

1 ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

This Attendance and Punctuality Policy was a collaborative school process, involving teachers, staff, parent representatives, the Principal and Board of Management.

1.1 RATIONALE

The main factors contributing to the formulation the policy can be summarised as follows:

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.
- To conform to legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act 1998.
- To recognise the role of the Tusla/ Educational Welfare Service in the reporting of absences.

1.2 RATIONALE

All members of the school community who have necessary and regular access to or contact with children must have successfully undergone Garda Vetting prior to commencement of employment or relevant volunteer work in the school. In the future staff will be re-vetted on a regular basis.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The policy aims to :

- Ensure compliance with the Enrolment Policy of Kilcolgan Educate Together N.S.
- Ensure that pupil attendance is recorded daily using Aladdin software
- Encourage full or near full attendance
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Identify pupils at risk of learning disadvantage through poor attendance
- Ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance

1.4 COMPLIANCE WITH SCHOOL ETHOS

This policy compliments the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

1.5 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance and the Deputy Principal along with the Principal make returns to Tusla/ Educational Welfare Service. The Deputy Principal has responsibility for maintaining the Leabhair Tinreamh and Clár Leabhair. It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

1.6 PUNCTUALITY

School begins at 9.00 a.m. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The class teacher will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. If there is no improvement the Principal will contact the parents/guardians. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to Tusla/ Educational Welfare Service.

1.7 RECORDING AND REPORTING ATTENDANCE

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on our Data Management System, Aladdin. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book). If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her nonattendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 9.40 a.m. each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. Attendance records cannot be altered after the roll has been taken. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes, if they are not in the homework journal, will be retained by the class teacher. Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher. Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of Tusla/ Educational Welfare Service particularly the bylaw relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. They are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Parents of pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are notified before then and are invited to meet with the Principal.

1.8 NATIONAL EDUCATION WELFARE BOARD

Tusla/ Educational Welfare Service is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line. The school must inform Tusla/ Educational Welfare Service, 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 school must submit a referral form to Tusla/ Educational Welfare Service where concerns around attendance exist.

1.9 WHOLE SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ATTENDANCE

Kilcolgan Educate Together N.S. endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. 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 teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils. Teachers are vigilant with regard to early identification of "risk students". 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 the school and parents/guardians either via a phone call or a note in the homework journal when this occurs. A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Service. 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 June and is available on the website

www.kilcolganeducatetogether.com. 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.

1.9.1 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 Education Welfare Service to resolve any attendance problems
- Discussing planned absences with the school
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- Encouraging their children 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
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters

1.10 STRATEGIES IN THE EVENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day'.

Section 21 of the Act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis. 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 parents who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend school. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and/or imprisonment. Reasons for absence are recorded and reported to Tusla five 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 the school year.

1.11 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 received notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must 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. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

1.12 RATIFICATION AND REVIEW

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Kilcolgan Educate Together on March 6th 2017. Review will take place as deemed necessary or appropriate.

Signed: _____

Kiran Sarma, Chairperson