2024

Attendance Policy Threen NS

Our current Attendance Policy (2016)was discussed by staff in March/ April 2024 .We began to examine it order to make any necessary changes, and update it to include the use of the Aladdin App for parents to record attendance, in September 2024.

The Parents and Board of Management members have had the opportunity to contribute to this policy.

Background

Every child to whom the School Attendance Act applies is obliged by law to attend school every day the school is in operation, unless there is a reasonable reason for not attending. The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 provides a framework for promoting regular school attendance, tackling the problem of absenteeism and early school leaving.

All parents have a duty to have their children at school every day and on time in accordance with Section 17 of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Rationale

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

- To promote, encourage and maintain regular attendance and punctuality 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 and Education Welfare Officers (EWO)
- Levels of disadvantage
- Maintain very good attendance amongst our students
- Changing attitudes to education.

Aims

The aims of the School Attendance Policy of Threen NS:

- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually
- Share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community
- Inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Act
- Identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems
- Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation
- Develop links between school and families of children who are at risk of developing attendance problems
- Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to: (a) TUSLA, (b) The Education Welfare Officer, (c) The Board of Management

Defining and Recording Non- Attendance

"A parent is obliged to cause a child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend at 'a national school or other suitable school' on each day that the school is open for instruction." Education Welfare Act 2000.

The following applies:

- A child is expected to attend each day
- Non-attendance is recorded in the roll book on Aladdin
- A letter/ Aladdin notice is provided by parents explaining the absence in accordance with the Education Act 1998
- All paper explanatory notes are kept on file by the school or recorded electronically in Aladdin
- The category of absence is also identified and recorded
- If a note/letter isn't forthcoming the school secretary/class teacher will contact the parents requesting a letter of explanation/ online note. If not supplied after this request the absence will be recorded as 'unexplained'.
- Children are expected to be at school at 9.20am
- All children are expected to complete a full day at school until 2pm (juniors) or 3pm.

If there is a difficulty with poor attendance:

- Class teacher will talk to parent about the matter and remind them of their statutory duty as to ensure that their child is sent to school and to see if the school can assist
- When a child has missed 10 days a message will be sent as a reminder, highlighting this, regardless of absence.
- If there is no improvement after this communication the principal along with class teacher will have further discussion with parent
- A formal letter will be sent when a child is 15 days absent to highlight this and encourage improved attendance
- The principal may formally contact a parent if improvement is not seen following this communication
- A letter will be sent to parents of pupils who have missed 20 days or more, regardless of reason for absences, informing them that this information will be reported to TUSLA and the Board of Management
- The Education Welfare Officer (EWO-TUSLA) and/or principal will work together to support families of children with particularly poor attendance if necessary
- All attendance will be reported to parents on the end of year school report

Punctuality

- School receives children from 9.10am when doors open, for start at 9.20am.
- All doors are closed for security reasons at 9.30am.
- Anyone arriving after 9.30am should be accompanied by a relevant adult and signed into school at reception.
- Appointments for students should be made outside of school time, where possible.
- The principal will meet with the parents of children who are continually late to discuss strategies to improve punctuality. If following school intervention and strategies punctuality does not improve, the principal will report the case to the Education Welfare Officer for further intervention and action.

Removal of a Pupil during School Day

It is expected that all pupils remain in school for a full school day. It is also important so as to ensure the accountability of all pupils during any emergency evacuations.

1. Unavoidable medical appointments/withdrawing a sick child from school

- If a pupil needs to leave early for an unavoidable medical appointment, a letter / note on Aladdin, should be sent in beforehand from his/her parents or a phone call made to the school office to inform the school, prior to collection.
- If a child is sick during the school day, the secretary/teacher will firstly ring the parent and if uncontactable, will ring the emergency contact number. Ensure all numbers are up to date.

- When collecting the child, the parent should report to school office, sign out the child and wait in reception while the child is collected from the classroom.

2. Arriving late to school due to an unavoidable medical appointment or emergency

- Our school day begins at 9.20am. If a child has a medical, dental or unavoidable morning appointment or emergency, a notice via Aladdin should be sent in beforehand or explanation given by way of phone call to the school.
- The school rolla is taken daily at 10am. In this case the rolla will be kept open for this child until 12pm (maximum).
- After this time, the child has missed half the school day and will be marked absent.

Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason
- Working with the school and TUSLA to resolve any attendance problems
- Discussing planned absences with the school, prior to the absence
- Refraining from taking holidays during school time as per TUSLA recommendation – see TULSA website
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- Encouraging them to participate in school activities
- Praising and encouraging their children's achievements
- Instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- Informing the school in writing or via Aladdin, of the reasons for absence from school.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments, are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Notifying the school, via Aladdin, if their child/children are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

The Board of Management:

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in children
- The Board of Management will support the school in providing resources necessary for children with special educational needs in accordance with Department of Education and Skills Guidelines
- The Board of Management will be informed if the advice of the EWO has been sought
- The attendance rates of the pupils will be monitored by the Principal and reported to the Board of Management.

- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve poor attendance

School Principal:

The School principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer/TUSLA: (a) if a pupil is not attending school regularly, (b)When a pupil has been absent for 20 days or more during the course of the school year, (c) If a pupil has been suspended
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil
- Report on attendance at the Board if Management meetings
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.

The Class Teacher:

The Class Teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences in writing or via the Aladdin system
- Ask the school secretary to contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually
- Inform the principal of concerns s/he may have regarding attendance of any pupil
- Contact parents/guardians where punctuality and attendance concerns begin to arise

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) on the 'Aladdin' database of each class on a daily basis. This automatically updates the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) which is held on 'Aladdin' along with the annual attendance of each individual pupil being recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register) which is also available and updated automatically on 'Aladdin'.

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 at 10.00am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent (unless the teacher has been notified of a late arrival) for the day.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Threen NS endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians.

- Parents/guardians and Board of Management 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.
- Appropriate contact takes place between the mainstream class teacher and parents/guardians either via a note on Aladdin or a letter, when there is a concern regarding attendance. A meeting between parents and the principal may be set up if attendance does not improve after this time.
- New entrants to Junior Infants and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction meeting, 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 and good punctuality habits from Junior Infants onwards. See Appendix 1 – TUSLA –Don't Let You Child Miss Out
- The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June for the following school year. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events during school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- Certificates may be awarded at the end of June to promote good and/or improved attendance up to those dates. An overall certificate will be awarded to those who have not missed a day of school during the 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.
- A principal may only remove a pupil's name from the school register where they have been informed that the child has been enrolled in another school or when the Welfare Board notifies them that the child has been registered or is in receipt of out-of-school education.

Communication

The school maintains communication with TUSLA the organisation that monitors attendance in schools.

The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to outline patterns amongst other issues.

Communication with other Schools

- If a child transfers from Threen NS to another school, the schools records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer

- When a child transfers from another school to Threen NS, confirmation of enrolment will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from Threen NS to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment – NCCA Education passport

Communication with Parents

The following applies in terms of communicating with the parents:

- Attendance Policy is available on school website
- The Aladdin App will be utilised for communication purposes
- School calendar for next school year communicated in June of the previous school year
- Reminders of importance of punctuality and attendance in newsletter
- When a child has missed 10 days of school a standard message, regardless of reason for absence, to notify and remind parents that their child has missed 10 days (2 weeks) of school may be sent
- 15 day absence letter - Standard letter sent to parents, regardless for reason for absence, to notify them that their child has missed 15 days (3 weeks) of school
- 20 day absence letter – Standard letter sent to parents, regardless of reason for absence, to notify parents that the absence is now reported to TUSLA.
- Update on absence – Standard letter to parents will inform all parents of number of days a child has missed in school, regardless for reason for absence, half way through school year.
- Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November of every school year. Parent's may be informed of how many days a child has missed of school at this meeting
- End of school report communicates the number of days missed to date in the school year.
- Pupils' teacher and/or principal will contact parents when appropriate and as outlined above in this document
- The school circulates this information regarding attendance at the induction meeting of the Junior Infants parents/guardians.

Communication with TUSLA/Education Welfare officer

We are obliged to inform TUSLA if:

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child has missed more than 20 days.
- We are obliged to furnish TUSLA with numbers of pupils absent for 20 days or more on two occasions during the school year.
- The Board of Management is also informed of the numbers of students who have missed 20 days or more at school.

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- maintenance and improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar Rolla records and statistical returns
- Happy confident well-adjusted children
- Punctuality of children
- Positive parental feedback and cooperation with policy in its entirety
- Teacher vigilance in terms of poor attenders

References:

Don't let your Child Miss Out – TUSLA, Education Welfare Act 2000, Education Act 1998

Section 29 Education Act.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 24 September 2024.

Signed: Valerie Callaghan Chairperson

Aine O Connor Principal