

Réalt Na Mara National School
Dunmore East, County Waterford



Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Introduction

Changing social habits and patterns has necessitated the introduction of a robust attendance policy. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential in order for each child to fulfil his/her educational potential, and as such, the Board of Management and school staff promote these as essential factors in maximising pupils' academic attainment. This policy was drafted in collaboration with the school staff, pupils, parents and the Board of Management.

Rationale

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

- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
- The role of the Education Welfare Service (TUSLA)
- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning following poor attendance trends since the opening of the school in 2021
- High levels of sporadic attendance throughout the school, including children being taken out of school for family holidays

Aims and Objectives

The revised policy is geared towards:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Encouraging full attendance where possible
- Promoting a positive learning environment
- Fostering an appreciation of learning and education
- Enabling equal access to learning opportunities for all pupils
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Identifying and addressing obstacles to school attendance
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

In co-operation with parents and guardians, we strive to help each pupil achieve his/her full potential and so we will promote a positive attitude towards good attendance and punctuality.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Principal and staff will, insofar as practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among children and parents/ guardians.

The Principal will:

- ensure that the school register of children is maintained in accordance with regulations
- ensure that the Education Welfare Service is informed:
 - when a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year
 - when a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days
 - when a pupil has been expelled
 - inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Service when concerned about a pupil's attendance

The class teacher will:

- record attendance in accordance with procedure
- monitor pupil attendance and punctuality
- encourage children to attend regularly and punctually
- promote a reward system for children with exceptional and improving attendance records as part of whole school initiatives
- keep a record of explained and unexplained absences
- monitor patterns of absenteeism in respect of individual children about whom they may be concerned
- inform the Principal of concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil

Parents/Guardians can support regular attendance by:

- ensuring their child/children attend school regularly and on time
- notifying the school if their child/children cannot attend for any reason
- informing the school, preferably in writing, of the reasons for absence from school
- ensure, insofar as possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc.) are arranged for times outside of school hours
- refrain, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- show an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- encourage their children to participate in school activities
- praise and encourage their children's achievements
- contact the school immediately, if they have concerns about school related matters which may impact negatively on their child's attendance
- avoid rewarding your child with a 'day off' from school

Punctuality

- School begins at 9.00am in the Village Campus and 9:10am in the Killea Campus.
- All pupils are expected to be on time.
- The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late to ascertain the reasons for lateness and also to identify potential supports that may be required.
- The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late to the Education Welfare Board.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

- Attendance of individual pupils is recorded on the Aladdin computerised system each day.
- Attendance is recorded by 10am each morning, (and no earlier than 40 minutes after the school day begins).
- Pupils not in attendance at this time are recorded as absent. This record will only be altered in exceptional/understandable circumstances.
- Although pupils arriving after 10am have been recorded as being absent, their arrival time will be noted on the Aladdin computerised system.
- Parents/ Guardians are required to provide an explanation on the Aladdin App to explain absences.
- Reasons given for late arrival or early collection must also be recorded on the Aladdin system.
- Parents/Guardians are notified of the total number of days missed and minutes late in the end of year report card

Strategies to Promote Good Attendance

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard the school will endeavour to ensure that:

- the school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child
- new entrants and their parents/guardians may be invited to an induction meeting through which the school policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained.
- the calendar of closures for the school year is communicated with parents/guardians at start of school year.
- reward systems are in place to encourage and reward good attendance. These may include:
 - Certificates for X number of days attended
 - Raffles
 - Highlighting most improved attendance
 - Acknowledging good and improved attenders at school assemblies
 - Ensure a consistent approach to homework throughout the school
 - Programmes to support pupils in their social, emotional and personal development are utilised. These may include Incredible Years (NEPS) and Friends for Life

Responding to Poor Attendance

- Attendance of individual pupils will be recorded on the Aladdin computerised system daily.
- Aladdin will alert the class teacher when absences of 10, 15 and 20 days have been reached
- At 8 days the principal will meet with the class teacher to discuss reasons given by parents for absences.
- Following this, the principal may alert parents by letter as to the importance of regular school attendance.
- When a pupil has missed 15 days, following a discussion with the class teacher and Principal, a further letter will be sent to parents informing them of the situation.
- This may be followed up by a meeting with the Principal and parents/guardians to discuss and address concerns.
- At 20 days cumulative absence, a formal letter will be sent to parents informing them of the school's statutory duty to inform the Education Welfare Service.
- A formal meeting may be arranged between parents/guardians, class teacher and Principal to address concerns.
- Where the school has made all efforts to address attendance difficulties, the Principal may seek assistance from the Education Welfare Service (TUSLA).

Specific Initiatives for 2024-25 School Year		
Parental awareness campaign – as part of initial parent evenings	September	
Announce a whole-school attendance improvement target based on 23-24 attendance figures	October	
Encourage school attendance at assembly	Weekly	
Attendance Certificates given out every half term	At mid terms and end of term	
Invitation to Hot Chocolate and Cookie Party for children who have full attendance	Run Monthly	
Invitation to Pizza Party for children who have full attendance	Run Termly	
Most improved attender over course of year	Based in class – throughout year to give child feedback on attendance levels.	
Visual display of attendance rates per campus e.g. Mount Everest	Updated termly	

Communication

- When a pupil transfers from Réalt na Mara National School to another school, appropriate records sought by school authorities will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers to Réalt na Mara National School, confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought.
- Pupils transferring from Réalt na Mara NS to a post primary school will have appropriate records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.
- The Education Welfare Service is informed of the total attendances in the school year annually.
- The Education Welfare Service is informed when:
 - A child has missed more than 20 days.
 - A child has been suspended
 - A child has been expelled

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Aladdin computerised records and statistical returns
 - **Tier 1:** Good/Regular Attenders: at least 80% of pupils
 - **Tier 2:** At risk for Chronic absenteeism – No more than 15% of pupils
 - **Tier 3:** Chronic Absenteeism – No more than 5% of pupils
- Happy confident well -adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

This Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management on the

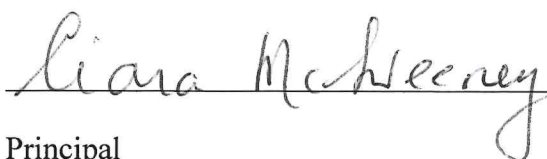
19/11/2024.

The Statement of Strategy was submitted to TUSLA on 25/11/24.



Chairperson, Board of Management

19/11/2024
Date



Principal

19/11/2024
Date

