**Attendance Policy**

**Introduction:**

Changing social habits and patterns necessitate the updating of the schools attendance policy. The redrafting was a collaborative school process involving staff and Board of Management taking cognisance of the directives from Department of Education and Skills and EWS.

**Rationale:**

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarised as follows;

* The changing fabric of society
* The roll of EWS-Tulsa
* Encourage children to have good attendance
* Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000
* Promote a positive attitude to education
* Child Protection

**Aims and Objectives:**

* To work closely with parents to ensure that our pupils attend regularly and on time, thus enabling

 children to fully avail of the holistic educational opportunities available to them.

* To encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
* To share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
* To inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Welfare Act

 2000.

* To identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
* To ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
* To develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who

 may be at risk of developing attendance problems.

* To identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.
* Encouraging full attendance where possible
* Identifying pupils at risk
* Promoting a positive learning environment
* Enabling learning opportunities to be availed of
* Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
* Fostering an appreciation of learning

**Compliance with School Ethos:**

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

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

 **Role of the School:**

* The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
* Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
* Pupil attendance is recorded daily in the class roll book. Class attendance is recorded daily on the class

 attendance sheet and the leabhar tinreamh (spread sheet on the computer).

* If a child is not present by 10am and the school hasn’t received notification from the parent/guardian

 the child is marked absent.

* Children are not encouraged to leave the school before the official closing time. Children are only permitted to leave if they are collected by parents/guardians or for older children if there is a written request from parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian is taking a child from school during school hours he/she must call to the office, get permission from the Principal and sign the child out. If this becomes a regular occurrence or if there is not a valid reason for the child’s removal the parents will be challenged by the Principal and encouraged to leave the child in school for the full school day.
* Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been

 communicated.

* Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
* Attendance for each class is monitored on a monthly basis.
* Attendance is monitored closely and the principal gets in touch with parents if he has concerns.
* The pre referral form is used first by the class teacher
* Contact is made with the parent/guardian of every child who has missed more than ten days requesting

 that the child’s attendance improves and informing the parent/guardian that the Education Welfare

 Officer will be notified if their child misses twenty or more days.(if the reason is unknown)

* The Education Welfare Officer is informed of all children whose attendance is affecting their education.
* School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
	+ The Education Welfare Services-Tusla
	+ The Education Welfare Officer

**Role of the Parent/Guardian:**

* Parents have an obligation to send their children to a recognised school and engage in full time

 education between the ages of 6 and 16.

* Parents are encouraged to get to know the Principal and teachers and to communicate any concerns

 that they may have regarding their child’s education and welfare.

* Parents are asked to pass on the notion of the importance of getting a good education and the

 importance of attending school every day.

* Parents are expected to have their children in school every day and on time.
* Parents are expected to let the school know if their child is absent and why.
* If an absence is known beforehand (e.g. dental or eye appointment), the school should be notified of

 the intended absence. If possible, children should be in school before and after appointments. Where

 possible, appointments for children should be made outside of school times.

* Parents should not take holidays during school time.

**Role of the Principal:**

* Promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
* Promote the development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
* Promote the reward system for pupils.
* Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
* Ensure support is in place for pupils, who have special educational needs, in accordance with

 Department guidelines.

* Ensure internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of

 pupils.

* Inform the Education Welfare Officer:

If a pupil is not attending school regularly.

When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.

If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.

When a pupil’s name is removed from the school register.

Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns

regarding a pupil.

In the instance of a child transferring from another school, inform the previous school once the child is on roll in St Colman’s National School.

**Role of the Teacher**

* Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
* Promote the reward system for pupils.
* Promote the development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
* Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
* Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
* Ensure the school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is interesting, flexible and relevant to the needs

 of the individual child.

