



*Lavally National School,
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Lavally N.S.

Attendance Strategy

Introduction:

In Lavally Primary school, we aim to encourage optimum attendance for each child. To this end, we attempt to create a positive welcoming environment, to which the children are happy to come each day. We recognise the clear and direct relationship between regular school attendance and pupil progress. Overall good attendance engenders a positive attitude to school and learning (Mc Coy et al, 2007). The Board also recognises the impact of poor attendance on wider aspects of a student's life, such as weak peer relationships, risks of engagement in anti – social activity and poor family relationships (Hibbett and Fogelman;1990:Caroll,2011).

In light of the fact that absenteeism is often a complex matter, the Board of Management, from the beginning, views each child in the context of his/her family and a holistic approach to improving attendance will be followed. By striving for greater understanding of the barriers faced by students and the supports and interventions that can be of help in ensuring students engage, participate and attend.

Aims and Objectives:

This policy is geared towards;

- Creating a safe and welcoming environment where children are happy
- Promoting a positive and stimulating learning environment by collaborating in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum whilst displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- Promoting a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected

- Facilitating children to have a voice in school matters
- Encouraging punctuality and having high expectations of students' attendance
- Fostering an appreciation of learning
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring awareness of and compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- Identifying pupils at risk and intervening early with personalised support eg curricular incentive, targeted attendance chart, behavioural plan or mentoring and engagement with families and their children.
- Identifying and removing in so far as practicable, obstacles to school attendance

Roles and Responsibilities:

Parents are encouraged to;

- Ensure their child attends school daily, unless there is good reason, such as illness. This is emphasised at the initial Open Day for incoming Junior Infants/new entrants each year.
- Informing the school in writing of all absences.
- Informing the school if their child/children are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.
- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school term by providing each family with a copy of the school calendar for the coming school year annually in June
- Ensuring, in so far as possible, that appointments are arranged for times outside school hours.
- Encouraging children to participate fully in school activities.
- Praising and encouraging their child's achievements.
- Instilling in their children a positive sense of self- worth.
- Making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance.
- Contacting the school immediately if they have any concerns about absence or unwillingness to attend.
- Working with the school and Tusla to resolve any attendance problems.

Staff

- Have an input into the implementation of this policy.
- Class teachers record attendance, punctuality and absenteeism on Aladdin at 10.30 am daily.
- Late arrivals and early departures are discouraged and recorded on Aladdin.
- There is a Sign-Out Book for early departures.

- Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of TUSLA Child and Family Agency particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year
- The school secretary and Principal makes returns to NEWB as required.
- Parents are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year

Where a child's attendance shows signs of being less than desirable, the principal gives an informal reminder to the parents/guardians about the importance of attendance. When a child has missed fifteen days in one academic year, a letter is sent to her parents/guardians. This reminds them of the importance of regular attendance and of the school's obligation to report to the National Education Welfare Board.

TUSLA Child and family Agency is informed if;

A child is expelled for 6 days or more

A child is suspended for 6 days or more

A child has missed 20 days or more

The Principal makes two reports on pupil attendance to the National Education Welfare Board each year. This may be a hard copy return or online at schoolreturn.ie.

Any child who has missed twenty or more days in a school year has her name submitted to the NEWB, who then take responsibility for the matter.

At the end of the school year, the Principal then submits a final return to the NEWB, which details the number of days lost through absence and the average daily attendance. In addition, where there are concerns expressed by a teacher about a child's attendance or timekeeping, the local NEWB attendance officer is informed and she may follow up this query.

Evaluation

The success of this attendance Policy is measured through:

Improved attendance levels as measured through Aladdin records.

Happy confident and well- adjusted children.

Positive parental feedback

Teacher vigilance.

This Policy was reviewed by the Principal, Deputy Principal and AP2 Post -Holder on _____

This Policy ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed _____

(Chairperson)

Letter to Parents re Attendance

Dear _____,

We note that your son/daughter.....has missed a total ofdays in school to date this year. The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB) was established to support school attendance and follow up on children who are not attending school regularly. Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, a school is required to make a submission of attendance to the NEWB, where a child has missed twenty (20) or more days in an academic year. Schools have no discretion in this matter.

If your child is sick or is absent for other good reasons, no action will be taken by the NEWB. However, if there is concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given, you may be contacted by an Educational Welfare Officer who will discuss your child's attendance with you. The Officer will work with you and take full account of the circumstances of the child and the family before deciding what further action is necessary to ensure that the child receives her entitlement to an education.

If you have any queries on this matter, please contact the school office.

Yours Sincerely,

Tommy Grealley
(Principal)