



RCN No:20113285

**Dunderrow National School**

**Roll No: 169400**

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Principal: Triona Hannon

Acting Deputy Principal: Leonora Horan

## Attendance Policy

### Introduction

There is a very strong tradition of good attendance in Dunderrow N.S. It is imperative that parents are aware of the absolute necessity for regular and punctual attendance at school. As a result, this policy document was drawn up to ensure and maintain a high level of attendance at school by all pupils. The principal and staff teachers, following consultation with the parents, together with the BOM, will be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.

Quite simply, children cannot learn if they are not in school.

It will be the responsibility of the Principal to coordinate a review of this policy

### Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of this policy are:

- 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 TUSLA
- Changing attitudes to education School recording of strategies in relation to attendance.

### Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of the School

Dunderrow NS endeavours 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 cooperation among pupils, parents/guardians and staff in maintaining a high level of regular attendance through the school year.

### Aims

This policy aims to:

- Outline Strategies to improve attendance.
- Encourage regular punctual attendance at school.
- Identify students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- Ensure that appropriate contact will take place between the school and the parents/guardian of these children.
- To provide for legislation concerning school attendance, in particular the Education Welfare Act.

### School Attendance Policy

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

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded electronically on the Aladdin computer based system on a daily basis.

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her absence will be recorded by the class teacher. Any pupil not present at roll call, 10.30am, will be marked absent for the day unless the teacher has been informed, either through the school app or making contact with the office, that the child is due to attend school later that day. The roll may not be altered once it has been filled in. Pupils who arrive late will be recorded as late. This applies to all our mainstream and special class pupils.

A message on the school app or contact with the office from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Explanations will be recorded on Aladdin. Parents/guardians must also provide a notification if a child departs early during the school day. Children will be marked present if they are not in school but are representing the school at outside activities.

Class attendance data is recorded automatically. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Primary Online Database, together with information provided in enrolment forms (PPSN, name, Mother's maiden name, Address, Date of Birth, Gender, Nationality, Religion, Ethnic background whether in receipt of learning support or Irish exemption).

Parents/guardians are informed in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more. The Principal makes returns to TUSLA.

### **Strategies.**

The following strategies have been put in place to help foster an appreciation of learning and good attendance:

- In accordance with the Code of Behaviour: the Principal will compliment pupils for their good attendance and talk about the advantages of it.
- Staff are invited to air concerns with the principal in relation to childrens' poor or late attendance. Follow up phone calls are made and referrals to school completion officer are made where deemed necessary.
- Parents of pupils whose non-attendance/regular lateness is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal and class teacher and are informed of the school's concerns.

### **Communication:**

- The school has developed a good relationship with the School Completion & TUSLA personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.
- 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 importance of good attendance/punctuality is regularly communicated to the school community through assemblies, PA meetings, BOM meetings and Newsletters.
- 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 March and again in more detail in September. 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.

Identification of students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems. These are categorised as follows;

- Irregular Absentee: 5 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason.
- Seriously Irregular Absentee: 10 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason.
- 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.

- For Irregular Absentees a member of the teaching staff will contact parents by phone to discuss the problem.
- For Seriously irregular Absentees the Deputy Principal/Principal will meet with parents with a view to ameliorating the situation.
- For Chronic Absentees the Principal will inform the Education Welfare Officer and notify parents of this by letter.

## Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

Dunderrow NS does not have the services of a Home School Liaison Teacher.

- Pupils who have exceeded 15 days of absence, and again at 20 days, will receive an automatic letter template by email from our school to notify them. (See Appendix 1 and Appendix 2)
- If a pupil is noted as absent without a valid reason, a call will be made to parents/ guardians by the class teacher.
- If attendance does not improve a letter will be sent to parents/ guardians requesting a meeting with the school principal.
- At this stage the TUSLA pre-referral form will be completed and kept on record. This form will include all strategies to date.
- If a parent does not respond to a request, the School Completion Worker may be contacted and asked to make a home visit.
- If a pupil exceeds 20 days a further letter will be sent to parents/ guardians informing them that the Education Welfare Officer will now be contacted.
- A referral form to TUSLA will now be completed and forwarded to our local TUSLA officer.
- The Principal/Deputy Principal/class teacher will still persist with phone calls home as necessary whilst the referral is being processed.
- In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board 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. This has never happened to date at Dunderrow N.S.
- Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to the NEWB two 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.
- Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer into Dunderrow NS will be sought directly from the previous school.

## 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.

When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must – with parental consent- 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 or she considers appropriate.

The Principal may be consulted by the home school liaison officer of Secondary schools regarding attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to secondary schools.

## Success Criteria and Evaluation

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

- Annual attendance rates at Dunderrow NS are excellent
- Board of Management, Staff and parent/guardian awareness of their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.
- Happy, confident and well-adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

## Implementation/Ratification and Review

This Policy will be ratified by the Board of Management after all stakeholders (Parents Association, Staff and our parent body have viewed and contributed to it.).

Signed: *Pat O'Leary* Chairperson

*Triona Hannan* Principal

Date: 03/05/24

**References:**

*Don't let your Child Miss Out* - NEWB 2004

Education Welfare Act 2000

Education Act 1998

Section 29 Education Act

*Empty Desks* - CDU Mary Immaculate

# Appendix 1

## Letter for Pupils missing 15 days

### 15 Days Absence

Dear Parents,

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify Túsla if a child is absent for 20 days or more, or where a child's absence gives rise to concern.

It is the school's policy to inform parents by letter of children's absences, when these absences are 15 days or more. While we understand that children may be absent due to illness or bereavement, we are just bringing the number of absent days to your attention.

This letter is to inform you that our records show that \_\_\_\_\_

has been absent from school for **15** days.

One of the factors ensuring success in education is regular school attendance and habits of attendance are set in the early years of schooling. Hence it is a policy of Dunderrow N.S to encourage children to attend school every day. Parents can help to develop a positive attitude to school attendance by encouraging children to come to school every day and also by ensuring that all absences are explained in writing. Our Attendance policy is available to view on our website [www.dunderrowns.ie](http://www.dunderrowns.ie)

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours sincerely,



Pat O' Leary, Chairperson



Triona Hannon, Principal

## Appendix 2

### 20 Days Absence

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify Túsła if a child is absent for 20 days or more, or where a child's absence gives rise to concern.

It is the school's policy to inform parents by letter of children's absences. You will have already received a letter when your child reached 15 days or more. While we understand that children may be absent due to illness or bereavement, we are legally obliged to report all absences of 20 days or more to Túsła. Following your notes, the categories of absence have also been recorded and Túsła may examine this data further.

This letter is to inform you that our records show that \_\_\_\_\_

has been absent from school for **20** days.

One of the factors ensuring success in education is regular school attendance and habits of attendance are set in the early years of schooling. Hence it is a policy of Dunderrow N.S. to encourage children to attend school every day. Parents can help to develop a positive attitude to school attendance by encouraging children to come to school every day and also by ensuring that all absences are explained in writing. Our Attendance policy is available to view on our website [www.dunderrowns.ie](http://www.dunderrowns.ie)

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours sincerely,



Pat O' Leary, Chairperson



Triona Hannon, Principal