



School Attendance & Punctuality Policy



St. Dymphna's N. S.
Athboy Road,
Kildalkey,
Co. Meath.
C15R2AV
046 9435286
www.kildalkeyns.com

Introduction:

There is a strong tradition of good attendance in St. Dymphna's N.S. However, we wish to ensure that parents/guardians are aware of the absolute necessity for regular punctual attendance at school.

St. Dymphna's N.S will cooperate with the NCSE in the performance by the Council of its functions under the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2004 in relation to the provision of education to children with special educational needs, including, in particular by the provision and operation of a special class or classes when requested to do so by the Council.

St Dymphna's N.S will comply with any direction served on the board or the patron under sections 37A and 67(4)(b)

[231122 Circular.pdf](#)

Rationale:

The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

The BOM wish to comply with the following legislation:

- ☐ Child Protection Guidelines 2011
- ☐ The Education Act 1998
- ☐ The Education Welfare Act 2000

Aims:

- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Encourage full attendance where possible.
- Ensure that pupil attendance is recorded through Aladdin.
- To foster an appreciation of learning by having good attendance practices.
- To ensure compliance with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000
- To raise awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving.
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.



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Defining and Recording Non-Attendance:

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

- A child is expected to attend each day. 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.
- Non-attendance is recorded in the roll book on Aladdin.
- The roll call must be taken by 10am each morning. Any pupil who arrives after 10am will be marked absent and must sign 'The Late Book'.
- The category of absence is also identified.
- A note on Aladdin should be provided by parents/guardians explaining the absence in accordance with the Education Act 1998. All explanatory notes from the parents/guardians are on file on Aladdin.
- If a child misses a half day, an explanation is required.
- If a note isn't forthcoming, the child's absence will be recorded as unexplained.

If there is a difficulty with punctuality or poor attendance:

- When a child has missed 15 days a letter is sent out, notifying parents/guardians and encouraging improvement.
- The principal will contact parents/guardians if there is a serious concern regarding a child's attendance.
- Tusla will be contacted regarding any child who has missed 20 days or more (mandatory reporting).
- A letter will be sent to parents/guardians when pupils have missed 20 days or more, notifying them that a report will be made to Tusla.



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- All attendance is reported in the end of year school reports to parents/guardians.

Promoting Attendance and Punctuality:

- We promote attendance through ongoing praise of good attendance.
- We endeavour to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians.
- At the initial meeting of parents/guardians of any new pupils, parents/guardians are notified of the school attendance policy and encouraged to read it.
- In the interest of the health and safety of the children, parents/guardians are reminded that external doors are closed at 9.30 each morning.
- With older children, we discuss the importance of timekeeping.
- The school calendar is published annually on the school website (June) and in the children's homework journals (Sept). A hard copy is available also from the school office if required. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimizing the chances of non-attendance during the school term.
- We are vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as bullying are identified early.

Communication

- Parents/guardians will be made aware that if they fail to send in a note of explanation of absence via Aladdin, the absence will be reported as unexplained.
- When a child reaches 15 days absence a letter will be sent to parents/guardians informing them of this and the responsibility of the school to report to Tusla should the child reach 20 days absence.
- A report is sent to Tusla when a 20 days absence has been reached.
- A letter will be sent to parents/guardians when pupils have missed 20 days or more notifying them that a report will be made to Tusla.
- All attendance is reported in the end of year school reports to parents/guardians.



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Removal of a Pupil during the School Day

Rationale:

Pupils are expected to remain in school for a full school day. Pupils should only be removed early from school in cases of emergency or unavoidable medical appointments.

Aims:

- To highlight the importance of remaining in school for a full school day
- To ensure the safety of all pupils in our school by having all visitors and parents report to the school office.
- To ensure the accountability of all pupils during any emergency evacuations
- To retain a record of pupils regularly leaving school early

Action:

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

~If a pupil needs to leave early for an unavoidable medical appointment, an email or a message via Aladdin should be sent in beforehand from his/her parents/guardians.

~If a child is sick during the school day, the secretary will firstly ring the parent/guardian and if uncontactable, will ring the emergency contact number. We ask that all phone numbers are up to date.

