



Attendance Policy

Introduction

This policy has been formulated by the school principal in consultation with school staff and endorsed by the Board of Management in 2020. This policy aims to outline the policy on student attendance and follows the guidelines as set out by the Department of Education and TUSLA.

It is the policy of Citywest & Saggart CNS to respect, celebrate and recognise diversity in all areas of human life. As part of its ethos, Citywest & Saggart CNS welcomes children from all faiths and beliefs. CSCNS is committed to the health and wellbeing of the children and staff. Every effort to reduce the illness of staff, either physical or mental will be made. We aim to foster a working environment which is supportive and caring.

Summary of main points in the policy

General	The attendance policy aims to provide guidelines and key information enabling parents, guardians and children to maintain high levels of attendance
What can be done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities in ensuring that pupil's attendance is recorded daily, encouraging full attendance where possible Post holder/Principal in addition to class teachers Identifying pupils at risk of poor attendance and at risk of leaving school early All staff Promoting a positive learning environment, enabling all pupils to avail fully of learning opportunities Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance to parents Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the children to understand the importance of coming to school. For children to want to come to school due to the positive learning atmosphere and the range of different teaching methodologies used to deliver the curriculum
Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For parents to understand their role in ensuring children attend school For parents to inform class teachers through notes or the connect app of any absences. For parents to understand the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act, 2000. This information is given to parents each year during the Welcome Meeting.
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The post holder monitors attendance monthly at a whole school level and is responsible for the Leabhair Tinrimh, the implementation of the attendance strategy across the whole school and notifying the Educational Welfare Officer of particular problems related to attendance. Class teachers monitor class attendance daily and track those children who have been absent for 10 days or more and 20 days or more. They email these parents and record absenteeism on the attendance log. Class teachers are also responsible for ensuring that all unauthorised absences are followed up. Principal monitors attendance frequently and feeds back progress on attendance at every BOM meeting and to parents in the monthly newsletter.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are as follows:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil's attendance is recorded daily, encouraging full attendance where possible
- Identifying pupils at risk of poor attendance and at risk of leaving school early
- Promoting a positive learning environment
- fostering an appreciation of learning and a love for learning
- Enabling all pupils to avail fully of learning opportunities
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- Identifying and removing, insofar as is practical, obstacles to school attendance.
- identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation

Compliance with School Ethos

Our attendance Policy compliments our school ethos. The characteristic spirit of our school is one which promotes the values of Excellence in Education, Care and Community. We acknowledge that to provide the highest quality education and ensure each child is cared for, the children must be at school to experience this. Thus, the importance of the attendance strategy which we have implemented since September 2019 (See Appendix 1).

The Education Welfare Act 2000

Under the terms of the Education Welfare Act 2000 (amended by the Child and Family Agency Act 2013) schools are obliged to:

- Maintain a record of students attending school
- Record school attendance and notify the relevant Educational Welfare Officer of particular problems relating to attendance
- Support students with difficulties in attending school regularly
- Prepare and implement a school attendance strategy to encourage, in a positive way, regular school attendance and an appreciation of learning within the school
- Prepare and implement a code of behaviour, setting standards of behaviour and disciplinary procedures for the school.
- Liaise with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have a role in ensuring the effective implementation of the attendance policy.

- The post holder monitors attendance every month at a whole school level and is responsible for the Leabhair Tinrimh, the implementation of the attendance strategy across the whole school and notifying the Educational Welfare Officer of particular problems related to attendance.
- Class teachers monitor class attendance daily and track those children who have been absent for 10 days or more and 20 days or more. They email these parents and record absenteeism on the attendance log. Class teachers are also responsible for ensuring that all unauthorised absences are followed up.
- Principal monitors attendance frequently and feeds back progress on attendance at every BOM meeting and to parents in the monthly newsletter.
- Parents are encouraged to bring their children to school every day and are regularly reminded through newsletters welcome meetings that good attendance is paramount. They are also encouraged to use the Connect app to record reasons for their child's absence.

Communication with Parents/Guardians:

- Good communication with parents/guardians is key to encouraging good attendance
- By consulting with parents/guardians when reviewing policies the aim is to promote a high-level of co-operation among the school community. Please see our Positive Communications policy.
- The calendar for each coming school year is published on the school website. 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.
- The school also informs all parents of the implications of non-attendance as per the Education Welfare Act, 2000. This information is given to parents each year during the Welcome Meeting. Specific reference is made to the consequences of long absences on children's progress in language acquisition and general academic progress, and also the implications it can have on children's wellbeing. Children can become unsettled and find it difficult to readapt to their class situation after a long absence.

