



# JOHN SCOTTUS NATIONAL SCHOOL

SCOIL NÁISIÚNTA JOHN SCOTTUS

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## **ATTENDANCE POLICY** **Approved by BOM 29/9/2016**

The aims of the attendance policy in school are to :

- (1) encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- (2) share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- (3) inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education (Welfare) 2000 Act.
- (4) identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- (5) ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- (6) develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- (7) Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance,

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
  - TUSLA - The Child and Family Agency and
  - The Board of Management

### **Definition**

A child will be recorded as absent if they miss more than one hour in a school day.  
A child will be recorded as late if they arrive in school after 7.55 in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class, and after 8.15 in all other classes.

### **Punctuality**

School is open from 08:00 a.m. (7:45am for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes) and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 8:15a.m (8:00 for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Classes). All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact

parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under The Act, to report children who are persistently late, to TUSLA.

### **Guidance for Parents**

Section (21) (9) of the Act states that: “a pupil’s absence can only be authorised by the Principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. The school principal cannot authorise a child’s absence for holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for a pupil’s absence must be communicated in writing or email, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. To facilitate this, such communications should not be in the homework diary, but on a separate page or sheet of paper. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher which contains the child’s name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child’s absence is not received by the school.

### **Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:**

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notifying the School by in writing or email if their children cannot attend for any reason, including the reason(s)
- Working with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems;
- Making sure their children understand that parents support 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.
- 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.

## **A strategy for promoting good school attendance**

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- Teachers are informed at Staff meetings of particular needs of pupils with medical conditions: e.g. allergies. Names and photographs of these pupils are posted up in the staffroom.
- Class teachers devise their own reward systems for good attendance by the children (e.g. giving stickers, etc.)
- The 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.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance. Parents are contacted and a meeting is set up between parent, class teacher and the Principal.
- At the beginning of year parents will be reminded of school policy at the beginning of year PT meeting, and on the school website. In particular, the following will be emphasised
  1. No absences are school approved.
  2. No holidays during term as it is bad example for other parents and suggests to the child and teacher that holidays are more important than school.
  3. Absences for sickness, emergencies and special occasions e.g. a wedding are understandable but not approved
  4. Inform parents that they are responsible for any missed learning

### **School Principal**

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform TUSLA:
  - 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 TUSLA with concerns regarding a pupil.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance

among pupils, parents and staff

### **Class Teacher**

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
- Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

[http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/FINAL\\_SAS\\_strategy\\_eng\\_2jun.pdf](http://www.tusla.ie/uploads/content/FINAL_SAS_strategy_eng_2jun.pdf)