



Ard Rí Community National School
Balreask Old,
Navan,
Co. Meath

Roll No. 20352T

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance
November 2017

Rationale

This statement was prepared in consultation with the staff, Parent Association and Board of Management in order to highlight the strategies and measures in place in Ard Rí Community National School, to foster an appreciation of learning among pupils and encourage regular attendance at school.

It was decided to work on this policy for the following reasons:

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
- To outline the role of TUSLA
- To address levels of disadvantage
- To change attitudes to education
- To outline school recording of strategies in relation to attendance.
- To address a recommendation made during our whole school evaluation 2015

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Attendance at school is a requirement under law. Our strategy aims to continue to promote attendance and to encourage parents and children to see that good attendance helps children to become fully involved in school life. This also supports the holistic development of the child.

Compliance with school Ethos

In Ard Rí Community National School we aim to protect the wellbeing of our pupils and staff by providing a safe and nurturing environment at all times. As a Community National school our ethos is underpinned by four cornerstones.





Aims

In Ard Rí Community National School we aim to:

- Foster an appreciation of learning in the school community
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance and also an awareness of forming good patterns of attendance in early years
- Identify pupils at risk of leaving school early and reporting this to TUSLA
- Promote positive attitudes to learning
- Ensure that the system of rules, rewards (one system throughout the school), and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourage pupils to attend school
- Make parents aware of their responsibilities, around attendance, under the Education Welfare Act
- Comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines from TUSLA

Roles and Responsibilities

- All staff members have an input into the implementation of this policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of daily attendance on Aladdin (the administration software programme used by the school) and the teacher with responsibility for attendance makes the returns to the Educational Welfare Services at TUSLA four times a year. The annual school attendance report is sent to TUSLA at the end of each school year. The teacher with responsibility for attendance maintains the Leabhar Tinreamh (on Aladdin) and keeps up to date records of registrations within the school in co-operation with the school secretary and school principal.
- The school informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act 2000. This information is given on the policy section of the school website and distributed to parents of the new incoming Junior Infants at their induction meeting in May/June before the start of the new academic year.
- It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.



Punctuality

School begins at 9.00a.m. 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 Education Welfare Act, to report children who are consistently late, to the Education Welfare Board. A record is kept of the children who are late. For these purposes 9.15am is considered as late arrival. Being late for more than five days in a twenty day period without any accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians will be considered consistently late. This information is forwarded to parents in the annual parent teacher meeting and end of year report.

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded by class teacher on Aladdin daily. If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her absence will be recorded by the class teacher on Aladdin. The roll call is taken before 11a.m. each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day (if not otherwise informed by parents). This will not be altered once it has been filled in.

A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. A number of absence slips are provided in the school homework notebook for convenience. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher. These notes are dated and kept until the end of the school year. If a child is absent for more than twenty days in a year, that child will be reported to TUSLA during that school year. The absent notes for these children will be collected at the end of the year and stored by the Teacher with responsibility for attendance. Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by school Secretary in the main Office.

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of TUSLA particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than twenty days per school year. The school informs parents/guardians when their child is approaching twenty days of absence and again when they exceed twenty days absence (This is done by a letter forwarded to the parents by the teacher with responsibility for attendance) The class teacher also records that these letters have been distributed. Parents/guardians are also notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern will be invited to meet with the Principal and will be informed of the school's concerns.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer/TUSLA, where a child has missed twenty or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended for six days or more or expelled.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

- Ard Rí Community National School endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. The teaching staff collaborate in the planning



and implementation of the primary school curriculum, to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils. Where it is applicable parents/guardians are consulted in the drafting and reviewing of policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community.

- Traditionally, school attendance is very strong in our school. However, the staff remain vigilant so that 'at risk' pupils are identified early. At risk pupils can be categorized as those who miss more than five days in a twenty day period without any accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and the parents/guardians either via a letter or a phone call when this occurs. A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than twenty days are automatically referred on to TUSLA.
- New enrolments and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction process through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained.
- The calendar for the coming year is forwarded to parents annually and updates are sent at regular intervals throughout the school year. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimizing the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

Encouraging Good Attendance

- **Communication with parents:** When a difficulty regarding attendance arises parents are reminded of the importance of attendance and punctuality and of the obligation on schools to report non-attendance. Parents are also informed, of their responsibility, to send a written note explaining absences to the teachers upon the child's return to school.
- **Phone Communication:** If a child's attendance is of concern (even before the child has reached twenty days absence) the class Teacher/Principal will contact the parents to ascertain a reason for the child's absence and if further school support is needed.
- While not compulsory, in the case of longer absences due to illness, parents are asked to supply **medical certificates** from their General Practitioner. A reminder is given to parents that the school is legally obliged to report absences of twenty days or more.
- **School Records of Attendance:** Teachers keep daily records of attendance. Teachers keep notes received from parents with regard to all absences. Teachers will look for patterns relating to attendance issues and address these issues with the principal where necessary.



