

St Joseph's National School Cong

Attendance Policy

2025

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every two years.

Parents will receive this policy at the time of enrolment along with the Code of Behaviour Policy among a suite of other policies.

This policy will be available to view on the school website and parents of children already in the school will be made aware of its updating and adoption.

Ratification of Policy

This policy was reviewed/updated by the board of management of Cong N.S. on the following date: 5th Feb 2025

Signature of Chairperson: James McShane F. John Conall

Signature of Principal: Michael Kenny

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Introduction – Guiding Principles

This policy wishes to promote the value for all pupils attending St Joseph's of having an excellent attendance record that extends from infants right through to senior years.

Aims:

- To foster an appreciation of learning by having good attendance practices.
- To comply with requirements under Education Welfare Act 2000
- To raise awareness of the importance of good school attendance.
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- To enhance the learning environment where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.

Definition of and promotion of Attendance

Definition of Attendance:

“A parent is obliged to cause a child between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend at ‘a national school or other suitable school’ on each day that the school is open for instruction.” Education Welfare Act 2000

- A child is expected to attend each day.
- Non-attendance is recorded in the roll book on the Aladdin System.
- The category of absence is also identified.
- A note is provided by parents explaining the absence in accordance with the Education Act 1998.
- If a child misses a half day a verbal or written explanation is required.
- For prolonged absences teachers will endeavour to contact the parents to establish the reason for the absence.

Promoting Attendance:

Under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2005, parents are responsible for making sure their child receives an education. In this regard, the Board of Management of Cong N.S. has high expectations regarding attendance and punctuality. Children are encouraged to attend school each day and the promotion of attendance is outlined below.

- We promote attendance through ongoing praise.
- Class teacher will highlight good attendance in the classroom.
- Principal will highlight good attendance at termly assemblies
- Specific attendance certificates may be offered to particular children to encourage attendance
- At the end of the school report, children’s level of attendance is identified for the year.
- At the initial meeting of parents of any new pupils, the “Don’t Let Your Child Miss Out” leaflet will be distributed.
- To promote positive attendance for younger pupils, activities/games are held first thing in the morning.
- With older pupils’ regular discussions will occur about attendance and the importance of punctuality.

Procedures in relation to the Removal from Register/Transfer from another school:

The school is aware that *'A principal may only remove a pupil's name from a school register where they have been informed that the child has been enrolled in another school or when the Welfare Board notifies them that the child has been registered by it as in receipt of out-of-school education.'*

The Board of Management may in exceptional circumstances suspend a child. (see Code of Behaviour)

Transfer to another school:

Where parents remove a child from a school the principal is obliged to give them and the new school a certificate stating child's record of attendance and absences in the school, the last class the child attended, and any other relevant information pertaining to the education of the child.

Transfer into St Joseph's school:

When St. Joseph's receives a new student, the principal will notify the principal of the child's last school attended that the child is now registered in our school, as soon as it appropriate and possible.

When a principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere, they are obliged to notify the principal of the pupil's new school of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil's former school and of such matters relating to the child's educational progress as they consider appropriate.

Communication

Responsibilities of School staff

➤ Monitoring attendance

The Aladdin system is used to monitor attendance by class teachers, categories such as the following are used: illness, unexplained, holidays, urgent family reasons. The Board of Management acknowledges that there are cases where a child has a genuine reason for absenteeism, including; illness, urgent family reasons, however when parents/guardians fail to log or send in a note to the class teacher to explain an absence, the absence will be reported 'unexplained'.

➤ School staff will utilize the following strategies:

- The Class teacher will talk to the parent about the matter should the need arise, and remind them of their statutory duty to ensure that their child attends school.
- When a child has missed 15 days, the school will email parents highlighting poor attendance and encourage improvement. **Appendix 1**
- If there is still no improvement the class teacher will have a further discussion.
- If there is still no improvement, principal will formally meet parent(s)/guardians to find out why this is happening on a regular basis, and work together to resolve the matter.
- Túsla are informed of any child who has missed 20 days or more. The Education Welfare Officer and Principal will work together to support families of children with particularly poor attendance.
- An email is sent to parents when pupils have missed 20 days or more. **Appendix 1**
- All attendance is reported in the end of year school reports to parents.