Punctuality

School begins at 8.55 am. All pupils and staff are expected to be on time

- It is the responsibility of the class teacher to maintain a record of children who arrive late to school, leave school early or are collected late. This should be recorded on Aladdin.
- At 8:55 the yard gates will be locked and children will have to enter through the main doors to the school. They will only enter the school building at 9:00 and will be marked late on Aladdin.
- A child will be recorded as being late to school if they arrive after 9:00 am.
- Parents/guardians must provide a note if a child departs early during the school day. These notes can be left in pupils' journals, kept in pupils' files as appropriate or noted in the early collections book at the office.
- Where teachers see a pattern of poor punctuality emerging, they should bring this to the attention of parents/guardians at an early stage.
- If there is still no improvement in punctuality then a letter should be sent home notifying parents/guardians of the issue.
- If punctuality continues to be an issue then teachers should bring the issue to the attention of the Principal / Special Duties teacher

Keeping records of Absences:

- The roll is taken each morning at 9:30 am. A bell is rung to remind all staff to take the roll. Any child arriving after 11.00 will be marked absent. Any child who came through the front doors will be marked as late.
- Parents will be informed of their responsibilities concerning school attendance during the initial welcome meetings and throughout the year via the website and newsletters. They will be requested to provide written explanations for all absences from school, regardless of the length or nature of the absence or provide reasons via the connect app.
- For all pupils, the main means of communication about absences between home and school is the Aladdin Schools App. The School Homework Journal can also be a means of providing reasons for their child's absence for 2nd – 6th class and a written note for infants and 1st class.
- Notes written in Homework Journals can be left in the journal.
- Individual notes and other written communication around attendance, such as Medical Certificates and other explanations for student absences should be kept in the pupil files. These will be retained for possible inspection by the National Educational Welfare Officer.
- When a child is marked absent on Aladdin, teachers should ensure that they enter the reasons for the absence in the appropriate section, (i.e. under Edit Absence Reasons tab) as soon as that information becomes available. This allows teachers to categorise the absence, such as Unexplained, Illness, Urgent family reason etc. This information will form part of the reporting procedure to the Educational Welfare Services section of the Tusla - Child and Family Agency
- Letters will be sent home, drawing parents' attention to poor attendance, after 10 and 20 days absence
- If a child misses school and a written explanation is not sent in, the class teacher must contact parents to obtain a reason.
- Each class teacher has a responsibility to monitor the attendance of the children in their care. Teachers should be aware of emerging patterns concerning poor attendance.

What to do when a child reaches 10 days absence:

- It is school policy that when a child has been absent for 10 days the class teacher emails his/her parents notifying them of the absence. Teachers will also record 10 days absence on the attendance log
- A sample letter is attached and is saved on google drive in the attendance folder

(See appendix 2)

What to do when a child reaches 20 days of absence

- It is school policy that when a child has been absent for 20 days the class teacher emails his/her parents notifying them of the absence.
- Teachers will also record 20 days absence on the attendance log
- A sample letter is attached and is saved on google drive in the attendance folder

(See appendix 3)

- When a child has been absent for 20 days we notify the Educational Welfare Services section of Tusla - Child and Family Agency

- The School has no discretion over handing this information on to Tusla – Child and Family Agency, regardless of the reason for absence.
- However, Tusla – Child and Family Agency will take account of absences due to illness, bereavement or other such circumstances
- There are four periods during the year when we are obliged to report information to Tusla – Child and Family Agency. Class teachers will be responsible for providing information on these absences. Additionally, Tusla – Child and Family Agency request an Annual Report at the end of each school year.

Procedures for Serious Absences

- Where teachers see a pattern of poor attendance emerging, they should bring this to the attention of parents at an early stage: poor attendance patterns are more easily changed if attention is drawn to them at an early stage.
- The Educational Welfare Act, 2000 requires schools to notify the Educational Welfare Services section of the Child and Family Agency (Tusla) of pupils who have been absent for 20 days and who are aged over 6 years of age.
- However, in Citywest & Saggart CNS, we monitor the attendance patterns of children from when they start school in Junior Infants, and we will inform the Tusla – Child and Family Agency of such absences, to seek to address the matter and deal with it as early as possible in the child's school career.
- The class teacher in conjunction with the school will follow a series of progressive steps, as per EWS Pre-Referral Checklist, when they are concerned about a pupil's attendance (A PDF copy of the checklist is saved on google drive and each member of staff has a copy in their attendance folder.)
- If an 'at risk' pupil is identified then the class teacher will complete the Pre-Referral Checklist.
- 'At risk' pupils can be categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in 20 days without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians.
- Where the School has cause for concern over a pupil's attendance for whatever reason and despite all efforts at resolution made at school level and in collaboration with the home a formal written and signed Referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Service.

