



Powerstown Educate Together National School

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POWERSTOWN EDUCATE TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

THIS POLICY HAS BEEN FORMULATED BY POWERSTOWN ETNS TO ASSIST SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND STAFF TO MONITOR & IMPROVE PUPIL ATTENDANCE. REFERENCE WAS SOUGHT FROM *THE EDUCATION WELFARE ACT 2000*, *DON'T LET YOUR CHILD MISS OUT (NEWB, 2004)*, *SECTION 29 EDUCATION ACT, "EMPTY DESKS" – C.D.U. MARY IMMACULATE*, *CIRCULAR 56/2011*, *CIRCULAR 33/2015* AND *DEVELOPING THE STATEMENT OF STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE: GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS (TUSLA, 2015)*

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INTRODUCTION:

In Powerstown Educate Together National School we aim to promote the good attendance and punctuality of our pupils. Regular attendance and punctuality at school is essential in order for each child to achieve their educational potential. The BoM, through the principal, the staff and the Parent Teacher Association first drafted this Attendance policy in May 2012.

AIMS

The aims of the attendance policy in Powerstown Educate Together National School are:

1. To ensure that pupil attendance is recorded accurately and efficiently each day.
2. To encourage full pupil attendance where possible.
3. To identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
4. To promote a positive learning environment where high expectations are maintained for all pupils.
5. To develop parents' understanding of the need for good attendance and punctuality.
6. To share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
7. To inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.
8. To ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
9. To develop links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
10. To identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL ETHOS

At Powerstown Educate Together NS we promote a school culture of inclusivity for all members of our school community. We seek to maximise engagement and participation of all pupils within the school through child-centred, individualised learning programmes; enriching curricular and extra-curricular learning activities; and student councils and committees. We maintain high expectations at all times for all pupils' learning and attendance. We work in partnership with our pupils' parents in order to promote their child's full attendance at school and positive, holistic learning experiences.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal, Deputy Principal and teachers, in consultation with parents, pupils and the Board of Management, are responsible for the implementation of this policy.

PRINCIPAL

In line with the duties and obligations outlined in the Education Welfare Act 2000 (amended by the Child and Family Agency Act 2013), it is the responsibility of the Principal to:

- Maintain a record of pupils attending the school and monitor overall attendance levels.
- Promote attendance through school initiatives, rewards, awareness campaigns, communication with staff and parents.
- Track attendance and identify emerging trends/ patterns of absence.
- Work supportively and collaboratively with pupils and their families to address emerging patterns of poor attendance and behaviour.
- Develop and maintain links with other schools and community organisations to support families with attendance matters.
- Notify the relevant Educational Welfare Officer of issues relating to attendance and inform parents of this.
- Make referrals to the EWO when a pupil is not attending school regularly / has missed 20+ days of school during the course of a school year and their attendance is of concern.
- Meet with EWO at Attendance Clinic to discuss concerns in relation to pupil attendance.
- Submit annual attendance reports to TESS.
- Prepare and implement a school attendance strategy to encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school.
- The Principal will report to the Board of Management in relation to attendance statistics, suspensions and expulsions and annual targets for attendance.

The principal of Powerstown ETNS is supported by the Deputy Principal to complete these tasks.

CLASS TEACHER

The class teacher will:

- Maintain Aladdin attendance and punctuality records in accordance to this policy
- Take roll call daily at 9am.
- Record time of all “late” arrivals i.e. after 8.30am

- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences and record same on Aladdin.
- Contact the parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
- Have early first-contact discussions with parents and pupils in relation to attendance concerns, e.g. pupils with multiple unexplained absences, pupils who have missed 10 or more days of school
- Inform the Deputy Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance and punctuality of any pupil.
- Welcome pupils on return to school after an absence.
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Discuss attendance at parent-teacher meetings.
- Provide a positive learning environment where pupils will feel valued, engaged, and supported.
- Maintain high expectations for all pupils.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Parents/Guardians can promote school attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- Notifying the school if their child cannot attend for any reason through the Aladdin app.
- Working with the school and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems.
- Making sure their children understand that parents support school attendance & attendance initiatives.
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Scheduling family holidays or trips abroad outside of school term time.
- Showing an interest in their child's school day and homework.
- Encouraging their child to participate in school activities.
- Praising and encouraging their child's achievements.
- Instilling in their child a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth.
- Ensuring, insofar as is possible, that children's appointments (with dentists etc.), are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
- Notifying the school, in writing, if their child/children, particularly children in junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

PUPILS

Pupils have the responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.

Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.

PUNCTUALITY

Pupils are expected to be at school **on time** and for the **full school day**.

Important times		
Supervised Morning Assembly	8.20am – 8.30am	School yard – designated line up area for each class
Children received by teachers	8.30am	Escorted to class by teacher
Classes commence	8.30am	Formal instruction begins
Roll call	9am	Children arriving after this time will be marked “absent but late”

Pupils are encouraged to arrive in school between 8.20am and 8.30am. Children congregate in the designated line-up space for their class in the school yard, under the supervision of the Principal, ISM team and Additional Needs Assistants. Children in our Autism Classes go directly to their rooms and are supervised by staff from 8.20am.

Pupils line up at 8.30am in the school yard to be escorted to their classroom by their class teacher to commence lessons. Children are required to be in their classrooms no later than 8.30am.

All pupils and staff are expected to be on time. Children arriving to school after 8.30am are **registered as late**. Their arrival time will be logged on Aladdin to indicate the number of minutes the child is late. Parents can access the punctuality record of their child through the Aladdin app. This will show the cumulative number of minutes that a child has been late for the whole year.

Pupils who are in school by 9am will be marked as ‘Present’ for the whole day. Pupils who arrive to school after roll call at 9am will be marked ‘Absent but late’.

If a child is persistently late, the class teacher will contact the parents to discuss their concerns. If punctuality continues to be an issue, the class teachers will bring their concerns to the attention of the Principal/Deputy Principal who will organise a meeting with the parents and an Action Plan will be put in place. In cases of concern about school attendance, the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted.

ATTENDANCE

In Powerstown Educate Together NS, the attendance of each pupil is recorded electronically on the Aladdin School Management System on a daily basis, in accordance with Circular 33/2015.

- Roll call is taken daily at 9am.
- If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher on Aladdin. Reasons for pupils' absences must be communicated by parents/guardians to the school through the Aladdin app. These notes/communication will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school.
- Parents will receive an Aladdin Notice/message if the class teacher is not informed of a reason for absence in advance of the roll being taken.
- Parents can access their child's attendance record via the Aladdin app.
- Parents are contacted via Aladdin notice/message when their child misses 10, 15 and 20 days of school in an academic year to ensure they are aware of their child's attendance.
- A monthly hard copy of attendance data is printed, signed by the Deputy Principal, and filed for school records. Concerns relating to punctuality or attendance are highlighted and tracked / actioned. This data is shared with Principal for their records.
- Absences can be characterised as the following:
 - ✓ **Irregular Absentee:** 5 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason on return. For irregular absenteeism, the class teacher will contact the parents to discuss their concerns about the child's attendance and seek to have explanation of absence submitted through Aladdin. Improvement strategies should be put in place.
 - ✓ **Serious Irregular Absentee:** 10 days absent in a 20-day period without a valid reason on return. For seriously irregular absenteeism, the class teacher will make further contact with the parents to emphasise concerns and to discuss improvement strategies.
 - ✓ **Very Serious Absentee:** 15+ days absent in an academic year. For chronic absenteeism the Deputy Principal will contact the parents inviting them to a meeting to discuss

attendance concerns and potential underlying reasons for ongoing poor attendance. An Action Plan will be put in place (using the EWS Assessment Framework), and a review meeting will occur within a month.

✓ **Chronic Absentee:** 20+ days absent in an academic year: Parents will meet with Principal and potential of EWO referral being made.

- Parents/guardians are informed in writing in the end of year report of the total number of days their child was absent from school during the year.
- The school is obliged to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child has missed 20+ days in an academic year, if attendance is irregular, if a pupil is removed from the school register, if a child is suspended for 6 days or more, or if a child is expelled.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS ON HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

Section [(21) (9)] of the Education Act states that: “a pupil’s absence can only be authorised by the principal when the child is involved in activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved”. **The school principal cannot authorise a child’s absence for holidays during school time.**

We strongly discourage parents from taking pupils on holidays during term time due to the educational impact, and potential legal impact, of removing pupils from school for long periods of time. If a parent decides to take their child abroad during term time, this should be communicated in writing to the principal of the school. Teachers will not assign school work to pupils whilst on holiday.

Let’s **make every school day count** and schedule holidays outside of school time.

A STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING GOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Powerstown Educate Together school staff is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. We operate a tiered approach to promoting good attendance and punctuality based on the Response to Intervention (RTI) model – strategies range from general whole-school approaches to more targeted and individualised supports as outlined below:

Support for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School policies, including our Attendance Policy and Code of Behaviour, are shared on our school website in order to set and communicate clear standards and expectations.• The school calendar is publicised to parents (via the school website, Aladdin Connect and the school homework journal).
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing programmes are implemented on a whole-school basis to promote a positive and supportive school culture, e.g. Berry Street Education Model, Zones of Regulation, Anti-Bullying programmes (e.g. FUSE). Student committees (e.g. Student Council, Green School Committee, Garden Committee, etc) empower students, promote student participation and encourage a student voice within the school. Parental involvement in learning activities and school events helps to ensure that parents feel like valued members of the school community. Enrichment activities (e.g. school choir, sporting events, music and drama performances, school garden, field trips) encourage students to feel engaged in school life. Attendance awareness campaigns highlight the importance of attendance among staff, parents, pupils, and school management and contribute to an ethos of continuous improvement. Details of awareness campaigns are included in our annual plan for attendance to ensure continuous reflection on meaningful and effective approaches. Reward systems promote and acknowledge good attendance at school. Reward systems are detailed in our annual plan for attendance to ensure continuous reflection on meaningful and effective approaches.
Support for Some <i>Pupils identified by class teachers who are showing <u>emerging</u> patterns of absenteeism</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing programmes are implemented in either a whole-class or small group setting to support pupils who are experiencing social or emotional difficulties, e.g. Nurture, Friends for Life Nurture breakfast is offered to a maximum of 25 children to support school readiness, punctuality and organisation. Some pupils may access additional support in school through the Continuum of Support model. Class teachers will discuss attendance concerns with parents to offer support and suggest improvement targets. Pupils may be provided with an attendance chart or a behaviour plan to remind pupils of expectations and monitor their progress.
Support for a Few <i>Pupils who have <u>established</u> patterns of absenteeism and have not showed improved attendance in response to less targeted approaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents will be invited to a meeting with the Principal / Deputy Principal to discuss attendance concerns and to gain an understanding of issues impacting on pupil's attendance. See Appendix 1 for meeting invitation letter. A targeted Action Plan will be drawn up in collaboration with the pupil's parents using the Tusla Assessment Framework (see Appendix 2). This plan will include individual attendance targets, agreed responsibilities and actions, and a timeframe for review. Review meetings will be scheduled to monitor attendance and to offer support to parents. A referral may be submitted to the Education Welfare Officer and parents may be invited to Attendance Clinic meetings to monitor attendance and to ensure that targets for

COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER SCHOOLS

A pupil's education record is stored on the Pupil Online Database (POD) in line with circular 0037/2016.

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act, when a child transfers from Powerstown Educate Together National School to another school, the school's records on attendance and academic progress will be forwarded (in compliance with Circular Letters 56/2011 and 45/2014) on receipt of written notification of the transfer. When a pupil transfers from Powerstown Educate Together NS to another school, they are marked as a school 'leaver' on our records and subsequently registered in their new school. If a pupil is absent for 20+ consecutive days, we are required to mark them as a school 'leaver' on POD.

When a child transfers into Powerstown Educate Together N.S. confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school and appropriate records sought. They will be registered to POD to confirm their enrolment.

Pupils transferring from Powerstown ETNS to a Post Primary school will have their records forwarded (in compliance with Circular Letters 56/2011 and 45/2014) on receipt of confirmation of enrolment. See www.ncca.ie/transfer for further details of Education Passport requirements.

EVALUATION

The success of an Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels
- Happy, confident, well-adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance

IMPLEMENTATION / RATIFICATION AND REVIEW.

This policy came into operation on 31st August 2012.

It was reviewed in June 2023. It will be reviewed in 3 years.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Chairperson

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Principal



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{{ address }}

{{ current_date }}

Dear Parents,

I am writing to you regarding {{ first_name }}'s attendance at school.

{{ first_name }} has now been absent for {{ days_absent }} days so far this year.

{{ first_name }}'s class teacher and Cróna would like to discuss {{ first_name }}'s attendance with you as soon as possible.

Please phone the office on 01 8272018 and make an appointment.

Because {{ first_name }} has now been absent for 20 days and/or we are concerned about {{ first_name }} attendance, the school must pass the information to the National Educational Welfare Board. An Educational Welfare Officer may therefore be in contact with you to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely,

{{ absence_table }}

APPENDIX 2: ATTENDANCE ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

UNDERSTANDING NEEDS – ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

What is/are the identified problems	
To what extent is the identified problem to do with.... Please include supporting information	The student
	The family
	The school
	The community
Summarise any supports of interventions already in place: 	
Baseline	
Create a baseline using the last 4 weeks (minimum) as the starting point	
Identify any patterns or trends of the presenting problem	
What do the following say about the problem?	
Student?	
Family?	
School?	
Other agencies if involved?	
What strengths can be built on?	
For the student?	
For the family?	
Who could support the family?	
Other family members?	
Other agencies?	
Analysis	
Analysis of information gathered	
Completed by	
Date of assessment	