



Mount Anville Montessori Junior School



Attendance Procedures and Practices, September 2014.

Introduction

The redrafting was a collaborative school process involving staff and Board of Management, following initial drafting by a representative group.

Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of a revised policy can be summarized as follows:

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
- The role of Túsla (formerly National education Welfare Board)
- Levels of disadvantage
- Changing attitudes to education.

Aims and Objectives

Attendance focuses on:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- encouraging full attendance where possible
- identifying pupils at risk
- promoting a positive learning environment
- enabling learning opportunities to be availed of
- raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- fostering an appreciation of learning
- identify pupils where their attendance needs improvement

- ensuring compliance with the requirements of relevant legislation and Túsła requirements
- developing links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems
- Encouraging attendance at Mount Anville Montessori Junior School

School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff have an input into the implementation of our current procedures and practices with regard to attendance. Class teachers and the Welcome Officer record individual patterns of attendance and our Administrator co-ordinates the documentation for the Túsła Returns on an annual basis.

Punctuality, Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla and electronically on Aladdin for each class on a daily basis.

School begins at 8.50am. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in Aladdin, together with information provided in enrolment forms and the annual Emergency Form (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, Religion, Parents'/Guardians' Names, E-mail, Emergency Contacts, Allergies).

Procedure for Daily Attendance

- The class teachers takes two registers every day. A hard copy roll book and the electronic register on a system called Aladdin. Generally these registers are taken by 9:30 each morning.

- If a pupil is absent, the teacher selects the reason from the drop down box on Aladdin. The teacher will follow-up with the student for a note from home identifying the reason for the absence however if the teacher does not know the reason for the absence, they mark the reason as 'Unexplained' on Aladdin.
- The Welcome Office has access to all Aladdin registers. All parents understand that they need to communicate to the Welcome Office if their son/daughter is absent for any reason. They can send a message by text, phone or email. Once the messages start to come in, the Welcome Office notes these on Aladdin.
- The Welcome Office periodically checks the register throughout the day and follow up texts are sent to parents/guardians that has not communication the reason for their child's absence. Generally by the end of the day, the Welcome Office has a full list of the pupils that are absent and the reason for their absence.
- If a pupil arrives late to school; either the Welcome Office or the class teacher will change the status on Aladdin to reflect this, if there is a note. If the Welcome Office receives a text in the morning to say a pupil will be late to school this is noted on Aladdin.

Pupils Leaving Early

In order to leave early, a pupil must have a written note or the Welcome Office needs to be informed. The Welcome Office then informs the teacher. The meeting point for early collections for 3rd to 6th class is the Welcome Office. Parents are not permitted to go directly to the classroom. All other children are collected from the classroom.

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of Túsla/NEWB particularly, relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. They are notified on the end-of-year report card in May the total number of absences during the school year. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern is discussed at Parent/Teacher meetings and the Principal will issue a letter by post to parents/guardians that absences are near to 20 days and informed of the school's concerns.

Túsla (formerly the National Education Welfare Board)

The school must inform Túsla on an annual basis of all the pupil's attendance numbers through their review documentation including The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child has missed more than 20 days.

Túsla asks school Principal to complete form R2

- Timetable, hours, annual days
- Total enrolment
- Teaching staff and qualifications
- Detailed learning programmes/curricula/provision
- Details about how progress is being monitored

Aladdin School Programme

The Aladdin Schools Programme was introduced in the school in September 2014. This system replaced our Data Base and Administration system designed by Aisling Technology.

The Aladdin system has streamlined our Administration system including our Database, Attendance, and Communication to parents – i.e. texting and emailing, Waiting Lists and Report Cards to parents.

There are different levels of authorised users on the system. E.g. Administrator, Teacher etc. Each user has a user name and password. Only Administrator has access to amend the Data base and create new data base entries. Other designated staff members have special access to special areas – e.g. Welcome Office has access to Attendance and Money

Data Base

The Aladdin system has the full family record for each pupil – child’s name , DOB, names and addresses of parents, phone, email and emergency numbers plus a flag alert for medical conditions. This is updated each year from the emergency forms. Siblings are linked on the system.

Staff details are also recorded on the Database.