* Support pupils, who have special educational needs.
* Parent/guardian to be contacted-Pre referral Form to be filled in where there is concern. ie Pre referral Checklists for schools (Tulsa) Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians either via a letter or a note in the homework diary if necessary. A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
* ‘No Homework ’ voucher given to each child who has attended school for a full term missing a day or 0 days.
* Inform the Principal of concerns he/she may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

**Teacher absence:**

* When a teacher is going to be absent he/she is expected to notify the Principal as early as is possible on

 the first day of the absence. The teacher should where possible indicate the likely duration of the

 absence. The maximum number of uncertified sick days allowed over two consecutive school years is

 seven.

* If the teacher is going to have a medical cert it is important to let the Principal know, as this has

 implications for substitute cover.

* Each class teacher to have the list of where children go when he/she is absent filled in and easy to

 access in the classroom eg. on the wall/or in the roll book.

* Teachers applying for leave of absence are asked to consult the relevant Department of Education &

 Skills circulars.

* If a teacher is aware that he/she is going to be absent(e.g. course day) and substitute cover is

 unavailable or not provided by the Dept. he/she is expected to have work ready for the pupils to

 complete.

**Role of Pupils:**

* Pupils have the responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
* Pupils should inform the principal or teachers if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
* Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
* Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents, on the specified day.

**Strategies for promoting good attendance:**

Parents/guardians 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 education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems.
* Making sure their children understand that parents support and approve of school attendance.
* Discussing planned absences with the school.
* Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time.
* Showing an interest in their children’s school day and their children’s homework.
* Encouraging them 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. If this is not possible remove the child from school for as little time as

 possible before and after the appointment.

* Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
* Notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be

 collected by someone not known to the teacher.

**The school promotes good school attendance by:**

* Fostering an environment that encourages children to attend school and to participate fully in the life of

 the school.

* Promoting the development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
* Ensuring the school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the

 individual child.

* Supporting pupils, who have special educational needs, in accordance with Department guidelines.
* Ensuring internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of

 pupils.

* Utilising the assistance of the Education Welfare Officer.
* The Principal works closely with parents who may experience difficulty in getting their children to

 school.

* Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve

 their attendance.

* Attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class

 teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.

* Children are congratulated at assembly and given No Homework vouchers are given to children who

 attend school for a term, missing 0/1 days.

* At the end of each term a class prize is given to the class with the best overall attendance.

Special medals, gold, silver and bronze are given to children who have not missed a single day, one day and two days at the end of every year.

**The Education Welfare Board:**

The Education Welfare Services-Tusla aims to assist children and parents of children who are not attending school on a regular basis. However, if the Education Welfare Services considers that parents/guardians are neglecting their obligations regarding school attendance they may serve a School Attendance Notice. Parents will be required to send their children to school and failure to do so may require legal action to be taken. Legal action is the last option and will only be taken in exceptional cases, if it is the only way that a child’s right to education can be safeguarded.

**School attendance problems**

These are categorised as follows:

**Irregular Absentee**: 2/5 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason

**Seriously Irregular** **Absentee**: 6/10 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason

**Chronic Absentee:** 11+ days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason

**Communication with other Schools:**

* When a child transfers from St Colman’s to another school, the schools records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer
* When a child transfers into St. Colman’s confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child’s previous school, and appropriate records sought
* Pupils transferring from St. Colman’s to a Post Primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment

**Communication with Parents:**

 The school also informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the *Education Welfare Act 2000*. Regular school circulars disseminate this information. Parents of new children are informed on enrolment.

Levels of attendance will be sent home to parents in their child’s summer reports.

 **Education Welfare Services:**

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if;

* A child is expelled
* A child is suspended
* A child has missed more than 20 days

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

**Evaluation:**

The success of any Attendance policy is measured through;

* Improved attendance levels
* Happy confident well adjusted children
* Positive parental feedback
* Teacher vigilance

**Implementation/Ratification and Review:**

This policy has been in operation in St. Colman’ssince 2005 and was updated in 2008, reviewed in 2013 and again in 2015 prior to our W.S.E

**References:**

Education Welfare Act 2000

Section 29 Education Act

Fiona Murray

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 Jan 27 2015

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