



Esker Educate Together National School

Attendance Policy

Table of Contents

Introduction. 3

Rationale. 3

Aims and Objectives. 4

Compliance with School Ethos. 4

Policy Content. 5

School Strategies. 6

Communication with other Schools. 7

Promoting Attendance. 8

National Education Welfare Board. 8

Report at end of year. 9

Evaluation. 9

Implementation/Ratification and Review.. 10

References. 10

Introduction

This policy was reviewed and updated from November 2023. The teachers, HSCL and principal expressed concern at the amount of time that certain children were absent from school. Attendance rates have decreased significantly since Covid-19 since 2020. Another major factor for our particular school is that a large proportion of our parents do not come from Ireland and often arrange family trips home during term time.

Rationale

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

- The pupil profile of our school (i.e. 81% children from international families)
- The role of the TESS
- Levels of language deficit and the consequences of absenteeism to progress in this and other areas
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000
- Changing attitudes to education

Aims and Objectives

The policy is geared towards;

- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Encouraging full attendance where possible
- Identifying pupils at risk
- Promoting a positive learning environment
- Enabling learning opportunities to be availed of
- 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 and at the centre of any policies pertaining to the children in our school.

Policy Content

Recording:

Individual school attendance is recorded online on Aladdin. All children attending and data on parents are recorded on Aladdin.

An explanatory note on Aladdin from parents/guardians is requested to cover each absence and these are stored on Aladdin.

Absences will be characterised as follows:

- Irregular Attendance: 5/10 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason on return.
- Seriously Irregular Attendance: Over 10 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason on return.
- Chronic Absentee: Over 20 days absent in a quarter without a valid reason.

Appropriate contact will take place between the school and parents/guardians of these children;

- For irregular attendance, the teacher will inform the HSCL and principal and then the parents by email of her/his concerns about the child and seek to have an explanation of absence returned in writing or if deemed necessary to meet the parents to discuss the matter to offer support.
- If matters persist with the same child, the HSCL will call out to the house to visit the family or invite them in for a meeting of support - a plan will be discussed on how to improve attendance.
- If matters persist with the same child, the principal will invite the parents in for a meeting of support and to inform them of the referral process to TESS.
- For chronic absenteeism the Principal will inform the Education Welfare Officer and notify the parents of this by email/letter.

- HSCL will encourage regular school attendance and will call out to parents of chronic attenders if there has been no contact from the parents.
- HSCL will promote attendance throughout the school with students.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of staff have an input into the implementation of the policy.

Class teachers record attendance. Class teachers report irregularities. The HSCL and principal manage the Leabhar Tinreamh. This is printed off each month and signed. The BOM are informed of monthly attendance and are informed of increases or decreases from similar periods from previous year.

The principal will take responsibility to liaise with TESS and to meet with parents of children with seriously irregular and chronic absenteeism.

School Strategies

A) Communication with Parents:

The school will circulate the TESS information booklet *“Don’t Let Your Child Miss Out”* to all new parents with the Esker ETNS Welcome Pack. The school also informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the *Education Welfare Act 2000*. This information is disseminated every year at the new parent meeting, at curricular meetings for infant parents and at PTM meetings for all classes. Specific reference is made to the consequences of long absences on children’s progress in language acquisition and general academic progress and also to the fact that children can become unsettled and find it difficult to readapt to their class after a long absence.

Parents who inform teachers that their child will be missing more than two week’s term time due to holidays or trips home should be referred to the principal, deputy principal or HSCL who will make them aware of the consequences for their child and whether it needs to be reported to TESS. Parents will also sign a letter stating that this travel is against the advice of the HSCL and the letter will be scanned onto the child’s file on Aladdin.

B) Early identification of children at risk

Staff are asked to be vigilant so that risk students are identified early. Appropriate contact takes place between the class teacher and parents/guardians either via email or a notice on Aladdin when the teacher deems a child to be at risk.

Staff are asked to record on Aladdin repeated late arrivals and early collections. It is noted that all time missing from school unnecessarily will put the child at an educational disadvantage. Parents are encouraged to only take a child out of school early if they are unwell or if they have a medical appointment. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to school late following a medical appointment or if they wake up late.

A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary.

Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to TESS

Communication with other Schools

- When a child transfers from Esker Educate Together National School to another school, the records on attendance, academic progress will be forwarded (if sought) on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
- When a child transfers into Esker Educate Together NS confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought.
- Pupils transferring from Esker ETNS to a Post Primary school will have their records forwarded (if sought) on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.

Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by;

- Creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Ensuring children are happy
- Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early

- HERO attendance week(s) programme in place in the school currently (Since Oct 2022). Class with the highest overall percentage attendance from Juniors and Seniors wins a prize.
- HSCL attendance strategy- 'If you're in you can win', weekly prize wheel spin in each class, if you're in and the wheel lands on your number you win a prize.
- Specific targeted interventions provided by the school to individuals to promote attendance include; Breakfast club, School Completion Project workers (TESS), school counsellor, homework club, mentoring by HSCL.

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if;

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended for more than three days
- A child has missed more than 20 days with no explanation

TESS is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Returns Report which is completed on-line at the end of the academic year.

Guidelines for teachers: Teachers may use the following language to describe attendance patterns for the individual report for children from 1st class to 6th class

- Over 20 days absent: Unsatisfactory, reported to the TESS
- 15-19 days absent: Unsatisfactory
- 10-14 days: Fair
- 5-9 days: Good
- 2- 4: Very Good
- Less than 2: Excellent

Infants : Can also use the same guidelines or simply satisfactory/ unsatisfactory

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 came was ratified by BOM on 16th of January 2024.

It was discussed at a staff meeting on 7th February 2024 and will come into operation on 8th February 2024.

This policy will be reviewed in February 2025..

References

Don't let your Child Miss Out - TESS 2004

Education Welfare Act 2000

Section 29 Education Act

"Empty Desks"- C.D.U. Mary Immaculate