

St. Eunan's N.S

Attendance Policy



Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote and support regular school attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure compliance with legal requirements in relation to attendance recording and reporting.
- Provide guidance to staff, pupils and parents/guardians on attendance expectations and procedures.

This policy applies to all enrolled pupils in the school throughout the school year.

Legal Background

Under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000:

- Parents are legally required to ensure that children attend a recognised school or otherwise receive a **minimum education** from age 6 until age 16 or completion of three years of post-primary education (whichever is later).
- Schools must keep **accurate attendance records** for each pupil and report to the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) when required.

Attendance Expectations

Regular Attendance

- Pupils are expected to attend school every day that the school is open, unless there is a **genuine reason** for absence (e.g., illness, unavoidable medical appointments etc.).
- Parents/guardians must notify the school **each time a child is absent**, stating the reason for absence.

Punctuality

Pupils should arrive on time each day to minimise disruption to learning and school routines.

Recording Attendance

Our school is committed to promoting excellent attendance in line with the guidelines of the Tusla Education Support Service and the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000. Attendance is recorded daily using Aladdin Connect, and parents/guardians are required to notify the school of all absences through the Aladdin Connect app, providing a clear reason for the absence. Class teachers mark attendance each morning on the Aladdin system, and the in school management team monitors patterns of absence, late arrivals, and early collections. Automated notifications may issue to parents/guardians where absences are not explained. The Principal reviews attendance reports regularly and, where a pupil reaches 20 days of absence, the school is obliged to notify Tusla. Where concerns arise regarding a child's attendance, the school will engage with parents/guardians in a supportive manner to identify barriers and agree appropriate strategies. The Board of Management oversees the implementation of the Attendance Policy, ensuring that all school parties — staff, parents/guardians, and pupils — work collaboratively to promote consistent school attendance and the educational welfare of every child.

Daily Roll Book

- Class teachers will record attendance daily using the school's electronic attendance system Aladdin. This must be completed before 10am.
- If a child arrives after 10am (inc. planned appointments), they are still marked as absent but the 'late' code is utilised and the number of minutes after 9am is recorded, as well as the reason for the late arrival (within the notes section).
- If a child departs school early, this must also be recorded on Aladdin.
- Attendance records must indicate if the pupil was present, absent, late or an early departure.

Absence Codes and Records

- All absences will be recorded on the 'Aladdin' system, and reasons noted in writing from parents/guardian via the Aladdin Connect App.

Communication With Families

- Parents/guardians are expected to provide a reason explaining all absences via the Aladdin Connect App.
- Where possible, scheduled appointments should be arranged **outside school hours**.

Reporting to Tusla

The school shall notify Tusla (Child and Family Agency) where:

- A pupil has missed **20 or more days** in a school year.
- Attendance patterns give **reasonable cause for concern**, even if less than 20 days.
- A pupil is removed from the school roll book (Aladdin) after 20 days of unexplained absences. Pupils will remain on the school register (POD) until we have been notified that the pupil has been enrolled in a new school.
- If the child remains on our POD system, the child becomes 'Missing in Education' and must be reported to the Education Welfare Officer.

Intervention and Support

Where a pupil's attendance is irregular:

- The school will contact the parent/guardian to discuss attendance concerns.
- With consent, the school may refer or engage with an **Educational Welfare Officer** to support the pupil/family.
- The focus of intervention is on **support and engagement**, not punishment, consistent with Tusla's approach.

Authorised vs. Unauthorised Absence

- **Authorised Absence:** Illness, medical appointments, bereavement, or other exceptional circumstances agreed by the principal.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** Family holidays during school time, truancy of unspecified reason, or other unapproved leave.

All of the above are recorded as absences and count toward the 20-day reporting threshold.

School Refusal

School refusal can be linked to anxiety, emotional distress, learning needs, bullying, or family circumstances. The focus is support and early intervention, not blame or punishment.

Supports available for parents when a child is refusing to attend school;

School-Based Supports:

Class Teacher -

- First point of contact for parents.
- Can identify learning, social or emotional triggers.
- May adapt classroom approaches, routines or workload.

Principal / In-School Support Team -

- Coordinates responses where attendance concerns persist.
- May arrange meetings with parents to agree a support plan.
- Can facilitate phased returns or temporary adjustments (where appropriate).

Special Education Teachers (SET) -

- Support pupils with additional learning or emotional needs.
- May provide targeted interventions individually or small-group support.

Student Support Plan -

- Developed collaboratively with parents.
- Sets realistic goals to support regular attendance.
- Reviewed regularly and adjusted as needed.

Outside Supports:

Educational Welfare Services (Tusla)

Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

- Available through Tusla - Child and Family Agency.
- Works with families and schools where attendance difficulties arise.
- Focuses on understanding barriers and supporting solutions.
- Involvement is supportive, not punitive.
- EWOs can help parents navigate complex situations such as anxiety-based school refusal, family stress, or disengagement.

National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)

NEPS Psychologist

- Accessed through the school.
- Supports schools in understanding emotional and behavioural needs.
- Advises on strategies for:
 - Anxiety
 - Emotional regulation
 - Behaviour linked to school refusal
 - May support staff and parents rather than working directly with the child.

Health and Mental Health Supports

GP (General Practitioner)

- Important first step where anxiety, sleep issues or physical symptoms are present.
- Can refer to further services if needed.

CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

- For moderate to severe mental health needs.
- Accessed by GP referral.
- Supports children with significant anxiety, depression, or related conditions impacting attendance.

Primary Care Psychology / Counselling

- Community-based supports for mild to moderate difficulties.
- Referrals typically through GP or Primary Care Teams.

Family and Parenting Supports:

Family Resource Centres

- Offer local, community-based family supports.
- May provide parenting programmes, counselling or advocacy.

Parenting Support Services

- Help parents manage stress, routines and behaviour at home.
- Often linked with Tusla or local services.

Reasonable School Adjustments (When Needed):

In consultation with parents and professionals, schools may consider:

- * Gradual or phased return to school.
- * Temporary adjustments to timetable or expectations.
- * Safe spaces or trusted adults within the school.
- * Additional emotional or learning supports.

Any reduced timetable must be **short-term, monitored, and in the child's best interests, with parental agreement.

Key Message for Parents

- * You are not alone.
- * Early communication with the school leads to the best outcomes.
- * Attendance difficulties are treated as a child-welfare and wellbeing issue, not a disciplinary one.
- * The goal is always to support the child back into full, meaningful participation in school.

Monitoring and Review

- Attendance rates, patterns, and concerns will be monitored by the principal and relevant staff.
- This policy will be **reviewed every three years** or earlier if legislation or practice changes.

Responsibilities

Parents/Guardians

- Ensure pupils attend school regularly and on time.
- Provide reasons for absence promptly.
- Work with the school and, where necessary, with educational welfare supports.

Pupils

- Attend school consistently and punctually.
- Take responsibility as appropriate for school-age understanding.

School Staff

- Record attendance accurately daily.
- Communicate concerns to the principal promptly.
- Engage with families to support attendance.

Communication of Policy

- A copy of this policy will be available to parents/guardians and published on the school website.
- Staff will be informed and trained in its implementation.

Date of Ratification: 10th June 2026

Signed: Dr. Akbar Gargan
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Date: 10th June 2026