



Assumption JNS Attendance Policy



Introduction

The awarding of DEIS status in June 2022, and changing social habits and patterns, led to the updating of our Attendance Policy. The redrafting was a collaborative school process involving staff and Board of Management, following initial drafting by a representative group.

Rationale

This policy was drawn up in consultation with the staff, parents, and Board of Management to highlight the strategies and measures in place in the Assumption Junior National School to foster an appreciation of learning and to encourage regular attendance at school.

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

- 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
- Levels of disadvantage and their effect on attendance
- Changing attitudes to education.

Aims and Objectives

This policy focuses on

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Encouraging full attendance where possible.
- Promoting a positive and inclusive learning environment.
- Enabling learning opportunities to be availed of by all.
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- Fostering an appreciation of learning.
- Identifying pupils at risk of leaving school early.
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
- Developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- Identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring and inclusive environment, where the welfare of children is paramount.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual pupil attendance electronically daily. The Deputy Principal makes returns to NEWB. The annual school attendance record is sent to TUSLA by the Deputy Principal at the end of each school



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year. The Leabhair Tinreamh is recorded on Aladdin. The HSL Teacher maintains strong links with 'at risk' families, offering support and making home visits. Regular meetings are held between the Principal/Deputy Principal and the HSL teacher to discuss improvements/deterioration in attendance.

It is the responsibility of the principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

Punctuality

School begins at 8.50 am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The Deputy Principal will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. Class teachers keep a record of learning time lost on Aladdin and this information is shared with parents/guardians at Parent/ Teacher meetings and in the end of year reports. The school is obliged under the Education Welfare Act to report children who are persistently late to the Education Welfare Board.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded daily on Aladdin. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh section of Aladdin. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is also recorded on Aladdin.

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. The roll call is taken each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day (unless otherwise informed by parents/guardians). The roll book should not be altered once attendance has been recorded. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be recorded on Aladdin by the parent/guardian or class teacher. If a child departs early during the school day details are recorded on Aladdin by the secretary. Late arrivals are recorded by the class teacher.

- Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of the NEWB, particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. Parents/guardians are notified on Aladdin when their child has missed 10/15 and 20 days. They are notified in writing, in the end of year report, of the total number of absences during the school year. Parents/guardians of pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Deputy Principal/HSL teacher and are informed of the school's concerns. If attendance continues to be a concern a referral is made to TUSLA (Education Welfare Services) by the Deputy Principal.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, 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.

National Education Welfare Board (TUSLA)



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In accordance with Section 21 of the Education Welfare Act, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is informed if:

- A child is expelled.
- A child is suspended.
- A child has missed more than 20 days.

In accordance with circular 33/2015, a pupil is removed from the roll after an absence of 20 consecutive days. In cases where we know the pupil will be returning (prolonged illness/ visit to country of origin) we will seek advice from the Department of Education.

The NEWB is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

- The Assumption Junior National School endeavors to create a safe and 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 cooperation among the school community. The teaching staff collaborate in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum to provide a safe, stimulating, inclusive and happy learning environment for all pupils.
- The school, in accordance with the SPHE programme, promotes the development of positive self-concept, and the holistic wellbeing of our pupils.
- Staff are vigilant so that 'risk' pupils are identified early, and interventions put in place.
- Parents/guardians of new entrants are invited to an induction meeting prior to the commencement of the school year and the value and importance of developing good attendance and punctuality from Junior Infants onwards is stressed. Our policies and procedures in relation to attendance are also explained. This message is repeated when Junior Infant teachers meet with the parents/guardians of the pupils in their class in late September.
- The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in April. It is hoped that this will enable parents/guardians to plan family events/ holidays around school closures, thus minimizing the chances of non-attendance.
- Attendance is monitored by the class teacher in the first instance. Where there are concerns, an attendance file is opened on Aladdin and a record of all interactions with parents/guardians and any interventions implemented are recorded. Where unexplained absences continue or where there is a pattern of poor attendance, parents/guardians are requested to attend a meeting with the Deputy Principal. If no improvement results from our interventions, an attendance referral is sent to TUSLA (Education Welfare Services)
- The class in each year group with the best attendance is presented with an attendance trophy at our monthly assemblies. Class teachers subsequently organize an appropriate activity to acknowledge the achievement.



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- Children who have full attendance for the month receive a special sticker.
- Classes who have the best attendance each month attend an end of term activity organized by the HSCL teacher.
- Targeted 'at risk' pupils have individual reward systems to encourage and acknowledge improvements in attendance.
- Children who have full attendance for the year and those who have been absent for three days or less receive a prize at the end of the year.
- Our DEIS attendance committee meets regularly to monitor and evaluate interventions and make changes to strategies as appropriate.
- Attendance concerns are discussed at Care Meetings, which are held once a term.
- Monthly percentages of attendance are monitored by the Deputy Principal to identify specific times when attendance is lower than usual to help plan interventions.
- Absences of 20 days or more are reported to TUSLA. (Education Welfare Services)

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 parent who he/she concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the 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 (Education Welfare Services) twice 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 that school year. This information will be communicated to the school community through the Board of Management end of year newsletter.

The Assumption JNS informs parents, via the Aladdin Connect App, when a child has missed 10/15 and 20 days.

Parents/guardians of children who have poor attendance/punctuality patterns are invited to meet with the Deputy Principal/ Home School Liaison Teacher to explain absences and to agree strategies to improve attendance/ punctuality.

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.



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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 *Assumption Junior* to *Assumption Senior/ Drimnagh Castle Primary Schools*.

Communication

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Board (EWB) personnel and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk.

A list of 'at risk' children is drawn up at the end of each school year and school completion places are offered as appropriate. This list is reviewed termly at Care Team Meetings.

The school maintains communication with our local pre-schools and *Assumption SNS* and *Drimnagh Castle Primary School* to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

Communication with other Schools

Under section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), when a child transfers to another school the principal of the child's new school must notify the principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school. In keeping with this legislation.

- When a child transfers from *Assumption JNS* to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer. The transfer will be recorded on the Pupil Online Database and imported by the new school via POD.
- When a child transfers into *Assumption JNS* confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought. The transfer will be recorded on the Pupil Online Database and exported by our school via POD.
- Pupils transferring from *Assumption JNS* to *Assumption SNS/ Drimnagh Castle* primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Communication with Parents

The school informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act 2000. This information is communicated to parents/ guardians at the annual induction meeting for incoming Junior Infants. Parents/guardians also receive termly reminders, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality. The names of the classes who have the best attendance are published in our monthly newsletter.

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 the Education Welfare Service to resolve any attendance



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problems

- discussing planned absences with the school
- refraining 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
- notifying the school, via Aladdin if their child/children, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher

Evaluation


The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Aladdin records and statistical returns.
- Happy confident well-adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Implementation/Ratification and Review

This policy will be implemented in August 2024.

Ratified by the Board of Management on April 16th, 2024.

Signed:  Chairperson BOM.

References:

Education Welfare Act 2000

Education Act 1998

Section 29 Education Act