- **School Reports:** Children's individual attendances are recorded in the annual school report which is forwarded to parents. When children are transferring to other primary schools, attendance records are also forwarded.
- **TUSLA:** Attendance reports are forwarded to TUSLA on a quarterly and annual basis.
- **SPHE:** As part of our Social Personal and Health Education Programme each class teacher teaches SPHE. This promotes self-esteem and encourages attendance through areas such as "Making choices".
- **Homework:** Ard Rí Community National School has a Homework Policy. Homework creates a good link between school and home and also helps to nurture lifelong learning. Parents are encouraged to approach the teacher if their child is experiencing difficulties with homework so that a more differentiated level of homework can be arranged, children can in turn feel more positive about coming to school each day.
- **Equality of Participation:** In Ard Rí Community National School we strive to make education available to all. School book costs are kept to a minimum with a book rental scheme organized. Support will always be provided for families who find it challenging to meet the cost of school books or school trips. In such cases, subsidies or payment plans may be arranged.
- **Learning Needs:** At present, Ard Rí Community National School has a Special Education Needs team of teachers who work with many of the children in our school, providing support for those children, to enable them to reach their potential. Staff meet regularly to discuss pupils progress and to prioritise children who may be in need of learning support.
- **Learning Needs and absences:** The child's class teacher may offer extra support to children who are long term absent due to illness or hospitalisation. Support is offered to children to encourage them to attend school more regularly or to allow them to catch up on work due to unavoidable absences.

The Role of Parents/Guardians

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- Informing the school in writing, upon the child's return, of the reasons for absence from school
- Working with the School and TUSLA Child and Family Agency to resolve any attendance problems
- Discussing planned absences with the school in advance



- Refraining from taking holidays during school time
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- Encouraging their children 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 are arranged for times outside of school hours
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about their children's absence or other matters related to school
- Notifying, the school in writing, if their child is to be collected by someone not known to the teacher

The Role of TUSLA

TUSLA Child and Family Agency is informed if;

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended for six days or more
- A child has missed more than twenty days

TUSLA Child and Family Agency is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form which is completed on-line. A copy of this return is kept by both the teacher with responsibility for attendance and the Principal.

Communication with other Schools

- Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school, via P.O.D. (Primary Online Database) that the child is now registered in their school.
- When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers relevant.
- When a child transfers into Ard Rí Community National School confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school via P.O.D. and relevant records sought relating to attendance and educational progress.



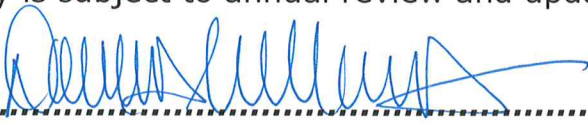
Evaluation

The success of this Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Attendance records and statistical returns.
- Happy confident well-adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy is subject to annual review and update by the Board of Management

Signed: 

Date: 21.11.2017

Board of Management Policy Consultation Record

Please present this form to your BOM when considering the policy at BOM level for ratification

School:	ARO Rt Community NS
Policy:	Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Staff Consultation:

Date of Final Consultation:	20.11.2017
Proposed By:	Jack S. [Signature] (Staff Member)
Seconded By:	Edel Barry. (Staff Member)

Student Consultation:

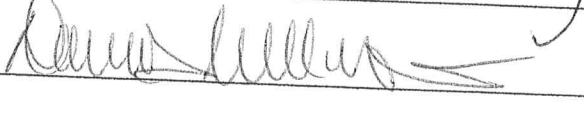
Date of Final Consultation:	
Proposed By:	(Student)
Seconded By:	(Student)

Parents Consultation:

Date of Final Consultation:	17.11.2017
Proposed By:	[Signature] (Parents Association Member)
Seconded By:	[Signature] (Parents Association Member)

**BOM & LMETB Ratification/Resolution Process for
This Policy**

BOM Ratification

<i>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</i>	21/11/2017
<i>Proposed By:</i>	Lynsey Giannity
<i>Seconded By:</i>	Catherine Dooley
<i>Signed:</i>	 (Chairperson, BOM)
<i>Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:</i>	

LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board

<i>Date of Resolution of ETB Board</i>	
<i>Signed</i>	(Chairperson)