



Dunderrow National School

Roll No: 169400

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Principal: Mary Cottrell

Deputy Principal: Helen O'Callaghan

Dunderrow NS

Our Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Dunderrow NS,
Dunderrow,
Co.Cork.

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The school's vision and values in relation to attendance:

The average pupil attendance at Dunderrow NS over the past five years is 96%. However, it is necessary to devise a Statement of Strategy for School Attendance at this time in order to:

- Comply with requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000, section 22.1 *“a statement of the strategies and measures it proposes to adopt for the purposes of fostering an appreciation of learning among students attending that school and encouraging regular attendance at school on the part of such students”.*
- To reinforce schools expectations and encouragement of pupils to be in attendance while giving a strong focus to the schools approach to attendance.
- To comply with requirements of Tusla.
- To reward students who have good attendance records.
- To identify at an early stage students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems.

We in Dunderrow NS seek actively, through word and action, to create a positive climate of physical, emotional, social and intellectual security for students, staff and parents/guardians. In this way teaching and learning can take place within the context of mutual valuing and respecting of relationships.

The schools' high expectations around attendance:

Dunderrow NS hopes to achieve the following by introducing this Statement:

- To affirm the schools commitment to attendance as an important aspect of school ethos, culture and policy.
- To foster an appreciation and participation in learning.
- To raise awareness of importance of school attendance and to encourage full attendance where possible.
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early.
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

- To recognise the complexity of some students' lives and difficulties. In response, the Statement of Strategy tries to secure the involvement and support of many agencies and community supports for the student's overall well-being and welfare.
- 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/Guidelines from Tusla.

How attendance will be monitored:

Defining and Recording Non-Attendance

- We define non-attendance as being when a pupil aged between 6 and 16 is absent from school on a day in which the school is open (a parent/guardian is obliged to ensure a child between the ages of 6 and 16 attends "a national school or other suitable school" on each day that the school is open for instruction).
- Attendance is accurately recorded at the beginning of each school day. As provided for in Rule 55 (*School Hours, School Meetings, Roll-Call*) in the rules for National Schools 1965 (*Rules for National Schools under the Department of Education*) "*Roll-Call shall be completed not later than 40 minutes after the time fixed for the commencement of formal instruction at the school meeting*". Circular 0028/2013 and Circular 0033/2015 outline the Department of Education and Skills requirements regarding attendance recording at primary level.
- We record individual non-attendance in the school roll book (Leabhar Rolla – online version) and in the Daily Attendance Record Book (Leabhar Tinrimh – online version). (*Procedure is communicated to parent(s).guardian(s) that "the Act obliges the parent(s)/guardian(s) of an absent child to notify the principal/class teacher of the cause of absence not later than the third day of absence" Notes or records of non-attendance require to be dated and recorded by the class teacher on-line.* Dunderrow NS reports certain non-attendance matters to Tusla i.e. pupils absent for 20 days or more or where a principal is concerned about a pupil's attendance. We seek identification of students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems. These are categorised as follows:
 - a) Irregular Absentee: 5 days absent in a 20-day period without a **valid** reason.
 - b) Seriously Irregular Absentee: 10 days absent in a 20-day period without a **valid** reason.
 - c) Chronic Absentee: 11+ days absent in a 20-day period without a **valid** reason.
- Appropriate contact will take place between the school and parents/guardians of these children.
 - a) For Irregular Absentees a member of the teaching staff will contact parents by phone to discuss the problem.
 - b) For Seriously irregular Absentees the Deputy Principal/Principal will meet with parents with a view to ameliorating the situation.
 - c) For Chronic Absentees the Principal will inform the Education Welfare Officer and notify parents of this by letter.
- All children attending Dunderrow NS and data on parent(s)/guardian(s) are recorded on the Primary Online Database (POD), in compliance with Circular 033/2015.
- We communicate the importance of attendance/non attendance of pupils and the effects that it has on pupil learning to parent(s)/guardian(s) on an ongoing basis and at parent/teacher meetings. On enrolment and in our newsletter each term parent(s)/guardian(s) are reminded of the school's obligation to report non attendance matters to the Tusla and the importance of sending in signed and dated explanations for an absence. School secretary may also be informed but

the absence section at the rear of your child's class journal also need to be completed. For younger children a written note should be furnished.

