

Carrakennedy National School

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Introduction:

At Carrakennedy National School pupils, parents, teachers, Board of Management and staff work in partnership to provide the best education for our pupils. Consistent attendance is necessary to facilitate the education of the children. The phrases "Every Day Counts" and "Every Minute Counts" are used regularly in our school. As a rural DEIS school, attendance is an area of high priority and we endeavour to support and foster good attendance patterns from a young age.

Rationale:

This Attendance Policy has been drawn up in accordance with the provisions of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 and the Educational Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency, TúsIa's document "Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools". The purpose of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 is to encourage regular school attendance. By law, every child must attend school regularly up to the age of sixteen years. At our school we believe that consistent attendance is a vital element in education. This policy ensures that school staff and families are informed and assisted in relation to attendance matters at our school.

General Information:

School start time: 9.20am

School finishing time: Junior/Senior Infants at 2.00pm/ 1st-6th at 3.00pm

Recording and Reporting Attendance:

1. School Attendance Record:

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded daily in the Roll Book via the Aladdin Management System. It is also recorded in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) which is printed off at the end of each month and kept on file in the school office. The enrolment records of all pupils will be uploaded to The Department of Education's Primary Online Database. (POD).

The attendance database Aladdin will be used to monitor and track overall attendance.

2. Monitoring Attendance:

Good home-school communication is one of the key factors to a child's success at school.

- *Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child is in attendance on every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him or her not to attend. (Section 17, Education Welfare Act, 2000). Parents/guardians must inform the school in **writing/telephone call/face to face of the reason for all absences.** This reason will then be recorded on the Aladdin Attendance database.*

- *Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Section 21(9), Education Welfare Act, 2000).*
- We strongly discourage parents from taking pupils on holidays during term time. However, if parents decide to take their child out of school for holidays, **we request that parents provide a letter to the school to say they are doing so and are aware of the implications.** This letter will be kept on the pupil's file in the school.
- The school Roll will be called at 10.00am each morning. Parents/guardians must inform the school in **writing/telephone call/face to face of the reason for late arrivals and early departures.** This reason will then be recorded on the Aladdin Attendance database.
- Parents/guardians are informed in writing of the pupil's total number of absences during the school year in the end of year Report.
- The school will endeavour to identify, at the earliest opportunity, those pupils who may be at risk of absenteeism and will make every effort to deal with any issue in a sensitive and understanding manner.

3. TÚSLA- Child and Family Agency:

All schools are obliged to report to the Educational Welfare Services Child and Family Agency, Túsła, to monitor school attendance. Schools report individual student absences and expulsions by submitting Student Absence Reports four times each year. Schools also report the total number of days lost through absence by submitting an Annual Attendance Report (AAR) at the end of the academic year.

Student Absence Reports

Schools must notify Túsła if:

- a child is absent for 20 days or more cumulatively
- a Principal is concerned about a pupil's attendance
- the BOM decides to expel a pupil
- a pupil has been suspended for six days or more cumulatively
- a pupil's name is to be removed from the register for whatever reason

This report will be generated by the school based on the guidelines outlined by Túsła.

Parents/Guardians will receive a letter from the school notifying them if a report has been made to Túsła regarding their child's attendance.

If your child is **sick or is absent for other explained reasons**, no action will be taken by Túsła. However, if there is a concern about your child's attendance at school or about the reasons given, you may receive a visit from an Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who will discuss your child's education with you. **Unexplained absences** are of particular concern to the school and Túsła.

Annual Attendance Reports (AAR)

All schools are obliged to submit a report to the Educational Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency, Túsła, 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 student absence in the entire school year.
- Total number of students who were absent for 20 days or more during the school year.
- Total number of students expelled in respect of whom all appeal processes have been exhausted or not availed of during the school year.
- Total number of students who were suspended for any number of days during the school year.

Promotion of Attendance:

Our school has many initiatives and ways of promoting and rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

- At the end of each term children with full attendance for that term are awarded certificates and prizes.
- Friday morning assemblies and prize-giving to encourage attendance and punctuality.
- Attendance Awards uploaded to school website.
- Staff "meet-and-greet" with children and parents every morning. (School Principal)
- The school organises and engages in activities to encourage good attendance- Railyard Fitness, Skip-Hop, Sean-nós Dancing, Friendship Week, School garden, Active Schools Week, Cumann na mBunscol etc.
- Túsła Attendance information leaflets are provided in the New Parent Welcome Packs.
- Parents will also be informed about our attendance strategies at New Parents' Evenings and Class Meetings, annually.


Review and Monitoring:

The policy was drawn up by school staff in April 2013. It was reviewed by school staff and the Board of Management in January 2017, in accordance with the Educational Welfare Services, Child and Family Agency, Túsła's document "Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools".

This policy adopted by Board of Management on

30/1/17

Signed:



(Chairperson of B.O.M)

Signed:



(Principal)