



Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Ardrahan National School, Labane, Ardrahan, Co Galway.

Roll Number 17007I

Introduction

This Policy was reviewed and updated in line with the National School Attendance Campaign 2023/2024 led by TESS in partnership with the Department of Education. In Ardrahan National School we believe that promoting good attendance habits from the very beginning of a child's time at school is very important. This statement outlines how we propose to do this.

Rationale

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000 (amended by the Child and Family Agency Act 2013) schools are obliged to:

- Maintain a record of students attending school
- Record school attendance and notify the relevant Educational Welfare Officer of particular problems relating to attendance
- Support students with difficulties in attending school on a regular basis
- Prepare and implement a school attendance strategy to encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school
- Liaise with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues

Aims

Through our Strategy for School Attendance we aim to:

- Raise an awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Promote punctuality in the school using the motto, 'Every minute counts'.
- Promote a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected
- Promote a stimulating, positive learning environment
- 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.

Targets

- To reduce the percentage of children who have missed 20 days or more in 2022/2023 from 8%(in 22/23) to < 6 % over the next two years
- To reduce the overall percentage of absenteeism in 2022/2023 from 6.2% to ≤ 5% over the next two years.
(See Appendix 1 for data regarding attendance)

Ardrahan National School's Approach to Attendance:

Whole-School Approach:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily on Aladdin.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored by the class teacher and the Principal.
- The school expects that in so far as is possible that all pupils fully attend school. Children who are unwell are not expected to attend school.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
 - TUSLA
 - The Education Welfare Officer
 - The Board of Management

Punctuality

School is open from 9:10 a.m. and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9:20am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

Promoting Good Attendance:

Good attendance is promoted through fostering a stimulating, positive learning environment where every child feels valued, trusted and respected.

Pupil wellbeing is a focus of our SSE this year and several wellbeing initiatives have been implemented to ensure a positive school experience for all students

SPHE lessons in all classes foster a sense of safety and belonging within our school environment

Attendance is encouraged even if the student is late.

Parents are discouraged from taking holidays during the school term.

Pupils are greeted in person each morning by the principal, class teachers and SNA as they arrive to school.

Children who maintain a perfect school attendance record during their time at Ardrahan National School are commended at the end of each school year.

Responding to Poor Attendance:

Parents are asked to indicate reasons for absences on Aladdin in a timely manner.

Parents are contacted by the class teacher when children are absent regularly, especially if there is an obvious pattern in their absences, e.g., Mondays or Fridays.

Parents of children who are consistently late are contacted by the class teacher.

Parents who find it difficult to encourage reluctant children to come to school are offered support.

Parents are contacted by phone when pupils do not return to school as expected

Aladdin automatically sends a text message to parents when their children have missed 10, 15 & 20 days of school.

Teachers will complete the Educational Welfare Services Pre-Referral Checklist to help address Poor Attendance (See Appendix 2).

Using the Educational Welfare Services Referral Form, the Principal will notify Tusla of children who miss more than 20 days in the school year. (See Appendix 3).

Implementation

The Principal will:

- Personally greet children at the school door to create a positive interaction to start the school day.
- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations
- Submit required Returns to Tusla
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil.
- Inform Tusla of children who miss more than 20 days in the school year using the Educational Welfare Services Referral Form (See Appendix 3)

The Class Teacher will:

- Take the roll call by 10.30am each day
- Regularly discuss the importance of full attendance and punctuality at class level
- Inform the Principal of his/her concerns regarding the attendance of any pupil
- Complete the Educational Welfare Services Pre-Referral Checklist to help address Poor Attendance (See Appendix 2)
- Routinely discuss attendance at parent teacher meetings
- Record each child's number of absences on his/her school report.
- Be mindful of children who may not always have homework completed, due to challenging home circumstances. This can be a deterrent to attendance and understanding can be very encouraging and help to ease anxiety.

- Plan fun activities for after school breaks to create a positive interaction to the start of the school day- particularly for children with special needs for whom the break in routine can be difficult.

The school secretary will:

- Check that the roll has been recorded on Aladdin by 10:30 for classes where the teacher is absent.
- Receive children who arrive late (after the doors have been closed) and take them to their classroom.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

- Ardahan National School promotes an 'Open Door Policy' whereby parents are encouraged to inform teachers/the Principal of concerns they may have regarding their children. It is hoped that regular communication will help to prevent/resolve any issues which could lead to poor attendance.
- The calendar for each coming school year is given to parents and is published annually in June on the school website and a copy is published in the homework journal. 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.
- At the end of the school year, each teacher will review the attendance patterns of the class for the year. The attendance of each pupil will be reported to parents/guardians on their child's report card.

Success Criteria

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar rolla records on Aladdin and statistical returns
- Happy, confident children who enjoy being in school
- Positive parental feedback

Review

This policy will be reviewed as necessary.

Ratification

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management in April 2024.

Signed: Martin Murphy
Chairperson, Board of Management.