School roles in relation to attendance:

- *Environment:* We at Dunderrow NS create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parent(s)/guardian(s).
- When pupils arrive late for school they are encouraged to apologise for being late and on the occasions of repeated lateness parent(s)/guardian(s) re reminded of the official school opening times and the necessity for punctuality.
- *Early Intervention:* New parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed of the importance of attendance through a school information booklet which is issued to all parent(s)/guardian(s) before their child starts school.
- *Homework:* Non-completion of homework is only an issue with a minority of pupils and they may be required to complete the work at break time or at weekends, pupil and teacher having agreed that this is the best practice for a particular situation at a given time (see Code of Behaviour).
- *Assessment:* Where a pupil may miss a day at school where standardised testing is taking place, the school will accommodate the testing of these pupils on another day.
- *Rewards:* We acknowledge full attendance and very good attendance with certificates and other incentives.
- *Reports:* We report the total amount of days missed in a year to parent(s)/guardian(s) at the end of the school year in the school report given to parent(s)/guardian(s). Late days are also recorded.
- *Learning Needs:* We cater for the individual learning needs of all pupils, differentiating the curriculum based on their needs.

Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups):

With post primary schools:

The principals and representatives from the local post primary schools are welcomed each year to speak to the senior room pupils in preparations for their transfer from Dunderrow NS to the relevant 2nd level schools. Close links are fostered in working together to encourage positive behaviour and attendance.

With local youth organisations:

The school fosters links locally with the community Gardaí and Kinsale Youth Support Services (KYSS) who visit annually – all of whom support good attendance.

With the parents:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) have been made aware of their statutory duties outlined in the Education Welfare Act in relation to their child's attendance at school.
- Parents have been made aware that taking pupils out of class during term time is not appropriate unless it is due to exceptional circumstances.

Strategies in the event of non-attendance:

- The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer, in writing, where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 days or more in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are aware of the school's duties, outlined in the Education Welfare Act in relation to reporting the non-attendance of a pupil to the Education Welfare Officer, of the serving of a "school attendance notice" by the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult

with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the principal of the school) on any parent/guardian who they conclude is failing or neglecting to cause the pupil to attend the school and of the possible consequences therein.

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to communicate the reasons for the non-attendance of their child at Dunderrow NS, notifying the Principal/Class teacher and/or secretary of the cause of absence, not later than the third day of absence. A signed and dated explanation of absence, when the pupil returns to school is required.
- All absence notes are recorded by the class teacher and an individual monitoring sheet is maintained for all pupils online (Aladdin). The principal reviews the individual pupil attendance records each term prior to reporting to Tusla.
- We communicate the non-attendance of a pupil to the Education Welfare Officer through the Tusla reporting service.
- We will reward good attendance with certificates and incentives.

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

A Principal may only remove a pupil's name from a school register where they have been informed that the child has been enrolled in another school or if the Welfare Board notifies them that the child has been registered at another school or that the child is in receipt of out-of-school education.

We inform the Education Welfare Officer of:

- Intended expulsion of the child.
- Notification from another school that the child has been enrolled in that school.
- Notification by the Education Welfare Officer that the child is in receipt of education outside of the regular school system e.g home or has enrolled in a special school, through the school returns online reporting system.
- Transfer **to** another school – where parent(s)/guardian(s) remove a child from Dunderrow NS, the principal is obliged to give them and the new school a certificate stating child's record of attendance 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 of the current school must notify the principal of the child's last school attended that the child is now registered in their school "as soon as may be". When a principal received notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he/she considers appropriate).

How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored:

Tusla is informed three times a year, which is compiled online, regarding the level of attendance at the school for each school year by the principal.

The practical indicators of the success of this statement include:

- increase and maintenance in attendance levels
- positive feedback from principal, teachers, parents/guardians, pupils as a whole school approach to valuing education and good attendance

People who have particular responsibilities for this policy include:

- Principal
- Teachers
- Parents/guardians
- Pupils
- Education Welfare Officer
- Board of Management

Review process and date for review:

This policy will apply from September 2017 and this statement will be reviewed annually in consultation with the above stakeholders.

Date the Statement and Strategy Policy was approved by the Board of Management:

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management of Dunderrow NS at a meeting held in November 2017.

Date the Statement of Strategy was submitted to Tusla: September 2017

Signed: Eamon Judge

Eamon Judge

Chairperson – Board of Management

Date: 8th November 2017