

St. Joseph's NS. Brackloon

Attendance Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was devised by staff members in Brackloon NS in October 2017.

Rationale

This policy has been devised to document the procedures and practices adopted by Brackloon NS, which are required to comply with the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Recording Student Attendance in the Student Management System (Aladdin)

Class teachers are required to take attendance before 10.30am each day. Children who arrive in school after this time are recorded as late in Aladdin.

All student absences must be explained by note or email. The notes/emails received from parents/guardians should be securely stored by teachers in the classroom filing cabinet for the duration of that school year. Details of notes should also be entered appropriately in Aladdin. If an absence note/email is not received, the absence is recorded as 'unexplained' in Aladdin. At the end of the school year, absence notes should be given to the school secretary for secure storage. These notes/emails will be stored for the current and previous school years and will be available to the Education Welfare Officer if requested.

Promoting School Attendance

The following strategies will be used to improve and promote school attendance in Brackloon NS.

1. A warm welcoming and attractive environment will be provided for the children at school. Staff members will always display a strong sense of respect and empathy as they work with the children; Teachers will use a wide and varied range of teaching methodologies and differentiation strategies in order to ensure that all learning styles and levels of ability are adequately catered for;
2. Each class teacher will promote school attendance by helping the children to understand the importance of avoiding unnecessary absenteeism; Class teachers are encouraged to employ appropriate incentive schemes to promote attendance.
3. The Principal teacher will continuously promote school attendance amongst the parent/guardian body;
4. School attendance will be promoted at assemblies, parent information evenings, in newsletters and parent-teacher meetings etc;
5. All children who achieve full attendance in a particular term will be presented with a certificate at the assembly that will take place at the end of that term
6. Children with poor attendance will be targeted for additional support in an effort to minimise barriers to poor attendance e.g.
 - a. Free lunch;

- b. Principal meeting parents;
- c. Additional support in literacy and/or numeracy.

Delivering Equality of Education in Schools (DEIS)

Brackloon NS participates in the DES DEIS scheme. It is therefore required to have action plans in place for literacy, numeracy, attendance, parental involvement and links with outside agencies. The schools current action plan for attendance is attached to this policy.

Procedures for dealing with poor attendance

The following procedures will be followed for children displaying poor patterns of attendance:

1. The class teacher will speak to the child in relation to his/her attendance at school and try to ascertain what the barriers to school attendance are. Depending on school resources, efforts will be made to eliminate some of these barriers. Please see point number 6 in the paragraph above.
2. When a child has been absent for a cumulative total of ten unexplained days, his/her parents/guardians will be contacted by the school principal requesting an explanation for the absence; Details of the phone-call will be recorded on Aladdin.
3. When a child has been absent for a cumulative total of twenty days, explained or unexplained, his/her parents/guardians will receive a copy of the letter in appendix A inviting them to meet with the school principal to discuss the TUSLA referral process. A copy of the letter and notes taken during the meeting with the parent/guardian will be recorded on Aladdin. A parent/guardian's failure to attend the meeting will be recorded on Aladdin.
4. At this point, the TUSLA referral will be made and copied to the pupil file. Information gathered in steps 1-3 will be included in the referral.
5. Throughout the process 1-4 the Principal teacher will liaise with parents/guardians in order to help them address the challenges causing poor school attendance.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of our school community can play a part in promoting school attendance. The specific roles and responsibilities are listed below:

Children

1. Make every reasonable effort to attend school punctually every day and for the full day;
2. Request their parents/guardians to provide absence notes/emails to the school to explain absences.

Parents/guardians

1. Make every reasonable effort to ensure their child attends school punctually every day for the full day;

2. Provide the class teacher with an absence note on the day following a period of absence;
3. Co-operate with school personnel in relation to measures taken to improve attendance e.g. attend meetings with the Principal relating to school attendance when requested.

Class teacher

1. Mark the roll on Aladdin before 10.30am each day;
2. Insert the reason (i.e. not specified, illness, urgent family reason, suspended, unexplained, transfer to another school, other) for a pupil absence in Aladdin;
3. Securely store absence notes in the classroom filing cabinet for current school year.
4. Include details of each child's attendance in their school report sent to parents/guardians in June;
5. At parent-teacher meetings, impress on parents/guardians the challenges presented for children by poor school attendance;
6. Inform the Principal of concerns in relation to pupil attendance e.g. repeated unexplained absence.

School Secretary

1. In consultation with class-teachers and the Principal, send out the letters in Appendix A and ensure a copy of the letters sent are recorded on Aladdin;
2. Process the TUSLA Student Absence Reports through Aladdin;
3. Remove a child's name from the class roll book when confirmation has been received in writing that he/she has enrolled in another school and record appropriately in the school register;
4. Ensure that the pupil transfer form is sent to the new school of a child who is leaving Brackloon NS to enrol in another Primary School.
5. Ensure that the child's details of leaving are recorded in the Pupil Online Database.

Principal

1. Review the policy in consultation with children, staff, Board of Management and parent/guardians;
2. Liaise with the TUSLA Education Welfare Officer;
3. Meet with the parents/guardians of children where there is a concern around attendance and again if the number of days exceed twenty;
4. Refer students to TUSLA who have been absent for more than twenty days;
5. Inform the Board of Management of attendance issues.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented from October 2017.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Brackloon NS
on _____.

Signed: _____
Chairperson. BOM

Date: _____

Appendix A –**20 or more explained or unexplained absences – meeting with the principal teacher to discuss the TUSLA referral process**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act, the Board of Management has a legal obligation to notify the National Educational Welfare Board when a child has been absent from school for over 20 days in any one school year.

Your child _____ has been absent for _____ days.

I would be grateful if you would contact the school at your earliest convenience to arrange an appointment with me so we can discuss the TUSLA referral process.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely,

Brendan Tunney
Principal

