

ST TIERNAN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL - ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy applies to all students, staff, and parents/guardians of St Tiernan's Community School. This policy was drawn up in consultation with all school partners i.e. Board of Management, staff, parents and students.

Relationship to St Tiernan's Community School

Mission/Vision/Aims

St Tiernan's Community School Attendance Policy supports our aim to foster the academic, social, moral and intellectual development of each boy and girl. **Regular school attendance is fundamental to the realisation of the aims outlined in our mission statement.**

Through a caring and collective approach St Tiernan's Community School aims to:

- Encourage academic success promoting quality in everything we do
- Develop a well-rounded individual with a healthy physical, social and spiritual outlook on life
- Nurture a sense of respect and pride in each individual in the school and in the community
- Maintain a positive, caring and disciplined environment
- Provide a joyful educational experience for all

The student is at the centre of all that we do in St Tiernan's Community School and their parents as their primary educators are our partners in their education. Our Attendance Policy recognises the importance of full and regular attendance in the realisation of each student's full potential, both socially and academically.

Rationale

This policy is necessary to fulfil our obligation to:

- The educational interests of our students
- Meet the legislative requirements arising from the Education Welfare Act 2000
- Meet the requirements of the Department of Education and Skills
- Meet and realise our aims and vision as outlined in our Mission Statement

Legislative Context

The National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)

Sections 9 and 10 of the Act provide for the establishment of the National Educational Welfare Board.

“to ensure that each child attends a recognised school or otherwise receives a minimum education, and to assist in the formulation and implementation of policies of children...”
The detailed functions of the Board are set out in Section 10 together with the provision that “The Board shall have all such powers as it considers necessary for the performance of its functions under the Act”

Educational Welfare Officers

Section 11 of the Act provides for the appointment by the National Education Welfare Board of Education Welfare Officers (EWO). The Board of Management, Principal, Teachers and other members of staff of a recognised school are obliged to give “all such assistance as may reasonably be required by an Educational Welfare Officer in the performance of his/her functions.”

Obligations of Parents

Section 17 and 18 of the Act obliges the parent of a child to:

“cause the child concerned to attend a recognised school on each school day and where the child is absent from the school at which he/she is registered during part of the school day, or for a school day or more than a school day, the parents of such child shall, in accordance with procedures specified in the code of behaviour prepared by the school under Section 23 notify the Principal of the reasons for the child’s absence”.

School Registers

Section 20 of the Act provides that:

“the Principal of a recognised school shall, as soon as may be after the commencement of this section, cause to be established and maintained a register of all students attending that school”

School Attendance Records

Section 21 of the Act obliges the Principal of a recognised school to maintain a record of the attendance or non-attendance on each school day of each student registered at the school.

Where a student fails to so attend, the reasons for such failure should be recorded.

Reporting of Absences

Section 21(4) of the Act obliges the Principal of a school to inform by notice in writing an Educational Welfare Officer where:

- the student is suspended from a recognised school for a period of not less than six days
- the aggregate number of school days on which a student is absent from a recognised school during the school year is not less than twenty.
- a student’s name is, for whatever reason, removed from the register referred to in Section 20 by the Principal of the school concerned or

- a student is, in the opinion of the Principal of a recognised school at which he/she is registered, not attending school regularly.

Annual Report

Section 21 (6) of the Act provides that the Board of Management of a recognised school shall:

“Not later than six weeks after the end of each school year submit a report to

- a) the Educational Welfare Officer who has been assigned functions under this Act in relation to that school”
- b) the Parents Association of the recognised school concerned, established under Section 26 of the Education Act of 1998 (where so established) on the levels of attendance at that school during the immediately preceding school year”.

