



ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was reviewed and drafted by Staff and parents during 2016 – 2017 and ratified by the Board of Management on 23rd January 2018

Review in 2020 / 2021 School Year



**St. Louis Infant School
Monaghan**

Attendance Policy

**Ratification of Review January 2018
Next Review 2020 / 2021**

Consultation June – September 2017

Introduction:

Circular 0033/2015 necessitated the updating of the schools attendance policy. The redrafting was a collaborative process involving the staff and Board of Management and Parents' Association.

Rationale:

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised attendance policy are as follows:

- a) The changing fabric of society and need to emphasis the importance of attendance.
- b) A number of families taking children on holidays during the school term.
- c) The role of TUSLA
- d) Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000.
- e) Proactive approach towards monitoring attendance
- f) The need for a collaborative approach to attendance
- g) Updating and simplifying the manner in which schools can maintain pupil enrolment and attendance records (Clár

leabhar, Leabhar Rolla and Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil) following the introduction of the Primary Online Database (POD)

- h) http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0033_2015.pdf
- i) http://www.education.ie/en/Circulars-and-Forms/Active-Circulars/cl0028_2013.pdf

Aims and Objectives:

The revised policy aims to:

- Encourage and monitor regular and punctual attendance.
- Identify pupils at risk.
- Promote a positive learning environment and foster an appreciation of learning.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor attendance.
- Share the promotion of good attendance with all members of school community.

Relationship to Ethos of School:

This policy compliments the school ethos, which aims to nurture the full potential of each child in a caring environment where the welfare of the child is of paramount importance.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All staff and parents have an input into the implementation of the policy:

- The Principal monitors attendance through a weekly Friday report compiled by the secretary using databiz information.

- Assistant Principal monitors attendance in conjunction with the secretary, class teachers, principal and Family Liaison Officer
- Class teachers record individual daily attendance on the DataBiz system.
- The school secretary under instruction from the Principal makes returns to the TUSLA on appointed dates during and at the end of the school year.
- The secretary has responsibility for maintaining and printing a record of the electronic version of the Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil i.e. the Daily/Monthly/Quarterly and overall yearly attendance record book. The secretary also maintains the DataBiz system and makes returns based on information obtained from the computer records.
- Under the direction of the Principal and Family Liaison Officer, the secretary prints and posts letters to parents of children identified as having poor attendance.
- Parents inform the school about absences/punctuality.
- Class teachers record the reasons for absences daily at 9.45am (Bell System) on the Databiz system.
- The Principal informs parents about absences and persistent punctuality concerns.
- Family Liaison Officer visits the school each month to identify children at risk of poor attendance.
- The Principal examines the data from the attendance report to identify poor attendance, at risk children, patterns and trends. I.e. days of the week, months, classes and percentages.

Recording:

- Individual school attendance is recorded on DataBiz. Class data is recorded in the Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil and the DataBiz.
- Attendance data is recorded on Databiz and the Department of Education and Skills, Primary Online Database (POD). Upon enrolment POD Permission is received from parents and paper records are stored until the child 18 years old plus 7 years – Circular 0033/2015
- *A note from parents/guardians is required to cover each absence* and these are kept in the class roll book for the term and then transferred to the administration office where they are kept in accordance with new Data Legislation
- Upon enrolment and in September, parents are made aware of the requirements of TUSLA, particularly the byelaw relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year.
- The Family Liaison Officer and or the principal will contact parents regarding poor attendance through a standardised letter designed by the school.

School Strategies:

- Our school attendance is strong and has not been adversely affected by social changes. Staff remain vigilant to *at risk students* who are identified ASAP. At risk, students can be categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in a 20-day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians.
- Appropriate contact takes place between school and parent/guardians via a phone call or letter when this occurs. A meeting between parents and Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Family Liaison Officer.
- Children are required to be in their classrooms at 9.00am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time.
- The Principal will contact parents if children are persistently late.
- The B.O.M./Principal does not approve of and cannot authorize a child's absence for holidays during school term. However, parents are asked inform the school of such arrangements via a school designed letter.

Communication with other Schools:

- When a child transfers from St. Louis Infant School to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc. are forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer and a request for such information.
- When a child transfers into St. Louis Infant School confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school [if the

school is made aware of previous school] and appropriate records sought.

- Information on pupils transferring from St. Louis Infant School to St.Louis Girls and St. Mary`s Boys schools will be forwarded (subject to Data Protection) on receipt of request for such.

Communication with Parents:

The school informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act 2000 in the enrolment pack. The school newsletter disseminates this information. Parents of new children are informed on enrolment.

Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance:

The school promotes good attendance by:

- Creating a safe and welcoming environment.
- Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding so that children are happy.
- Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying, etc. are identified early.
- Rewarding good attendance.
- Encouraging families to avail of our morning supervision to help parents attend work.
- Reminding parents of the link between attendance and academic achievement in the newsletters.
- *Attendance Buddy the Dog* (Appendix I) reward system. As a reward for excellent, improved or improving attendance, classes will care for 'Buddy the Dog' for a week.

Family Liaison Officer and Education Welfare Officer -David McCague
The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

- a) A child has missed more than 20 days.
- b) A child has missed 10 days in the first term
- c) Meetings with parents are arranged through the Family Liaison Officer.
- d) Parents that do not attend these meetings require home visits.
- e) Further observations / daily / weekly / are monitored on at risk children through the Databiz system.
- f) The Education Officer is informed if a child is suspended or expelled.

TUSLA is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form, which is completed on-line by the school Secretary/Principal. Quarterly returns are made online.

Evaluation:

The success of this Attendance Policy will be measured by

- Improved attendance levels and percentages are monitored through the Databiz System. Weekly percentages are compiled by the secretary, examined by the Principal and reported to the staff and the children through 'Buddy the Dog' announcement.
- Happy confident well adjusted children.
- Positive parental feedback.
- Teacher vigilance.

Implementation:

This policy has been in operation in St. Louis Infant School since September 2006 and was updated in November 2008. It was reviewed in January 2013, 22nd April 2015. Full review during 2016 / 2017.
Next Review May 2020 / 2021

Consultation

This revised policy was presented to the staff at a meeting on 28th February 2017, uploaded on Databiz on 3rd April 2017 and distributed to the secretary of the Parents Association in June 2017
Consultation continued until September 2017

Ratification:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Fr. Stephen Joyce
Chairperson
Board of Management

Appendix 1
Buddy the Dog
St. Louis Infant School Attendance Buddy