Identifying 'at risk' pupils:

- While actively reviewing attendance patterns of children in their care, teachers should be vigilant so that 'at risk' pupils are identified early
- 'At risk' pupils can be categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in 20 days without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians.
- When this occurs, teachers should follow the steps outlined under the Procedures for Serious Absences section above

Reporting Absenteeism to Educational Welfare Services (EWS)

Since the inception of the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000 schools are obliged to report on school attendance. The post holder is responsible for these reports. The following reports will be submitted:

Student Absence Report:

This report is submitted four times each year on those students falling within the following criteria:

- a student has been absent from school for a cumulative total of twenty days or more
- a student's name is to be removed from the school register for any reason
- a student has been suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days
- the school has expelled a student
- a principal is concerned about a student's attendance

Annual Attendance Report (AAR)

The Annual Attendance Report is submitted at the end of each academic year and provides information on levels of attendance. Schools are required to provide the following data in the AAR:

- The total number of days lost through student absence in the entire school year.
- The total number of students who were absent for 20 days or more during the school year.
- The total number of students expelled in respect of whom all appeal processes have been exhausted or not availed of during the school year.
- The total number of students who were suspended for any number of days during the school year.

Transfer to another School / Communication with Other Schools

Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Principal of a child's current school must notify the Principal of the child's previous school that the child is now registered in their school.

When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere he/she must notify the Principal of the pupil's new school of any problems concerning attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second-level education.

Communication with other Schools

- When a child transfers from Citywest & Saggart CNS to another school, the school's records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer
- When a child transfers into Citywest & Saggart CNS confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from Citywest & Saggart CNS to a post-primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment

The school will also follow the four steps to update POD as per Circular 0033_2015

Strategies to Promote and Support Good Attendance

Citywest & Saggart CNS strives for excellence in education by providing children with a curriculum that is differentiated, engaging and exciting. Staff use many different learning methodologies to open the

pathways to learning for all children. Citywest & Saggart CNS prides itself on using the latest teaching methodologies, innovative pedagogical practices and child-centred approaches to teaching all of which encourage children to want to come to school.

As a school, we track class attendance every month.

- The class with the highest collective percentage attendance each month from the Junior and Senior school are allowed to wear their own clothes to school on the last Friday of the month.
- The winning junior class receives 'Attendance Bear' for the month to stay in their class and the winning senior class receives an attendance trophy.
- The results for best attendance each month are visible on the attendance display on the ground floor of the school
- Winning classes are also acknowledged and their achievements celebrated in the monthly newsletter.
- At the end of the year, children will be recognised for their attendance achievements. Teachers should be cognisant of children who may have missed periods of school due illness etc.

End of Year Procedures

At the end of the school year, each teacher will review the attendance patterns of the class for the year. The attendance of each pupil will be reported to parents/guardians as a percentage on their child's report card.

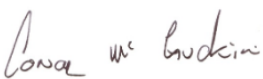

Success Criteria

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar Rolla records and statistical returns
- Happy children who want to come to school
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Implementation/Ratification and Review

This policy will be reviewed on a three-year basis or when required.

Signed:  (Chairperson) Date: 21 st April 2020	Signed:  (Principal) Date: 21 st April 2020

