



CARLANSTOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY & STRATEGIES

Introduction:

This policy was drafted initially through a consultative process involving the Board of Management, the teaching staff and parents in 2006. It was reviewed by the staff and Board of Management in February/March 2017 to reflect changes in legislation, recent DES Circulars and TUSLA guidelines. It was agreed also to reflect recent changes in school administration procedures following the introduction of Aladdin Schools Administration Systems in October 2014 and the DES Primary Online Database in September 2015.

Rationale:

The main factors contributing to the formulation of the revised policy are

- To promote and encourage regular attendance 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 the NEWB/TULSA/TULSA and the Education Welfare Officer.
- The introduction the DES Primary Online Database (POD)
- Changing attitudes to education

The Aims of the Attendance Policy in Carlanstown NS are

- To ensure, insofar as possible, that pupils 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 Education (Welfare) 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
- Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance

CONTENT

The Primary Online Database, also known as POD, will collect individual information on each pupil, including their PPSN. Schools are legally obliged to populate POD with the required information on all pupils enrolled in the school and update the system periodically to reflect any changes in the enrolment figures as a result of student transfers.

The introduction of POD has further refined and simplified the arrangements for schools to maintain pupil enrolment and attendance records. Changes that will become effective from the commencement of the 2015/2016 school year and listed in DES Circular 33/2015 include:

- With the approval of the Board of Management schools may choose to record the attendance of pupils using electronic roll books rather than the traditional Leabhar Rolla.
- Schools no longer need to maintain the Clárleabhar (Register). POD contains the same information and it is not necessary for schools to maintain a duplicate record in the Clárleabhar.
- Schools no longer need to maintain the Leabhar Rolla in hard copy format. If the school uses an electronic system for recording attendance of pupils, they may continue to use this system as an alternative to the excel version of the Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil.

1. Recording Attendance

- The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded electronically by the class teacher using an electronic roll book on Aladdin in accordance with the agreed procedures as outlined below.
 - In accordance with Rule 55 (4) of the National School Rules and Circular 0033/2015, roll call shall be completed not later than 40 minutes after the time fixed for the commencement of formal instruction. It also states that the roll should be called at the same time each day.
 - School starts at 9.20. Assembly is from 9.20.- 9.30. Formal instruction commences at 9.30 and therefore the roll should be called at 10.10 each morning.
 - **A child must be present at roll call to be marked present. If a child is not present in the school at 10.10 then they are marked absent.** There will be no provision for adjusting the Roll Book where a pupil subsequently does not complete the full school day or arrives after the roll call.
 - If a pupil arrives later they remain marked absent, but their arrival is recorded on Aladdin for the purpose of attendance awards etc.

- Class attendance data is aggregated on Aladdin and recorded in an electronic version of the Leabhar Tinrimh.
- If a pupil is absent, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. A note from parents/guardians is required stating the child's name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. This may be written in the home school diary or using the schools absenteeism note. (Appendix 1) The Education and Welfare act 'obliges the parents of an absent child to notify the school of the cause of absence not later than the third day of absence'.
- When a written explanation for the child's absence is not received by the teacher, the school's absenteeism note, with the dates of the absence(s) is issued to parents by the class teacher. Parents are asked to complete and return to the school at their earliest convenience.
- The notes explaining pupil absences' will be kept by class teachers for the academic year during which they are collected and receipt of same recorded on Aladdin. The teacher will record the reason for absence, from categories as defined by the NEWB/TULSA, from the drop down menu on Aladdin. This information is then used in statistical reports and NEWB/TULSA returns generated by Aladdin on behalf of the school.
- When a pupil has fifteen, and subsequently twenty recorded absences, parents are informed in writing and reminded of the NEWB/TULSA guidelines and school requirements. (Appendix 2 & 3)
- Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child must leave school early. These notes are dated and kept by the class teacher also. Pupils who arrive late or leave early time must be signed out, on the register in the Principals classroom, by a parent/guardian stating the time and a brief explanation. The number of times a pupil arrives late or leaves early is reported to parents on the end of year report card.
- Teachers will not assign work for children who are absent from school because of holidays.

2. Reporting Attendance

- Schools are obliged to report on school attendance to the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB/TULSA) under the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. The school is required to submit four student absence reports known as 'Quarterly Reports' and one annual attendance report each year. The annual report is a statistical report which gives overall absence information for the entire school population. By making a return the school is not making a referral. Where the school has concerns in respect of a pupil, the Principal will contact the Education Welfare Office and make a referral.
- The school is also obliged to prepare and submit a report every time a pupil falls into any of the categories 1-5 listed below.
 1. A student who has been absent from the school for a cumulative total of 20 days or more.
 2. A students name has been removed from the register for any reason
 3. A student who has been suspended for a cumulative total of 6 or more days
 4. Where a Principal is concerned about a pupils attendance
 5. Where the Board of Management has expelled a pupil.
- All parents/guardians are made aware of the N.E.W.B guidelines in relation to attendance upon enrolment through the school information booklet and are reminded at the start of each subsequent year through the school newsletter
- The NEWB/TULSA must receive written notification of the Board's intent to expel a student and such expulsion cannot take effect until 20 days have elapsed after the NEWB/TULSA has received this notification on the relevant form available from the NEWB/TULSA.
- Patterns of attendance for each pupil are recorded on the end of year report cards which are sent to parents/guardians.

