

Attendance Strategy

Attendance Strategy

Faithlegg N.S

Faithlegg,

Co. Waterford

Roll No: 18380M

Aims

In Faithlegg N.S. we aim:

- To promote and foster an appreciation of learning
- To ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- To ensure that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- To raise awareness of the importance of full school attendance
- To raise awareness of the importance of punctuality
- To identify pupils at risk of early school leaving
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development
- To promote positive attitudes to learning
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner that encourages pupils to attend school
- To ensure compliance with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000/Guidelines from NEWB
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of relevant legislation
- developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance

Strategies

The following strategies are in place to help foster an appreciation of learning and good punctual attendance:

- Presentation of certificates for full attendance by Mayor of Waterford City every October
- As stated in Code of Behaviour, parents/guardians are expected to write a note/letter notifying the teacher of the reason for their child's absence once the child returns to school
- The teacher keeps record and notes the reason for the pupil's absence, with particular attention given to those that are at risk of developing school attendance problems

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

- Faithlegg N.S. endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community. The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.
- Traditionally, school attendance is strong in our school. However, the staff remains vigilant so that 'risk' students are identified early. Risk students can be categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in a 20-day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians either via a letter or a note in the homework diary when this occurs. A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up if

deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

- New entrants 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. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.
- Our homework policy, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, clearly outlines the school's expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.
- The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June and a reminder is published in September. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- Pupils are expected to wear the correct school uniform.
- Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will provide a lunch.
- Waterford City and County Council awards certificates to pupils who have full attendance during the school year. The mayor visits the school annually to present the certificates. Certificates are also available to pupils who improve their attendance over a short period of time, and to pupils who improve their overall attendance.

1. TUSLA and absenteeism

- TUSLA is the board responsible for ensuring that all children in our school are being looked after. They work with our school to ensure that children are not neglected or abused. Absenteeism is one of the most common issues that the organisation deals with. Schools are responsible for reporting absenteeism through a web site, www.schoolreturns.ie.
- When a child misses 20 school days, TUSLA may become involved in investigating the cause.

2. Structures in Place

2.1 Structure of Recording Attendance

- Every day in school, children's attendance is recorded on our online roll book before 9:50a.m. When a child is absent when the roll is called, he/she is marked absent. A child is marked absent even if they arrive after the roll call. This roll call should be taken by 9:50 a.m. If the roll call is taken later than 9:50 a.m., a teacher must explain why this has occurred.
- When a child is absent, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to write a note to explain the absence. These notes are stored in the child's file until June 30th of each school year.
- Parents are required to submit a written explanation outlining the reason for their child's absence. Usually notes are received within three days of the child returning to school following the period of absence. Every term, the school reports all absences over 20 days to the EWB. In this report, every child's absence is recorded online with a reason. There are 6 criteria for absence in the report. Any absence, without a written note, will fall under the category "unexplained".
- If a child is absent for 10 days or more, an automated text message will be sent to

the families of the child. After 15 days parents/guardians will be contacted by the Principal. It is our legal obligation to report any child missing 20 days or more to the EWB in the end of term returns.

3. What to do if your child is absent

- If your child is absent, please write a short note explaining the reasons for the absence. The only exception to this is if the child is running late for school and will miss the roll call at 9:50am.
- Although planned holidays and other absences are not encouraged by the school, a note must be sent in to explain the absence from school. Please note that the teacher will not provide schoolwork for children for any planned absences.

4. Lateness and the Roll Book

- School starts at 8:50am in Faithlegg N.S. Lateness is damaging for the child. A child who arrives only 10 minutes late for school misses over 30 hours of tuition per annum. The first ten minutes of our school day can be the most important time as it helps the child to settle in to his/her routine.

- Class teachers will monitor punctuality on a daily basis. Classes begin at 8:50am sharp. If a child arrives at school after this time, the class teacher will record the amount of minutes the child has missed. This information will be communicated to parents if and when the need arises. Any child who arrives later than 9:50am (when the roll is called) will be marked absent even if he/she arrives to school. There are exceptions to this rule outlined in the next two sub-points.

4.1 What to do if you know your child will be excessively late

- If the child is going to be late for school, a phone call to 051-382415 before 9:30am will be accepted and the child will not be marked absent in the roll book. Failure to produce the above will warrant the child being marked absent for the day.

4.2 Planned Lateness

- If a child has a morning appointment, e.g. doctor, dentist, etc., it is acceptable to write a note or simply tell the teacher of the appointment. In some cases, a certificate may be asked for.

5. Lateness After School and early Collection

- School ends at 1:30pm for infants and 2:30pm for other classes in Faithlegg N.S. Being late to collect your child can cause undue stress for the child as well as inconvenience for the teacher. While teachers will in general act “in loco parentis”, in unforeseen circumstances, continuing or excessive lateness may result in further action from the school. This may be in the form of contact with the Gardaí or social work team.

- Children who are regularly collected early for no valid reason are also missing out on valuable school time. Regular early collection may result in the school making a referral to TUSLA.

School Transfers

- Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be forwarded to the Principal of the school by post as soon as written confirmation of this transfer is received.

- Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer into our

school will be sought directly from the previous school.

- Attendance, behaviour and Academic records of pupils transferring to secondary school will be sent to the school once enrolment has been confirmed.

Roles and Responsibility

The following people have a responsibility for the successful implementation of this strategy

- Principal
- Class Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- Parents/Guardians
- Pupil
- Education Welfare Officer
- Board of Management

Review

The Policy will be evaluated on an ongoing basis by representatives from the whole school community and will be reviewed as necessary.