Student Absence Reports

Schools are required to submit Student Absence Reports twice each yearly on students with serious attendance issues that have been identified during the current academic year i.e. students falling within the following criteria:

- a student has been absent from school for a cumulative total of twenty days or more
- a student’s name is to be removed from the school register for any reason
- a student has been suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days
- a Principal is concerned about a student’s attendance
- the school has expelled a student

Annual Attendance Report (AAR)

Each recognised school in the State is obliged to submit a report to TUSLA Child and Family Agency on the levels of attendance at the end of each academic year. Schools are required to provide the following data in the AAR:

- Total number of days lost through absence in the entire school year
- Total number of students who were absent for twenty days or more

Goals and objectives of St Tiernan’s Community School Attendance Policy

Through implementation of this policy, St Tiernan’s Community School expects to:

- Promote a caring, welcoming environment within the school
- Encourage/Promote full attendance at school
- Raise awareness and highlight the importance of regular attendance to students and parents.
- Maintain an effective and accurate attendance record keeping system for all classes through our e-portal system.
- Identify and support pupils at risk
- Develop and implement support strategies to improve school attendance.

- Foster an appreciation of learning and full engagement in school life.

Policy Content

The following are the attendance procedures for St Tiernan's Community School:

- The school day begins at 8.50 am. Students are expected to be in their designated Year areas at this time.
- Students who arrive late to school have their names taken at the door by the Attendance Secretary. Students who arrive after 9.05 am must report to the office and sign in the late book. Failure to do so may result in the student being marked absent for the day.
- When a student is absent, the student must present the explanatory note in the homework journal to their class tutor on the day they return to school.
- **It is school policy that explanations for absence must be given in writing. All notes are kept in student's files in the respective year heads office.**
- A student may not leave school during the school day without permission.
- Any contact with parents/guardians must be made through the year head.

Students will receive sanctions for absence without permission and lateness in accordance with St Tiernan's Community School Code of Behaviour.

A full and detailed account of all procedures relating to attendance is outlined in our ATTENDANCE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME

OUR STRATEGIC ATTENDANCE PLAN further examines, analyses and reviews policy and procedure in relation to attendance. .

Related Policies

St Tiernan's Community School Attendance Policy is drawn up to fully complement and support the following policies:

- 1 Admissions Policy
- 2 Code of Behaviour Policy
- 3 Anti-Bullying Policy
- 4 SEN Policy
- 5 Subject Policies

Roles and Responsibilities

All stakeholders in St Tiernan's Community School have a specific role in the implementation of and adherence to this Attendance Policy. **The Board of Management**, through the Principal and Deputy Principal, have a responsibility to set and oversee the implementation of the Attendance Policy.

Principal and Deputy Principal have a responsibility to

- fulfil the legislative requirements as outlined above
- establish and maintain a register of all students attending St Tiernan's Community School
- support staff in maintaining a daily record of attendance and non-attendance and to record reasons for failure to attend
- take overall responsibility for the implementation of the school's Attendance Policy in line with their responsibilities as outlined in the related policies i.e. Admissions Policy, Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying.

Year Heads have a responsibility to

- ensure adherence to the attendance procedures outlined by the students in their Year Group.
- keep accurate records of attendance, as outlined in the Implementation Programme.
- follow procedures for dealing with absenteeism as outlined in the Implementation Programme.
- promote good attendance in their Year Group by using the supports/interventions/incentives as outlined in this Policy.

Tutors have a responsibility to

- work as part of a Year-team to promote good attendance in their tutor group.
- follow procedures for morning registration of pupils as outlined in the Implementation Programme

Class Teachers/Subject Teachers have a responsibility to

- take an attendance record on e-portal for every class taught
- report any discrepancies that occur between their attendance record and morning registration record to Year Head

Parents/Guardians have a responsibility to

- protect their child's right to an education
- send their child to school every day
- explain in writing in Homework Journal reasons for absence for school
- promote and encourage full attendance and engagement in school life

Students have a responsibility to

- attend school every day
- bring in an explanatory note for absence in Homework Journal on day of return to school
- engage fully in their education in St Tiernan's Community School

SUCCESS CRITERIA/MONITORING PROCEDURES

The following will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the Policy.

- Analysis of attendance figures and trends as identified in Attendance Strategy Statement
- Reports from HSCL and SCP
- Feedback from Year Heads and Tutors
- Report/feedback from Parents' Association

REVIEW PROCEDURES

This Policy will be reviewed bi-annually by Attendance Committee