

School Attendance Policy



St. Aidan's Comprehensive School

Approved: _____
Chairperson Board of Management

Date: _____

Contents

	Pages	
Cover	1	
Contents	2	
Policy	3-7	
Total	7	(includes cover and contents)

Appendices

<i>Appendix 1</i>	<i>Mission Statement, Ethos, Aims of School</i>
Appendix 2	Attendance Protocol
Appendix 3	Attendance Procedures
Appendix 4	Attendance and Participation
<i>Appendix 5</i>	<i>Attendance Monitoring</i>
<i>Appendix 6</i>	NEWB – Pre -Referral form -Referral form
<i>Appendix 7</i>	NEWB – Reports
Appendix 8	TUSLA School Attendance Strategy

St Aidan's Comprehensive School
School Attendance Policy

1. Scope:

The policy applies to students, parents, guardians, teachers, ancillary staff and school management.

2. Relationship to School Ethos/Mission Statement:

The *Mission Statement and Ethos* of St. Aidan's is to provide an education which will prepare students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life and to promote an active partnership between the school, home and the community. (Appendix 1)

Our attendance policy compliments this aim in training our students to take responsibility for their attendance and punctuality on a daily basis, in preparation for their future.

3 Rationale:

- 1) By law, under section 21 of the Education Welfare Act 2000, recognised schools are required to have a school attendance policy.
- 2) A written policy statement serves as a reference point for students, parents and teachers. It promotes harmony by clarifying procedures, expectations and roles.
- 3) The involvement of parents and students in policy formulation, where appropriate, promotes partnership.

4 Goals/Objectives:

- To develop a policy, *that* will foster an appreciation of learning among students, and encourage regular and punctual attendance at school.
- The school strategy to encourage full attendance will include the following: daily text message after registration to parent/guardian if a student is missing. (where relevant); contact by Tutor/Year Head if absent for a number of days and no contact from home; on students return referral to the guidance counsellor or chaplain where deemed necessary.
- Parents/Guardians are requested to ensure their son/daughter attends for the maximum number of days each year and are punctual each day.

5. Policy Content

The school will:

- Maintain an accurate record of attendance.
- Identify, at the earliest possible stage, those students who are at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- Contacts will be made and maintained with the families identified.
- As part of the induction of new students the school will seek, with the aid of the primary schools, to identify students who already have school attendance problems.
- In order to recognise and reward good attendance a specific attendance category forms part of the school's annual Awards Ceremony.
- Conduct research into the reasons for the poor attendance of those students identified. The outcome of this research will be a factor in *and provide appropriate supports*.
- Minimise the erosion of teacher/student contact time by the careful management of non-teaching activities i.e. parent teacher meetings/staff meetings/staff in-service training/ extracurricular events etc.
- *There is a protocol in place re: attendance (Appendix 2)*

6 Procedures for monitoring attendance

- Students' attendance is recorded daily at morning registration by the tutor.
- A record is also kept of students who come to school late.
- Students who attend late on 3 occasions without reasonable parental excuse are given Friday afternoon detention.
- Attendance is checked again during the first period in the afternoon by subject teachers.
- Absences must be explained and accounted for by a note in the journal from a parent or guardian on the first day of return to school and should be given to the tutor for filing.
- Letters re: appointments, hospital, doctor or dental, should be accompanied by an appointment card. All such appointments are discouraged during the school day. Doctor's letters and medical certificates should be given to the Year Head.
- Students leaving the school during the day must first seek permission from their Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal and must be "signed out" by a parent or guardian and "sign in" on their return to the school.

- For legal and safety reasons students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the day, unless prior written permission has been given. A Friday detention will be issued to any student violating this rule.
- If a student is absent from school for any length of time, due to illness or any other reason, the school should be notified in writing or by phone as soon as possible.
- Students' attendance is reviewed regularly especially at the end of each month and students will be spoken to by their year head. If there is cause for concern a letter is sent home and/or parents will be contacted by phone.
- A text message is sent to parent/guardian after registration to inform them of a student's absence.
- The Deputy Principal monitors attendance and if a student is absent for 20 days or more, the NEWB and parents must be notified in accordance with the legislation, the Education Welfare Act (2000).
- Sanctions will in general be in the form of detentions with a view to obliging the student to make up the lost time.
- The school liaises with the Education Welfare Officer on matters relating to attendance. (*Appendix 3*)

7. Policy on Punctuality

- Students should be in school and ready for class five minutes before the bell. In accordance with the provisions of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, severe sanctions, including detention, will be applied to persistent late-comers.