Responsibilities of Parents/guardians

➤ Absence of a Pupil

Tusla and the Board of Management of Cong N.S. advise that parents do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. Holidays should be taken during the allocated holiday time as outlined in the school calendar.

➤ Removal of a Pupil during the School Day

Pupils are expected to remain in school for a full school day. For the purposes of maintaining high levels of attendance, as is the purpose of this policy, pupils should only be removed early from school in cases of emergency or unavoidable medical appointments.

Aims:

- To highlight the importance of remaining in school for a full school day
- To ensure the safety by having all visitors/parents report to the school office
- To ensure the accountability of all pupils during any emergency evacuations

Action:

1. *Unavoidable medical appointments / Withdrawing a sick child from school*

If a pupil needs to leave early for an unavoidable medical appointment, a note should be sent in beforehand from his/her parents or if this happens at school the secretary will firstly ring the parent and if uncontactable, will ring the emergency contact number. A regular update of contact details may be necessary to ensure all are current. When collecting the child, the parent should report to the school office and the child will be accompanied out by a parent or staff member. *In keeping with child protection and best practice - no child will be allowed to leave the school with any other adult other than his/her parent unless a note / phonecall has been received beforehand naming the person who is collecting child*

2. *Arriving late to school due to medical appointment or emergency*

Our school day begins at 8.50am. If a child has a medical, dental or unavoidable morning appointment, a note should be sent in beforehand from his/her parents to alert the teacher. The school roll is taken daily before 10.30am. After that time arrivals are recorded as 'late' on the Aladdin System.

3. *Emergencies*

The parent should ring the school en-route and explain the situation. The secretary can then have the child collected from the class and ready to meet the parent.

No child will be allowed to leave the school with any other adult other than his/her parent. Except in exceptional cases, where, the child will only be released to an immediate family member known to the Principal & staff, as named as the Emergency Contact person.

➤ Punctuality

School begins at 8:50am. All pupils and staff members are expected to be on time.

The Principal will contact with or meet with the parents of children who are continually late to discuss strategies to improve punctuality. If following school intervention & strategies punctuality does not improve, the principal will report the case to the Education Welfare Officer for further intervention and action.

A copy of the policy will be given to members of staff, Board of Management, and made available to parents to view in the school and will be available on our website.

Appendix 1

Letter template for Pupils missing 15 and 20 days

15 Days Absence

Dear Parents,

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify Túsla if a child is absent for 20 days or more, or where a child's absence gives rise to concern.

It is the school's policy to inform parents by letter of children's absences, when these absences are 15 days or more. While we understand that children may be absent due to illness or bereavement, we are just bringing the number of absent days to your attention.

This letter is to inform you that our records show that _____
has been absent from school on ____ days.

One of the factors ensuring success in education is regular school attendance and habits of attendance are set in the early years of schooling. Hence it is a policy of Cong National School to encourage children to attend school every day. Parents can help to develop a positive attitude to school attendance by encouraging children to come to school every day and also by ensuring that all absences are explained in writing. Our Attendance policy is available to view on our website www.congns.ie.

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Kenny
Principal

Ciara King
Deputy Principal

20 Days Absence

Dear Parents,

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify Túsla if a child is absent for 20 days or more, or where a child's absence gives rise to concern.

It is the school's policy to inform parents by letter of children's absences. You will have already received a letter when your child reached 15 days or more. While we understand that children may be absent due to illness or bereavement, we are legally obliged to report all absences of 20 days or more to Túsla. Following your notes, the categories of absence have also been recorded and Túsla may examine this data further.

This letter is to inform you that our records show that _____
has been absent from school on ____ days.

One of the factors ensuring success in education is regular school attendance and habits of attendance are set in the early years of schooling. Hence it is a policy of Cong National School to encourage children to attend school every day. Parents can help to develop a positive attitude to school attendance by encouraging children to come to school every day and also by ensuring that all absences are explained in writing. Our Attendance policy is available to view on our website www.glencullenschool.ie.

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Kenny
Principal

Ciara King
Deputy Principal

