

School Attendance for Parents Frequently Asked Questions

Section A: Attendance

1. What are the times that are important for me to note?

School opens for drop off: 8.45am

Classes commence: 8.55am

Infant classes finish: 1.35pm

1st – 6th class finish: 2.35pm

2. What is the role of the parent in relation to school attendance?

Parents and guardians of children aged 6*-16 have a **legal obligation** to ensure that their child attends school. Each child has a Right to Education and all the legislation and practice in this area is in order to protect this right.

3. Why is it important for my child to attend school each day?

Apart from the fast pace of our curriculum and the importance of being present for the high quality instruction of the curriculum, there are many social and emotional benefits from attending school each day. The interactions and learning opportunities obtained at school are difficult to mirror elsewhere.

4. What is considered 'Regular attendance patterns'?

Approximately 80% of children in a school should miss less than 10 school days in a year. (According to TUSLA and the DES)

5. What happens if my child cannot attend school?

You must inform the school through the Aladdin Connect App. The school is legally obliged to collect the reasons for absences. The reason can be put on Aladdin Connect either prior to or after the absence.

6. What constitutes 'too ill' for attending school?

The average child will have between 6 – 12 days of illness during a **calendar year**. You as a parent will know your child best. However, the following may be of use to you:

- Fever over 38° C
- The child may have a contagious illness or rash.
- The child is not well enough to **meaningfully** participate in class
- The illness poses health and safety risk to the child and/or others in the school.

The infographic below will guide you with absences due to illness.

WHEN SHOULD MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL/ CHILDCARE?				
Chicken Pox When scabs are dry	Conjunctivitis No need to stay out*	Diarrhoea or Vomiting 48 hours after the last episode	Flu 5 days after start of illness	Glandular Fever No need to stay out*
Hand, foot & mouth No need to stay out*	Head Lice No need to stay out*	Impetigo When scabs are dry or 24 hours after starting antibiotics	Measles 4 days after rash appears	Mumps 5 days after swelling appears
Scabies After first treatment	Scarlet Fever 24 hours after starting antibiotics	Slapped Cheek No need to stay out*	Threadworms No need to stay out*	Whooping Cough 5 days after starting antibiotics or 21 days after start of illness
This information is based on the Management of Infectious Diseases in Schools guidance document.			*No need to stay out if child is well but school or childcare provider should be informed.	

7. How much detail should I give on the absence?

Aladdin Connect will prompt you to choose a reason. You can choose to add more detail if you wish. The following are the most common reasons that would need to be input:

- a) Illness
- b) Urgent family reason
- c) Other (We require a written note with this reason)
- d) Holiday

8. We need to take a holiday abroad for a number of weeks during the school term, is that ok?

We cannot endorse children missing school time for holidays. We release the school calendar as early as possible to allow for families to plan holidays away. The school year is 182 days long which leaves 183 days for breaks away.

9. Do I need to apply for leave/write a letter requesting time off for my child?

No. You enter the reasons on Aladdin connect as with other absences. We do, however, like when we are given some notice if a child will be absent for a period of time.

10. Will the class teacher be giving school work to my child while they are out of school?

If a child is absent with an illness, they should focus on recovery and rest. Sending work home would not be meaningful if they are unwell. We will not be providing work for children who are taken out for non-essential reasons.

11. Can I get support from the school?

Of course! We consistently analyse attendance patterns. When a child reaches a certain number of days missed, the class teacher may start an Attendance Action Plan with you. This will outline what supports and goals can be reached together to improve the attendance of the child at school.

Section B: Punctuality/Early Collections

1. Why is important for my child to be on time for school?

The first few minutes of the school day are very important! During this time, the teacher does a check-in with each child, they get their class timetables set up for the day and get the children settled. As adults, we know how difficult it can be to walk into something that has already begun. There is an old Irish phrase '*Tús maith, leath na hoibre*' (Pronounced Tuce moh, lah nu hibr-e). This means, a good start is half the work!

2. What happens if my child is late for school?

We understand that your child may be late **on occasion** due to weather, traffic, appointments etc. Each morning after 8.55, the doors must close to allow teachers to return to classrooms. Children who arrive late will need to come to the front office where a staff member will greet them. We wait for a number of minutes to allow all children to arrive together. We often speak to the children about the importance of arriving on time, particularly the older children who walk to school on their own.

3. What happens if my child is late often for school?

This can cause an issue for children and we have seen instances where poor punctuality has resulted in emotional dysregulation and low mood in children. We monitor patterns of punctuality and will call parents for meetings where we feel there is an ongoing pattern of such to develop an improvement plan.

4. What should I do if I know my child will be late?

Please let us know in advance, either via the Aladdin Connect App or by email.

5. What are the procedures for collecting my child early from school?

Please inform us by the Aladdin Connect App, by email or by phone of the exact time you will be collecting your child. When collecting your child, you will need to sign them out at the office with the date, time, person collecting and the reason.

6. What happens if my child is collected early often?

As with attendance and punctuality, we analyse patterns of early collections. The class teacher will contact you if there is a pattern of your child missing significant amounts of school time due to early collections. The end of the day can be just as important as the start and children are often disappointed when they have to leave an activity half completed or leave an activity that they are enjoying.

Section C: Reporting Procedures

1. What reporting does the school have to do?

The school is legally obliged to report figures to Tusla on a number of occasions during the school year. This is the number of children who have missed a large number of school days. The principal also reports to the Board of Management on school attendance and the Attendance Strategy.

2. Are there any other reporting mechanisms that the school uses?

On some occasions, where the school is concerned about the number of days a child is missing or would potentially miss, they can make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) in the area. The Education Welfare officer may visit your home and meet with the school with a view to improving the attendance of your child at school. The EWO will also **support** you if you are having difficulty getting your child to school.

3. Why do we receive letters from the school when my child misses 10 or 20 days?

The school **legally** must notify the parents/guardians of children when they meet particular thresholds of absence. The 10 day letter is meant as a notice and reminder of the number of days missed. The 20 day letter sets out the school's legal obligations under the Education Welfare Act (2000).

4. What happens if my child misses 20 days of school?

20 days equates to 10% of their school year or 1 month of school which is a significant amount of time. The school must legally make a summary report to TUSLA regarding children who miss 20 days. Very often, there will be good reasons for a child not being in school and these will be taken into account if they are explained to the school. At this point, the teacher and principal may get in contact to develop an action plan.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

TIPS FOR PARENTS BY PARENTS

**Don't give in!
Follow through.**

**Be organised! Get everything
ready from the night before. Have
their coats and bags at the door,
their lunch made and their clothes
on the banisters.**

**Treat it like a military
operation in the
morning!**

**Don't give them a
choice to stay at
home.**

**Give yourself 15
minutes before the
kids get up.**

**No TV, iPad or
phones allowed in
the morning.**

**Keep talking about
the importance of
school.**

**Early to bed the night
before school, especially
after holidays.**

**Come back to school
after doctor/ dentist
appointments.**

**Know how many
days your child has
missed in school.**

TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um
Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

CYPSC
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEE
Dublin City North

Thank you to the parents who gave their time to help with this leaflet.

WHAT HELPS IF YOU ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY GETTING YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL

Nip it in bud
early.

Be tough and
don't give up.

Reach out for help.
Talk to the school.

Every child is
different: Find out the
cause.

Some children want
to leave school early
but don't give them an
option. Stick it out!

Know how
many days
your child has
missed.

WHO CAN HELP

Class teacher/ Year Head

Principal

Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Coordinator

School Completion Programme

Educational Welfare Officer

Educational Welfare Service Helpline: 01 7718815

www.tusla.ie

For further information on services in your area, check out www.dublincypscdirectory.ie

or Dublin City North CYPSC on www.cypsc.ie

