

# **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

## **Introduction**

The National Education Welfare Act 2000 recognises the role of parents in ensuring the regular attendance and punctuality of their child. The legislations also requires schools to establish and maintain a school register and school attendance records, to monitor the attendance of all students enrolled and to report on student attendance in certain circumstances, to Túsła, The Child and Family Agency.

This policy document was drawn up by the principal and teaching staff in consultation with the Board of Management of Shellybanks ETNS.

## **Rationale**

In Shellybanks ETNS we hope to nurture each child to develop their potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued. Regular school attendance and punctuality help to give children the best possible start and are essential factors in a child's learning. The purpose of this policy is to promote and encourage regular school attendance and to foster an appreciation of the importance of arriving to school on time every day.

## **Aims**

The aims of this policy are to:

- raise awareness of the importance of regular and punctual school attendance
- ensure a high level of attendance and punctuality among pupils
- comply with requirements under the Education Welfare Act 2000

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

### **Attendance - Parental Responsibility**

There is a statutory obligation on parent(s) to ensure their child attends a recognised school. Where a child is absent from school the parent(s) of the child is/are required to notify the school in writing of the reasons for the child's absence.

### **Attendance - School's Responsibility**

There is a statutory obligation on schools to report on student attendance and absence.

### **Reporting of Student Absence**

A school is obliged to report to Túsła every time:

- a student has reached 20 days absence cumulatively
- the principal is concerned about a student's attendance
- the principal is concerned about a student's punctuality
- the board of management decides to expel a student
- a student has been suspended for 6 days or more cumulatively
- a student's name is to be removed from the school register for whatever reason

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

If a child is absent the parent(s) of the absent child must:

- Notify the class teacher in writing of the cause of absence. This note must be signed and dated by parent(s).
- Such notes will be retained by the class teacher in a folder. Reasons for absence will be recorded by the class teacher on the online Aladdin System.
- Schools must report certain non-attendance matters to Túsła (see above)
- If a teacher is not given a written explanation by the parent(s), he/she will send a request home in writing using the approved template. See Appendix Attendance Reminder.

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- The parent(s) of a pupil whose non-attendance is a concern will be contacted to meet with the principal.

### Half-day Absences

If a child is absent for part of a school day or goes home early parent(s) must:

- Notify the school in writing of the cause of the absence.
- Sign the 'Sign Out' log book in the secretary's office if leaving to go home early with the date and reason for going home early.

### Punctuality

Punctuality is very important to ensure that your child gets the right start to the day.

### Late Arrivals

- The school gates will be opened at 8.35am. **All children must be accompanied into the school yard by a parent or guardian and wait in their class line.**
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to supervise their child in the school yard until the teacher takes the class into the school building.
- Class lessons begin at **8.45am sharp**. Pupils must be in their class line before this time. They will be collected from the line and led to their classrooms by the class teacher.
- The school door will be closed as soon as the last class line is taken into the school building. This complies with our *Health and Safety* and *Child Protection Policies*.
- Pupils who arrive after 8.45am sharp are deemed *late for school*.
- Parents who bring their child to school late will be asked to sign the *late arrivals book* recording the time of arrival (as per digital clock which will be on display) and reason for being late.
- This will also be recorded as 'late' on the online Aladdin system. This role system is a direct link to the Department of Education and Skills.
- After signing the *late arrivals book* **parents will not accompany their child** to their classroom as this causes further disruption to the daily teaching and learning in the classrooms.
- Where a child is repeatedly late for school the class teacher will address this in writing to the parents. See Appendix Late Arrivals
- The parents of a pupil whose repeated lateness is a concern will be contacted to meet with the principal.
- If the problem persists a report will be made to Túsla under our Child protection Policy.
- In line with our school ethos we ask parents/guardians to respect our endeavours to provide the best possible learning environment for all the children in the school. Your co-operation will help create an efficient, calm atmosphere in the morning.

### Late Collections

- The school day finishes at 1.25pm for infants and 2.25pm for all other pupils. Pupils must be collected from the line at this time.
- Pupils who are collected after this time are deemed late for collection.
- If pupils are repeatedly collected late from school the class teacher will address this to the parent(s) in writing. (See attached template)
- The parent(s) of a pupil whose repeated late collection is a concern will be contacted to meet with the principal.

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## Strategies to promote attendance and punctuality

- In Shellybanks ETNS we endeavour to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parent(s).
- 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.
- Parents of new entrants will be given a copy of the Attendance Policy at parent meetings.
- Parents and pupils are reminded regularly of the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- 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. It is hoped that this will enable parents to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- At the end of the school year pupils with full attendance will be presented with a certificate of attendance.
- Parents will be referred to *Don't Let Your Child Miss Out* - school attendance leaflet for parents [http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/english\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/english_leaflet.pdf)

## Communication

There is a good relationship with the Túsła personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

## Success Criteria

The principal is responsible for evaluating the success of this policy and will coordinate and monitor the implementation of the strategies in place.

## Indicators of the Success of the Strategies in this Policy

- Increase in attendance levels and punctuality.
- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils.
- Board of management, parent and staff awareness of their legal obligation under the Education Welfare Act 2000.

## Roles and Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the Board of Management.

## Implementation Date

This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management and communication to the Parent Teacher Association.

## Ratification and Review

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2016.

Jessica Ryan-Chairperson of Board of Management  
Therese Gamble-Principal

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed in May 2017

This policy will be uploaded onto the school website.

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## **Appendix Attendance Reminder**

### **Attendance Reminder**

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

Dear Parent(s),

Your child \_\_\_\_\_ was absent from school on \_\_\_\_\_.

Please note that our school Attendance Policy requires that you provide a written explanation for all absences.

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

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## Appendix – Late Arrivals

### Late Arrivals

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

Dear Parent(s),

It has come to my attention that there have been \_\_\_\_\_ mornings in the past \_\_\_\_\_ week(s) when your child was late for school.

Please note that class lessons start at 8.45am sharp. Your child must be in the line for collection before this time. The school gates open at 8.35am. All children must be accompanied into the school yard by a parent or guardian and wait in their class line. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to supervise their child in the school yard until the class teacher takes the class into the school building.

Punctuality in the morning is essential for giving children time to settle in to the school environment, preparing themselves for the day ahead and start their lessons promptly.

The National Education Welfare Act 2000 recognises the role of parents in ensuring regular attendance and punctuality of their child.

Should you have any queries please refer to our Attendance and Punctuality Policy or contact me regarding the issue.

Yours Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Class Teacher