if a child is going to be late arriving in school or if the child has to leave school early. Children must be signed in/out at the school office. If a child leaves the building before 10.00.a.m. and does not return for the duration of the school day, the child will be marked absent for that day.

Parents/guardians should inform the class teacher in writing when a child has been absent. (This is an obligation under the Education Welfare Act). This note should be dated and explain the reason for absence (blank note provided in journal). There is also a facility on our school website for Parents/Guardians to complete an absence note. This assists the class teacher in completing returns about absences to TUSLA.

Absence notes will be kept by the class teacher. Records of children missing in excess of 20 days in the course of the school year are returned to TUSLA. The reasons noted for the individual child's absences are recorded.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance:

Calendar:

A calendar of school holidays/closures is posted on the school's website in advance of the beginning of the school year. It is also circulated by e-mail to all parents and is also included in pupils' homework journals. Junior Infant children are given a hard copy of the calendar. These school measures are intended to help enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of absences related to family holidays during the school term

Early Intervention:

A "Starting School" pack is prepared each year for the parents of newly enrolled pupils.

Communication with Parents / Guardians:

An information note is included in the school journal outlining the importance of attendance and punctuality and stating the obligation on staff to report non-attendance. Parents are also informed of their responsibility to send a written note to the class teacher explaining any absences.

Phone Communication:

When a child has been absent for 6 or more consecutive school days and the school has received no communication regarding the reason for the absence, the child's parents will be contacted by the class teacher. Following this, the Principal/ Deputy Principal will be made aware by the class teacher of the duration and reason for the child's absence.

Longer Absences:

In situations where the school has been informed that a child will be absent for a longer period of time (up to and exceeding 20 days), the parent/guardian(s) must formally write to the Principal requesting the leave, giving the period of and reason for the intended absence. The Principal will respond in writing to the request reminding the parents of the educational and potential legal implications of removing students from school for extended periods of time. It is emphasised to parents that they should continue to support the child with school work during the course of the absence if the child is absent for reasons other than illness. Where a child is on prolonged absence from school due to accident/illness parents should contact the school to discuss whether any additional resources could be made available to support the child's school work while he/she is absent.

School Records of Attendance:

Class teachers securely store notes received from parents re absences.

School Reports:

Children's individual attendances are recorded in the annual school report. In the cases of children transferring to secondary schools and/or other primary schools attendance records are also forwarded.

TUSLA:

In line with most recent guidelines, bi-annual returns are forwarded to the TUSLA re attendance for each school year.

Monday Morning Meetings/ Assemblies:

Children are encouraged to have good attendance and the value of regular school attendance is highlighted at these whole school gatherings.

SPHE:

As part of our Social Personal and Health Education Programme teachers/staff actively promote self-esteem and encourage attendance through approaches such as "Making Good Choices".

Homework:

In accordance with our school's policy, homework is recorded in each child's school journal. The journal is an important link between school and home, helping to nurture consistent learning in both settings. If absences are related to homework or assessments, parents/guardians and teachers will work in partnership to come to a solution about this.

Assessment:

Individual teachers make arrangements for their own class assessments. If absence from school is associated with this aspect of school, parents/guardians will be encouraged to talk to the class teacher. Assessments will generally reflect class work and homework. Encouraging children to do homework will help alleviate their fears. In the case of children with special learning needs, the class teachers will make professional decisions as to what accommodations should be made when attempting assessment activities.

Equality of Participation:

In Lucan Educate Together we strive to ensure that provision of educational opportunities is available to all. School book lists are kept to a minimum with the majority of books in the senior part of the school being part of a book rental scheme. This reduces the financial burden on families. Research is carried out annually to select school tours which are the best value for money. If parents are experiencing difficulty with funding for school tours/swimming, they are encouraged to discuss this with the Principal.

Equality Issues:

Our school values the culture of every child and ensures that they will make the most of all the learning opportunities provided by the school. We address and challenge stereotypes that might assume that students from particular backgrounds or with a particular experiences will always have a problem with attendance and learning.

Learning Needs and Absences:

Extra support may be offered to children who are absent on a long term basis due to illness or hospitalisation. Support may also be offered to children to encourage them to attend school more regularly or to allow them to catch up on work due to absences.

Communication with Other Schools / Other Providers

- The Primary Online Database (POD) contains relevant information on individual children in our school. POD facilitates inter-school transfers and the transfer of relevant data on individual children to post primary schools. POD has replaced the need for schools to complete the National Annual Census and the Clárleabhar.
- If a child from our school transfers to another school, relevant details about the child are passed onto the other school. These details include attendance figures, results of standardised tests (where applicable) and any other relevant educational reports.
- When a child transfers to our school, all relevant reports and documents are requested from the sending school.
- When a child transfers to secondary school, the 'School Passport' report showing attendance for the previous year, general progress and their standardised test results from 2nd, 4th and 6th classes are passed on to the relevant principal.
- Returns are made to TUSLA as required, outlining the number of children who have been absent for 20 days or more. Annual returns are forwarded showing total attendance for all children and total absence numbers.

- Referral forms are also completed and returned to the TUSLA when we have a concern about a child's non-attendance at school.
- TUSLA will also be informed if a child has been suspended for 6 days or more, and also if a child is being expelled. Procedures for suspending a child are outlined in our Code of Behaviour.
- The Principal of the school may also contact Social Workers (if relevant and in the best interests of the child) to discuss children's long term absences or repetitive absences.

Roles and Responsibilities:

- **Principal/Deputy Principal:** Oversee the collection of attendance records in the school. They ensure that TUSLA returns are forwarded and liaise with TUSLA re. any issues of non-attendance. They also ensure that POD is updated when children join/leave the school. On a monthly basis, the Principal reports to the BOM on attendance percentages in the school.
- **Class Teacher:** Each class teacher is responsible for the completion of the daily register of attendance, for the collection of absence notes, for following up on longer-term absences and for communicating attendance figures to parents through annual school reports.
- **Parents/Guardians:** It is parents/guardians' responsibility to ensure their children attends school and to inform, in writing, the class teacher/school about any reason for a child's absence (see 'recording attendance/absences' above).
- **Pupils:** As they progress up the school, we aim to foster in our pupils a growing sense of responsibility for their learning (both in school and at home), while also highlighting the benefits and importance of consistent attendance for learning and social reasons.
- **Board of Management:** Have responsibility for ensuring that our enrolment policy is enacted appropriately and consistently. They also have a role in supporting the teaching/learning environment for all staff and pupils.

Related Documents:

Code of Behaviour

Homework Policy

Enrolment policy

Rule 55 – school hours, school meetings and roll call

Circular 0028/2013 - Simplified arrangements for the maintenance of pupil enrolment and attendance records

Circular 0033/2015 – Primary Online Data

Success Criteria:

School attendance remains consistently high throughout the year.
A decrease in numbers taking holidays during school term and other longer term absences.

Activity:	Date:
Reviewed:	
Ratified by Board of Management:	
Effective from:	
Next Review Date: *	

*** Unless reviewed at an earlier date if deemed necessary by a change in law, Department policy, or to reflect changing school circumstances.**

Signed: _____

Chairperson:

Signed: _____

Principal: