



## School attendance policy

The aims of the attendance policy in Ábalta Special School are to :

- (1) encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- (2) share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- (3) inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the School Attendance Act.
- (4) identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- (5) ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- (6) develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- (7) Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance,

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
- Pupil attendance is recorded daily.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
  - The Education Welfare Board.
  - The Education Welfare Officer
  - The Board of Management

### **Punctuality**

School begins at 9.30 a.m. Students are expected to be in their classrooms by 9.40. Any student not present at 10.00 a.m. will be marked absent for the day. All pupils and staff are expected to be on time. School finishes at 3.10 p.m. Only in exceptional circumstances will pupils in the school be supervised past this time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils arriving or being collected persistently late. The Principal is obliged to report children who are consistently late or who are marked absent for more than 20 days, to the Education Welfare Board.

### **Guidance for Parents**

Section [(21) (9)] of the 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. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Parents / guardians should contact the school by phone informing them if their child is going to be absent, this is to facilitate staffing re-arrangements. Reasons for pupils’ absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. To facilitate this, such communications should not be in the homework diary, but on a separate page or sheet of paper. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school, a written note should be marked for the attention of the class teacher which contains the child’s name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school. The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child’s absence is not received by the school. If student’s need to leave school prior to closing time of 3.10 p.m., a written note must be supplied to the class teacher, in this case the note can be via the communication diary.

### **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 service to resolve any attendance problems;
- Making sure their children understand that parents support and approve of 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 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.
- Informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school.
- 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, in writing, the school if their child/children, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

### **A strategy for promoting good school attendance**

The Board of Management is committed to providing a positive school atmosphere which is conducive to promoting good school attendance. In this regard:

- The school curriculum, insofar as is practicable, is flexible and relevant to the needs of the individual child.
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- A special reward system will be introduced for promoting good attendance at school.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

### **School Principal**

The School Principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform Tusla:
  - If a pupil is not attending school regularly.
  - When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year.
  - If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
  - When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact Tusla of concerns regarding a pupil.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff

### **Class Teacher**

The class teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.  
Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

**Reviewed by Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date**

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_**

**Chairperson, Board of Management**

**To be reviewed annually**

**Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_**

