



Revised January 2022

ATTENDANCE POLICY SHANBALLY N.S.

1. Introduction

Changing social habits and patterns necessitated the updating of the schools attendance policy. The redrafting was a collaborative process involving staff and Board of Management, following initial drafting by a representative group.

2. Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy could be summarised as follows:

- a) The changing fabric of society
- b) The role of TUSLA (Child & Family Agency).
- c) Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000
- d) Changing attitudes to education

3. Aims and Objectives

The revised policy is geared towards

- Encouraging full attendance where possible
- Identifying pupils at risk
- Promoting a positive learning environment
- Enabling learning opportunities to be availed of
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Fostering an appreciation of learning

4. Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff members have an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teachers record individual patterns of attendance. Mr. Paddy Clifford makes the returns to TUSLA and also has responsibility for maintaining An Leabhar Tinrimh. All data relating to school attendance is now managed through Aladdin- the online school data system.

6. Punctuality

School begins at 8.50 am. 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 persistently late to the National Education Welfare Board.



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7. Recording and Reporting Attendance

Individual school attendance is recorded daily at 9.45 am on the Aladdin data system and class data is recorded in the online Leabhar Tinrimh. Information relating to all children attending the school and data on parents is recorded in the School Register, which is maintained by Mr. Paddy Clifford.

- A note from parents/guardians is required to cover each absence. An absence note facility has been set up through Aladdin that allows parents to send a note to the school stating the reason for their child's absence. This record is maintained electronically on the Aladdin system. This is the preferred method of informing the teachers of absences.
- A written note may be supplied if the parents/ guardians cannot access Aladdin in a timely manner. It is not school policy that the parent/guardian contacts either the school principal or the school secretary regarding a child's absence. Neither is it acceptable to give this information by phone call or text message.
- Written absence notes will be kept by class teachers for the duration of one academic year i.e. September to June.
- Parents are made aware of the requirements of TUSLA particularly the bye law relating to absences of 20 days or more per school year. They are also made aware that TUSLA will be notified about subsequent absences throughout the school year.
- Traditionally, school attendance is strong in our school and has not been adversely affected by social changes. A standard letter will be sent to the parent of any child who reaches 15 days of absence in a school year, even if absence notes have been supplied.
- Absences of 20 days or more are automatically referred to TUSLA in accordance with the most recent circulars. Schools have no discretion in this matter. Parents will also be notified of this referral. **Please note that if we have been supplied with absence notes we will be informing TUSLA that we do not have concerns about the child's attendance.**
- If the school has concern over a student's attendance, for whatever reason and in spite of all efforts at resolution, a formal referral will be made to the school attendance section.

8. Removal/ return of a pupil during the school day

If a pupil needs to leave early for an unavoidable medical appointment or other reason, a message from his/her parents needs to be posted on Aladdin to the school. If you do not have access please ring the school office. Please indicate if your child is leaving for the full school day.

If a child is sick during the school day, the secretary or another staff member will firstly ring the parent(s) and if uncontactable, will ring the emergency contact numbers unless other arrangements are made with the school.



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During COVID PERIOD

When collecting a child early, the parent/designated collector should firstly ring the school office from outside to let us know that they are here to collect the child. The school secretary will then sign out the child, and arrange for the child to be brought to the collector. If your child is returning to school please contact the office by phone and arrange for your child to be brought back to class, while the school secretary will record the child being returned.

NORMAL PROCEDURE: Parent/ designated collector must come to the school office to sign out the child at the sign-out station. The school secretary will then arrange for the child to be brought from their classroom. If your child is returned to school following an appointment you must also signify this at the sign-out station.

In cases of separation of parents, specific instructions as to who has permission to collect the child(ren) must be verified by a legal document stating the same. This applies in cases where access is an issue.

9. Late arrival of pupils

Parents are strongly encouraged to inform the class teacher if they know their child will be unavoidably late for school.

If a child is not in school by 9.45am he/she will be marked absent on the Aladdin recording system, unless otherwise notified.

If a child arrives to school after that time- the class teacher will amend the entry in the Aladdin system.

The child will be marked late and the amount of time missed will be recorded.

The child will be marked present at this stage.

10. Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

- Creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Ensuring children are happy
- Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying, etc. are identified early

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.

11. TUSLA

TUSLA, Child and Family Agency is informed if:

- a) A child is expelled
- b) A child is suspended
- c) A child has missed 20 days or more.



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- d) A school referral form is completed when there is concern over a child's attendance.

TUSLA is furnished with the total attendance for the school year through the Annual Attendance Report Form which is completed on-line.

12. Communication

- 12.1. The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.
- 12.2. Communication with other schools**
- When a child transfers from Shanbally N.S. to another school, schools records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer.
 - When a child transfers into Shanbally N.S. confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought.
 - Information on pupils transferring from Shanbally N.S. to a Post Primary school will be forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment.
- 12.3. Communication with Parents**
- The school informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act 2000. Parents of new children are informed on enrolment with an introductory letter concerning the role TUSLA (Child and Family Agency) and the school's obligation in this matter.
 - Standard letter to bring to the parent's attention that the child has already been absent for 15 days.
 - Standard letter regarding a child's absence of 20 days where the school is not concerned about the pattern of absences but where the child's name is being passed to TUSLA
 - Letter regarding a child's absence of 20 days where the school is concerned about a child's non-attendance and the concern is being passed on to TUSLA

These standardised letters will be sent automatically to parents via Aladdin after 15 days / 20 days.

13. Promotion of school attendance by parents/guardians

Parents/ guardians can promote good school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance
- Notifying the school if their children cannot attend for any reason
- Working with the school and education welfare services to resolve any attendance problems



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- Making sure their children understand that parents support good school attendance
- Discussing planned absences with the school
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- Encouraging them to take part 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
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school
- Ensuring, insofar as it is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc.) are arranged for times outside of school hours
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have any concerns about absence or other related school matters
- Notifying the school if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

14. Evaluation

The success of any Attendance policy is measured through

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

15. Implementation/ Ratification

This policy has been in operation in Shanbally NS since 2013, was updated in 2016/ 2017 and now in 2022. It will be reviewed again in 2025.

16. References

1. Don't Let Your Child Miss Out - N.E.W.B. 2004
2. Education Welfare Act 2000
3. Section 29 Education Act
4. "Empty Desks" – C.D.U. Mary Immaculate
5. Circulars and updates issued by TUSLA

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Fr. Sean O'Sullivan
Chairman BOM
26th January 2022