Attendance

Each day the class teacher completes the roll for her class. Where a pupil is absent we have the facility to record the reason when advised by the parent. Where a pupil is absent and we have not received an excuse the Welcome Office will make contact with the parents. We have a clear report of the number of pupils absent on any given day and graphs to monitor the trends. The

record of each day absent is on the pupil's record on Aladdin and the school gets a warning when 20 days have been exceeded. The record of the number of days absent is used to complete the annual return to TUSLA. If a pupil is late this is also recorded and held on the pupil's record.

Communication to Parents and Staff

All formal communication by text or email to parents goes out via the Aladdin system from the Secretary/Administrator's office. A record of all communication is held on the pupil's record. Communication to parents can be sent to an individual, class or all families in the school and all staff.

Report Cards

Report Cards are generated on Aladdin for each pupil in the school. 1st – 6th class use the NCCA report card adapted for their particular class and the Montessori Classes have a similar report card adapted to suit the reporting needs of their class. All reports are filled in electronically and once completed by the teacher, approved by the Principal are then printed and posted to parents. A copy of the report card remains on the student's record on Aladdin and is available for teachers to look back on when a pupil moves forward.

Test Results

Sigma T and Drumcondra Test Results for 1st – 6th class are recorded each year on the Aladdin system and then are automatically filled in on the school report. All test results remain on the students records. Trends /changes on results are also clearly visible.

Waiting List

All Application forms requesting places in the school are recorded on the Aladdin system on an "Intake List" – this list is then used to enrol new pupils each year in summer. The intake lists has all contact details for the pupil and is filed in the order of the year and class of entry.

Archive

Before introduction of the Aladdin system the school did not have a clear electronic record of pupils who left the school or moved forward to the Senior Sch. Now on the Aladdin system pupils who leave the school go into an 'Archive' file which includes correspondence sent by text email and report cards and test results which are all very easily accessible.

Money Collections

Where it is necessary to collect money within the school for example for buses/school trips or swimming a record of payment may be made using the Aladdin system

Promoting Attendance

The school promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Timetabling Morning Sport for pupils from 3rd to 6th class
- The school choir and percussion are hosted at 8am each week
- Language programme is timetabled for 20 weeks a year with a variety of languages
- ensuring children are happy
- Welcoming pupils and parents as they enter the school grounds
- displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early
- rewarding good attendance at sports on a class basis at Friday assembly.
- endeavors to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians.
- provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.
- the staff remains vigilant so that 'at risk' students are identified early.

New entrants have an indication meeting with the principal/deputy principal, a booklet is presented to parents, identifying the important 'healthy attendance'. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits with all class levels.

Our homework policy, drawn up in consultation with parents/guardians, clearly outlines the school's expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.

The calendar for the coming school year is published on our website and up-dated regularly. It is hoped that the issuing of the school year, co-ordinated with the Secondary School 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.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will provide a sandwich and a drink.

Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned' to attend school on each school day.

Section 21 of the Act obliges schools to inform Túsla if a child is absent on more than 20 days

Transfer to Another School or Mount Anville Secondary School

Under Section 20 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), the Administrator on behalf of 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 in relation to 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.

The school maintains communication with Mount Anville secondary School in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

- Tours around the school
- Question & answer session with 6th class pupils and the teachers from the Secondary
- The Chaplin from the Secondary School and 5th year students host a 5 week programme with 6th class pupils
- At Open Day, the pupils and parents are invited to join tours of the Secondary School
- MAMJ and the Secondary have communal function rooms: The Atrium, St Anne's Hall and the Concert Hall

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 good school attendance
- discussing planned absences with the school
- refraining, if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time
- showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- encouraging parents to participate in school activities
- praising and encouraging their children's achievements
- instilling in their children a positive self-concept and a positive sense of self-worth
- informing the school in writing of the reasons for absence from school
- 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 junior classes, are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Practices and Procedures is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Aladdin
- Happy confident well adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

Implementation and Review

Attendance Practice and Procedures has been review and improved with a whole school system, Aladdin being implemented since September 2014. The School has developed current practices since the introduction of Aladdin and will continue improvement on a needs basis or as legislation changes.