~When collecting the child, the parent/guardian should report to the school office and the child will be signed out in the Leaving Early Record Book. The parent can then wait in the foyer while the child comes from the classroom/sick bay.



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~On returning a child after an appointment, the return time will be recorded in the Record Book at the School Office.

No child will be allowed to leave the school with any other adult other than his/her parent unless notification has been received beforehand naming the person who is to collect the child.

1. Arriving late to school due to medical appointment or emergency

Our school day begins at 9.20am. If a child has an unavoidable morning appointment, a note should be sent in beforehand by the parents/guardians.

The school roll is taken daily by 10am and recorded on Aladdin. After this time, the child will be marked absent. All late arrivals are recorded in the Late Arrivals Record Book at the school office.

2. Emergencies

The parent/guardian should ring the school and explain the situation. The child will be made ready to meet the parent. The child will be signed out in the Late Arrival/Early Leavers Record Book.

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

The school is aware that '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 when the Welfare Board notifies them that the child has been registered by it as in receipt of out-of-school education.'

The Board of Management may in exceptional circumstances suspend a child. (see Code of Behaviour)

Transfer to another school:

Where parents/guardians remove a child from a school the principal is obliged to confirm the child's record of attendance and absences with the new school, the last class the child attended, and any other relevant information pertaining to the education of the child. This applies to children who transfer between primary school and to pupils who transfer from primary school to second-level education. This information will be entered on P.O.D.



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Transfer from another school:

When St. Dymphna's receives a new student, the principal will notify the principal of the child's last school that the child is now registered in our school. When the principal of the previous school receives notification that the child has been registered in St. Dymphna's N.S, he/she must notify us of any problems in relation to attendance and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. The transfer will be entered on P.O.D.

Punctuality

School starts at 9.20am. For security reasons, all doors will be locked at 9.30am. If a child arrives at school after 9.30am, they must enter the school via the reception door. Pupils will be recorded in the Late Arrivals Record Book. The secretary will bring the junior children to the classroom to prevent disruption as class will have already commenced.

The Principal will meet with the parents/guardians of children who are continually late to discuss strategies to improve punctuality.

If following school intervention & strategies, punctuality does not improve, the principal will report the case to the Education Welfare Officer for further intervention and action.

A copy of the policy will be available to Staff Members, Board of Management, and available to parents to view in the school and will be available on our website.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All Staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance and the school makes returns to TUSLA. A member of the ISLT communicates absences and concerns to TUSLA through the TUSLA portal. Bi-annual reporting and the Annual Attendance Report (detailing the overall level of attendance/reasons for absences) will be made through the TUSLA portal. The Staff Member responsible for this is Kerrie Lynch.

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management. The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), in writing, of any attendance concerns.



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Timetable for review

Once the draft has been approved and the final draft ratified, the policy will be amended every second year or sooner as circumstances require. The staff member responsible for this is Kerrie Lynch

Ratification by the Board of Management

The Board of Management of Kildalkey National School ratified this policy on 23rd May 2023

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson: *Mary Reidy*

Date: **23-05-2023**

Principal: *Nodlag O'Neill-Forde*

Date: **23-05-2023**



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Log of Actions:

Reviewed by staff in April 2023

Consulted with Parents' Association in May 2023

Ratified by the BOM on 23rd May 2023



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Appendix 1

Letter template for Pupils missing 15 and 20 days

15 Days Absence

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify Tusla if a child is absent for 20 days or more.

This letter is to inform you that _____ has been absent for ____days.

While we understand that children may be absent due to illness or bereavement, we are just bringing the number of days to your attention, as is required of us.

Please retain any copies of doctor certificates/medical letters.

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours sincerely,

Nodlag O'Neill Forde

(School Principal)



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20 Days Absence

Dear Parents,

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify Tusla if a child is absent for 20 days or more.

You will have already received letters when your child reached absences of 15 days.

Again, we understand that children may be absent due to illness or bereavement, however we are legally obliged to report all absences of 20 days or more to Tusla.

This letter is to inform you that our records show that _____

has been absent for ____ days and a report has been submitted to Tusla.

Please retain a copy of any doctor certificates or medical letters.

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours sincerely,

Nodlag O'Neill Forde

(School Principal)