8. Related Policies

Admissions, Child Safeguarding, Code of Behaviour, Suspension and Expulsion, Student Support, Child Protection, Health & Safety, Out of School Activities, Extra-Curricular, Anti-Bullying policies and other relevant school procedures.

9 Roles and Responsibilities

- **The Education Welfare Board (N.E.W.B)**

The Education Welfare Act 2000 provides for the establishment of the National Educational Welfare Board, to ensure that each child attends a recognised school and receives a minimum education.

- **Education Welfare Officers**

Section 11 of the Welfare Act provides for the appointment of Education Welfare Officers.

The Board of Management, Principal, teachers and other members of staff in the school are obliged to give “all such assistance as may reasonably be required by an Education Welfare Officer in the performance of his/her functions”.

- **Obligations of Parents**

Section 17 and 18 of the Education Welfare Act 2000 obliges the parent of a child to “cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day. Where the child is absent from the school during part of the day, for a school day or more than a school day, the parents shall notify the school of the reasons for the child’s absence”.

School Attendance-Strategies to encourage attendance

1. Information evening with parents of incoming 1st years stressing the importance of attendance.
2. Student Support Structure of Year Head and Tutor to provide support for students with issues / concerns
3. Part of Code of Behaviour that students and parents agree that attendance is essential
4. A variety of educational programmes to suit the differing needs of students
5. An excellent learning support programme
6. Active anti-bullying policy
7. After School Study
8. Book Rental Scheme for Junior Cycle
9. Registration each morning, meeting Tutor in the same room
10. Emphasis on good attendance in registration class and all subjects
11. Monitoring of attendance
 - Roll call morning and afternoon
 - Each teacher takes roll at start of class
 - Notes must be provided on return from absences
 - Notifying of high level / a pattern of absences to Tutor – calls home and inform Year Head
 - Text message home if absent each day

- The Deputy Principal acts as the Attendance officer and will review absenteeism and contact parents
12. Endeavour Award system in place to encourage positive engagement with school
 13. Awards for attendance given at annual award ceremony.
 14. Meeting with Students/Tutor/Year Head if concerns arise over level of absenteeism
 15. Referral to Guidance Counsellor and /or Chaplain and / or Deputy Principal
 16. Meeting with Parents
 17. Breakfast Club / School Meals Programmes/Extra –curricular activities including sports.
 18. Buddy Programme for 1st years to support them in their transition
 19. Encourage students to get involved in extra-curricular i.e. sport and in turn encourage attendance.
 20. Students attendance / lates / sign outs summarised each month for Year Head who will meet with students who have a high level of absence, lates etc.
 21. Communication on an on-going basis with parents, year head, tutor, subject teacher, student and senior management.

At all times, St Aidan’s staff stress the importance of attendance and the impact of non-attendance on performance in in-school assessments and in particular in the Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate state examinations. (*Appendix 4*)

School Register

The Principal is obliged to maintain a record of attendance or non-attendance of each student registered at the school, on each day. Where a student fails to attend, the reasons for such failure should be recorded.

Annual Report

The attendance officer on behalf of the Board of Management of the school shall, not later than 6 weeks after the end of each school year, submit a report to:

- i. The Board of Management
- ii. The Education Welfare Officer
- iii. The Parents Association, of the levels of attendance during the preceding school year.

2. Success Criteria

- Decrease in the number of students with over 20 day’s absence from school.
- Overall improvement in daily attendance and punctuality at school.
- Overall improvement in academic performance at school.

3. Monitoring Procedures

- Attendance is monitored on a daily basis by tutors, subject teachers and the attendance officer. (Deputy Principal)
- This is supplemented by subject teachers taking an afternoon roll.
- Latecomers are recorded each morning and sanctioned weekly.
- At the end of each term, students' attendance is recorded on their reports.
- Annual report
- The Attendance Officer from the N.E.W.B. may visit the school and meet with the school attendance officer re attendance queries. (*Appendix 5/6*)
- The School must return an Annual Attendance Report to the Board of Management and NEWB. (Appendix 7)

4. Policy Review

The policy will be reviewed on an on-going basis. Policies are developed/reviewed using a working party, then a consultation process takes place with the students' council, whole staff and parents where necessary. Following this the working party will review suggestions and comments before submitting the policy to the Board of Management for review and ratification.