

# Gaelscoil Shlí Dála

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## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Deireadh Fómhair 2020

**Impact of Covid 19 on attendance:** In the midst of the current global pandemic, it is understandable that children may be absent from school for longer periods than normal due to isolating, having Covid symptoms etc.

#### **Aims:**

Gaelscoil Shlí Dála is committed to providing a learning environment that will foster all children's learning and encourage them to attend school regularly. Our aim is to provide a stimulating day, with clear guidelines and structures, so that children feel welcome and nurtured while attending school. We believe that our pupils will benefit from this education through regular attendance. In so far as possible, we aim to have full attendance from all of our pupils.

Casual absences (for whatever reason) are discouraged as they have a direct impact on children's learning. We aim to support children and parents in achieving good attendance.

#### ***Among the many strategies/measures we use to ensure regular attendance are:***

- We aim to provide a warm, welcoming and supportive learning environment for our pupils, one in which they are valued and respected and in which provision is made for their learning needs.
- We hold regular and open class-level discussions with the children on the importance of regular attendance.
- We aim to publicly and positively affirm those children who have excellent attendance. In order to do this we have introduced *attendance certificates* together with the use of the dojo system which will be awarded termly.
- We aim to praise and reward those who are making a serious effort to improve their attendance/punctuality.
- We aim to have regular communication with parents and provide them with updates on their child's attendance if it is a cause for concern.
- Our class teachers and support teachers seek to ensure that children who may be experiencing learning difficulties are actively supported and encouraged with appropriate teaching.

- Our school's code of behaviour takes a positive approach to fostering good behaviour.
- We ask parents to value every minute that the children spend at school and therefore make sure that the children are sitting in their classroom by 8.50am. (School open from 8.40am)
- In the same way we ask parents not to ask to let the children off early, unless for a specific appointment. We have introduced a *sign-out sheet/book* for children who are collected early by a parent. This will enable us to keep a record of such absences and make parents aware of how much time is being missed.

## **The Education (Welfare) Act 2000**

The Education (Welfare) Act 2000 provides a framework under which attendance at school can be dealt with by law. As a result of the Act, the National Education Welfare Board (now TUSLA) has been established and has appointed Education Welfare Officers.

### **Under the regulations of the Act, the school is obliged to:**

- Keep a record of pupils' attendance, (this is done in the class roll books).
- Submit to the NEWB (TUSLA) the names of all pupils who miss 20 or more days from school.
- Keep a written record of pupils' absences.

### **Attendance / Parental Responsibility**

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000 Section 17, parents are legally obliged to send their child to school. Class teachers therefore record the attendance of all students every day the school is open. This includes the recording of non- school attendance due to illness or any other absences.

Under Section 18 of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 parents are also obliged to notify the school of the reason for the child's absence.

The school keeps a record of all such absences, using the codes as set down by TUSLA (see below). To facilitate both parents and teachers in the maintenance of such records, the school has designed a standard Absence Form (see sample) that is to be returned to the child's teacher after a day/days missed. Each family is given four blank forms at the beginning of the school year and additional copies are available through the school office should they be required.

### TUSLA codes for Category of Absence

A Illness

B Urgent Family Reasons (eg: Bereavement)

C Expelled

D Suspended

E Other (eg: Holidays, Religious Observance, Emigration)

F Unexplained

G Transfer to another school (written confirmation received from other school)

### **Early Intervention Strategy for Pupils with Problematic Absences:**

- Informal on-going contact with parents to encourage attendance.
- Standardised letters to be sent by the school at 12 days unexplained absence and again at 18 days unexplained absence.
- Parent may be requested by the school to attend a meeting in the school after 18 days unexplained absence.
- If no improvement in the attendance after this school meeting a referral to TUSLA
- Positive affirmation of attendance each day in the classroom.
- Regular Roll
- Standard agenda of school attendance on all staff meetings and regular review of overall school's absenteeism.

**This Revised School Attendance Policy was drawn up in consultation with School Staff and Management in September 2019.**

**Ratified by Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Date**

**Signed \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Chairperson, Board of Management**