

**Holy Family Junior School
Aughnaharna, Portlaoise**

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY & STRATEGY

The aims of the *Attendance Policy in Holy Family Junior School* are:

- (1) To encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
- (2) To share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
- (3) To inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Act.
- (4) To identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- (5) To ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
- (6) To develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- (7) To 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 encouraged to inform the school of reasons for absences.
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
1)The Education Welfare Officer 2)The Board of Management

Punctuality

School is open from 8.50 a.m. and children are required to be in their classrooms not later than 9.10 a.m. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late.

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.

Reasons for pupils’ absences should be communicated by parents/guardians to the school. This can be done orally or in writing and can be then recorded by the teacher. Alternatively, parents will have the opportunity to record the reason through Aladdin Connect.

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 approve of school attendance;
- Discussing planned absences with the school.
- Refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- Encouraging children to participate in school activities.
- 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, particularly children in Infant Classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Holy Family Junior School 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 childrens' individual needs.
- The school will promote development of positive self-concept and self-worth in the children.
- Supports for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with DE&S guidelines.
- Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
- Aladdin Connect can notify parents of their child's absence and request an explanation.
- We encourage children to come to school before/after dentist/medical appointments.
- The assistance & support of the Education Welfare Officer is utilised in particular for 'at risk' families.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, who will notify the Principal regularly 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 e.g. phone calls home, discussion with pupil, meetings with parents/guardians, specific support with a target teacher
- We encourage late arrivals and before and after appointments rather than absenteeism etc.

The School Principal is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Informing the Education Welfare Officer:
 - 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.
- Informing parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil. The school will generally contact parents regarding concerns around their behavior after 15 / 20 absence.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff

The Class Teacher is responsible for:

- Maintaining the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
- Keeping a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Keeping a record of 'Late Arrivals' (i.e. 20 mins or later)
- Contacting parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing.
- Encouraging pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Informing the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

Record/Communication

Subject to the restrictions of GDPR, attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

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First Ratified by the Board of Management on _____

Signed:Msgr John Byrne, Chairperson BoM