Appendix – Citywest & Saggart Attendance Strategy



Template for the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

Name of school	Citywest & Saggart CNS
Address	Fortunestown Lane Citywest Dublin 24
Roll Number	20398U
The school's vision and values in relation to attendance	The characteristic spirit of our school is one which promotes the values of Excellence in Education, Care and Community. We acknowledge that to provide the highest quality education and ensure each child is cared for, the children must be at school to experience this. Thus, the importance of the attendance strategy.
The school's high expectations around attendance	Citywest & Saggart CNS strives for excellence in education by providing children with a curriculum that is differentiated, engaging and exciting. Staff use many different learning methodologies to open the pathways to learning for all children. Citywest & Saggart CNS prides itself on using the latest teaching methodologies, innovative pedagogical practices and child-centred approaches to teaching all of which encourage children to want to come to school.
How attendance will be monitored	<p>Attendance</p> <p>The Special Duties post holder will monitor attendance every month.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff are responsible for taking the roll daily at 9:30 and recording all children who enter the classroom after 9:00 as late • An electronic copy of Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) is on Aladdin • At the end of each month a hard copy of that months Leabhar Tinrimh is printed by The post holder signed by Principal and filed. • All staff are responsible for tracking those children who have been absent for 10 days or more. • Teachers send letters home to those children who have missed 10/ 20 days of school. (letters on Google Drive) • All staff will record on Google doc children who have missed 10/ 20 days each term. (Doc on google drive) • Principal and The post holder monitor these children closely <p>Punctuality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 8.55 all gates are locked and children have to enter the school through the front door. • The principal opens the front door at 9:00 and children are recorded as late on Aladdin.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punctuality is monitored closely by all class teachers Children who are frequently late will be spoken to by the class teacher • The importance of punctuality will be reinforced to them and their child's learning time missed will be shown to them in minute/ hours.
<p>Summary of the main elements of the school's approach to attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target setting and targets • The whole-school approach • Promoting good attendance • Responding to poor attendance 	<p>Citywest & Saggart CNS strives for excellence in Education and we understand to achieve this, children need to have good attendance.</p> <p>Target Setting and Targets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a school, we are trying to improve on last year's attendance. Each month we look at previous year's attendance for that particular month and try to improve on it. • Previous year's attendance is visible on attendance display with this year's percentage next to it <p>Whole School Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A whole-school approach is taken to attendance at Citywest & Saggart CNS. • Staff are all briefed in September on school expectations for attendance and are shown how to use Aladdin (the programme used to take roll) • At the end of each month staff are sent an email reminding them to check for those children who may have missed 10/ 20 days of school and emails are then sent to these parents. • Staff also fill in a google doc on the drive with the names of those children who have missed 10/20 days to allow these children to be closely monitored. <p>Promoting Good Attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a school, we track class attendance monthly. The best class from the Junior and Senior school are allowed to wear their own clothes to school on the last Friday of the month. • The winning junior class receives 'Attendance Bear' for the month to stay in their class and the winning senior class receives an attendance trophy. • The results for best attendance each month are visible on the attendance display on the ground floor of the school • Winning classes are also acknowledged and their achievements celebrated in the monthly newsletter. • At the end of each term children with 100% attendance receive a certificate • At the end of the year, those children who have achieved 100% will receive an attendance medal. <p>Since beginning the attendance drive in November, attendance increased in comparison to the same time last year. At Citywest & Saggart CNS, teachers strive to provide children with exciting and engaging learning experiences that are differentiated and cater for all learning styles to ensure that all children are excited about learning and want to come to school. We also provide a wide and varied range of after schools programme for both the Infants and the Senior children.</p> <p>Responding to Poor attendance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Aladdin Connect' app is used by parents to record absenteeism. If any child returns to school and reasons for absence are not on Aladdin teachers will follow up

	<p>with parents either face to face or through a phone call to clarify the reasons for their child's absence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For 10/ 20 days parents will receive a letter home outlining that any child who misses 20 days or more their details will be forwarded to the Child Welfare Board. • 10/20-day absences are recorded on a google doc
School roles in relation to attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The post holder monitors attendance every month at a whole school level. • Class teachers monitor class attendance daily. • Principal monitors attendance frequently and feeds back progress on attendance at every BOM meeting. • Parents are encouraged to bring their children to school every day and are regularly reminded through newsletters welcome meetings that good attendance is paramount.
Partnership arrangements (parents, students, other schools, youth and community groups)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent channels of communication with parents are essential for encouraging good attendance Facebook, twitter, newsletters, welcome meetings etc. • A Calendar for each school year is published annually in June and is available on the website to help parents/ guardians plan family holidays/ events • When a child transfers from Citywest & Saggart CNS to another school, the schools' records on attendance, academic progress etc. will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer • When a child transfers into Citywest & Saggart CNS confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought • Pupils transferring from Citywest & Saggart CNS to a post-primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment • The school will also follow the four steps to update POD as per Circular 0033_2015 • All after school groups have a roll of children attending their class and take a roll at the beginning of each session.
How the Statement of Strategy will be monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statement will be monitored closely and will be reviewed annually. • Principal staff, children and parents will be involved in the review process to ensure that the policy we have in is the most effective in ensuring best attendance for the children of Citywest & Saggart CNS.
Review process and date for review	October 2020
The date the Statement of Strategy was approved by the Board of Management	13.2.20
The date the Statement of Strategy submitted to Tusla	14.2.20