18/04/2024
Date

Appendix 1: Analysis of School Attendance figures from 2020/2021 to 2022/2023

	<u>24/08/2020 to 30/06/2021,</u> All classes				24/08/2021 to 30/06/2022, All classes				24/08/2022 to 30/06/2023, All classes			
	Days present	Present %	Days absent	Absent %	Days present	Present %	Days absent	Absent %	Days present	Present %	Days absent	Absent %
Total	16847	96.9%	531	3.1%	21425	92.1%	1850	7.9%	24665	93.8%	1642	6.2%
Girls	7412	97%	229	3%	10078	91.7%	908	8.3%	11597	93.5%	806	6.5%
Boys	9435	96.9%	302	3.1%	11347	92.3%	942	7.7%	13068	94%	836	6%

Year	% of children who missed > 20 days
2020/2021	0 %
2021/2022	15%
2022/2023	8.%
2023/2024	5%(to date 10/04/2024)

Appendix 2

EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICES PRE-REFERRAL CHECKLIST

For School Referrals please complete pre-referral checklist and Sections 1 and 2

Prior to submitting a referral form to the statutory educational welfare service, it is expected that the school has made attempts to resolve attendance issues. The purpose of this checklist is to note the actions taken prior to referral to the EWS. **This checklist should always accompany a referral form.**

To be completed in discussion with the Class Teacher (Primary)/ Year Head (Post Primary) or a nominated teacher/principal.

Child's Name	*	Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Home Address	*			
Date of Birth	*	PPSN	*	
Ethnicity	*	Language Spoken at Home	*	
School Name	*	School Roll No.	*	
School Telephone No.	*			
Class/Year e.g. 1st class or 1st year	*			
Number of school days absent this school year out of a possible number of school days open	_____ days absent out of _____ school days to date			
Number of unexplained absences year to date	*			
What is the presenting issue for this child	*			
Checklist actions to address poor attendance	Date of Action Taken	By whom		
In-school discussion with pupil (where appropriate)				
Contact between school and parent/guardian to express concern e.g.				

phone call, letter, discuss at parents evening		
Specific meeting in school with parent/guardian to identify problems and agree interventions		
Concerns and agreements communicated in writing to parent/guardian		
Implementation of any appropriate in-school measures (e.g. change of class, 'contact person' in school, support in class etc.)		
Use of appropriate interventions with pupil (e.g. attendance charts/ attendance report, incentives, rewards etc.)		
Other school interventions (e.g. care team, Pastoral care team, student support team etc.)		
Previous EWS involvement in this case		

Does the school have....	
.....Home School Community Liaison Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	If yes please attach any additional supports given other than outlined above (on a separate sheet if necessary)
.....School Completion Programme Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Signature of Principal: _____

Name of Principal (Capitals) _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3
EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICES
REFERRAL FORM

Section 2 **SCHOOL DETAILS**

Child's Name	*		
School Name	*	Roll No.	*
School Address	*	Tel No.	*
School Email	*		

No. of school days absent this school year to date	*		
Total no. of school days absent last school year	*		
Date parents/guardian were informed of referral to EWS?	*		
If Post Primary – Year group of pupil	*	If Primary – Class group of pupil	*
Date pupil entered the school	*		
Summary or reason for referral to EWS	*		

Previous school/s	*
Does this child have special educational needs?	*
Has the child been assessed (or is assessment pending) by the National Educational Psychological Service?	*
What resources (if any) have been allocated to meet the child's needs?	*
Does the child have any health issues?	*

Does the school have knowledge of other agencies involved with the child or family? If so which?	*
Has the school referred the child or family to another agency? If so what agency?	*
Has the school made a referral to the Social Work Department of the Child and Family Agency in respect of child protection or welfare concerns?	*
Is there any additional information that you feel is relevant for this referral?	*

Note:

A referral received by the statutory educational welfare service does not replace the responsibility of the referring school continually to support the child as required and to work in collaboration with the service in that regard.

Signature of Principal: _____

**Name of Principal
(Capitals)** _____

Date: _____

Referral forms, once completed and signed (and copied for school records), must be forwarded to EWS by post (**clearly marked 'EWS REFERRALS'**), to the appropriate EWS office. Details below: Referrals should not be sent directly to your EWO.

Southern Area: Cork, Kerry, Limerick, Clare, Tipperary, Waterford, Wexford, Carlow, Kilkenny, East Wicklow.
Post: Referrals Region 1, Educational Welfare Service, Tusla, Block C, Heritage Business Park, Bessboro Road, Blackrock, Cork

South Dublin, Kildare, West Wicklow

Post: Referrals Region 2, Educational Welfare Service, Tusla, Floor 2, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8

North Dublin, Louth, Meath, Cavan, Monaghan

Post: Referrals Region 3, Educational Welfare Service, Tusla, Ground Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8

West/North-West: Galway, Mayo, Sligo, Donegal, Leitrim, Roscommon, Longford, Offaly, Laois, Westmeath.

Post: Referrals Region 4, Educational Welfare Service, Tusla, Unit 19, Sandyfort Business Centre, Grealishtown, Bohermore, Galway

NOTE: For reasons of data protection, you are requested NOT to send Referral Forms by email under any circumstances.

For EWS Office use only			
Referral Reference No:			
Allocated for Assessment?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Case to open?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	
Reason for decision			
Signature of EWO		Date	
Signature of SEWO		Date	
Date Stamp	Date Stamp	Date Stamp	