3. Reporting to Other Schools

- When a child transfers **from** Carlanstown National School to another school, the schools records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- 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 receives 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.
- When a child transfers **into** Carlanstown National School confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought.
- Pupils transferring from Carlanstown National School to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

CARLANSTOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGIES

In Carlanstown National School, we value the individuality of all our children and respect their right to access all areas of learning. We work to enable them to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are necessary for their self-fulfillment and their development into active and responsible adults.

THE FOLLOWING SCHOOL BASED STRATEGIES ARE SUGGESTED TO PROMOTE 'GOOD ATTENDANCE'

▪ **School Environment**

- The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. At all times, we aim to ensure that children are taught in a safe, secure and caring environment where their intellectual, physical and spiritual development are catered for through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum. We strive to create a welcoming environment for pupils and parents. Teachers consistently try to encourage good attendance in their respective classrooms.
- The schools '**Code of Behaviour**' clearly defines the expected behaviours of the whole school community. It is a framework of positive techniques which motivates and encourages the children to manage their own behaviour and to respond appropriately to the behaviour of others. It ensures that the school & classroom are effective settings for teaching & learning. It involves the children as responsible, participating members of the school community in the decision making processes of the school. This sense of ownership encourages good attendance among all pupils.
- The schools '**Anti Bullying Code**' aims to create a school ethos which encourages respect, trust, care and support and to this end encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour without delay to an adult. The framework underpinning the code will support good attendance.
- The school has forged strong links with the local pre-school and secondary schools. We aim to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible and reduce any anxieties which may impact negatively on school attendance in the future.
- We encourage parental involvement across the curricular areas and through various initiatives such as the CAPER Literacy Initiative and school garden. By involving parents in the life of the school, children see school as an extension of home.

- **Catering for Individual difference and Special Educational Needs**

- Pupils needing support are identified as early as possible and the appropriate support systems put into place. (See the staged approach to assessment, identification and programme planning as per the school's Special Education Policy). We emphasise and celebrate positive achievements across all areas of the child's development and in doing so enhance individual children's self-esteem.

- **Rewards**

- One teacher has a Special Duties Post which includes the monitoring and promotion of good attendance.
- We publicly and positively affirm those children who have excellent attendance. They are awarded termly with attendance certificates. We praise and reward those who are making a serious effort to improve their attendance. An awareness of the importance of good attendance by the children is kept to the forefront in the classroom and at assemblies.

- **Communication & Parental Support**

- It is the policy of Carlanstown National School to encourage and maintain open communication between home and school and to encourage parents in their role as primary educators of their children. Parents are asked to make an appointment (by phone call, by visit to the secretary's Office or by note in the Homework Journal) to meet with the child's teacher if/when needed. Pre-arranged appointments facilitate better quality communication between the parent and teacher. It is understood that from time-to-time certain 'sensitive/urgent' situations will arise which will require a parent to arrive at the school without appointment and such situations will of course continue to be facilitated.
- Parents are made aware of the requirements of the Education Welfare Act at pre-enrolment information meetings. Each family is given a copy of the information leaflet - **Don't Let Your Child Miss Out** (Leaflet for parents NEWB/TULSA 2004) This leaflet outlines
 1. The importance of regular attendance
 2. Parental obligations in relation to attendance under the Education Welfare Act
 3. Advice to parents on what they can do to help children attend school regularly.
- Regular reminders of the importance of good attendance are included in the school newsletters. The school calendar for the new academic year is circulated to all families early in the third term of the preceding year. Parents are reminded of school closures and all school related events through the school newsletter & calendar.

THE FOLLOWING HOME BASED STRATEGIES ARE SUGGESTED TO PROMOTE ‘GOOD ATTENDANCE’

Parents/Guardians are urged to

- Ensure regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notify the school if their children cannot attend for any reason.
- Work with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems
- Discuss planned absences with the school.
- Refrain from taking holidays during school time
- Show an interest in their children’s school day and their children’s homework.
- Encourage them to participate in school activities.
- Praise and encouraging their children’s achievements.
- Instill in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth
- Inform the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school
- Ensure, insofar as is possible, that children’s appointments (with dentists etc), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Contact the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.

Evaluation:

The success of our Attendance Policy and Strategies is measured through

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar Rolla records and statistical returns generated on Aladdin (See Appendix 2)
- Positive parental feedback

Implementation/Ratification and Review:

This policy has been in operation in Carlanstown N.S. since February 2005. The most recent review of the policy, to include the agreed ‘Attendance Strategies’, was ratified by the Board of Management on the 7th April 2017. A review of this policy will be conducted as deemed appropriate, based on the success criteria outlined above.

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date:

Signed: _____
Principal

Date