ATTENDANCE POLICY

2026

Introduction

This Attendance Policy was a collaborative school process, involving teachers, staff, parent representatives, the Principal and the Board of Management.

Rationale

The main factors contributing to the formulation of the policy can be summarised as follows:

- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning.
- To conform to legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act 1998.
- To recognise the role of the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) - TUSLA and Education Welfare Officers (EWO)
- Levels of disadvantage
- Maintain very good attendance amongst our students
- Changing attitudes to education
- reluctance school attendance.

Aims and Objectives

The policy is geared towards:

- Ensuring compliance with the Enrolment Policy of Grangemockler NS
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily using Aladdin software.
- Encouraging full or near full attendance.
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance.
- Identifying pupils at risk of learning disadvantage through poor attendance.
- Ensuring compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation.
- Developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.

- Identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance – school refusal etc.

The school will ensure that:

- The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school
- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have not been communicated
- Pupil attendance and lateness is monitored
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
    (a) TUSLA,
    (b) The Education Welfare Officer,
    (c) The Board of Management

Compliance with School Ethos

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

Defining and Recording Non- 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.

The following applies:

- The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on the Aladdin software for each class on a daily basis. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book available on request on Aladdin)

- A child is expected to attend each day
- If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is required taken before 11:00am each morning.
- Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. The roll call may not be altered once it is filled in.
- Non-attendance is recorded in the roll book on Aladdin
- All explanatory notes are kept on student's file on Aladdin.
- The category of absence is also identified and recorded.
- Parents should record the reason for absences on Aladdin using the appropriate choice. When a parent uses the 'Other' option they must include what the reason is e.g. Appointment etc. if the reason is not included it will be deemed as unexplained
- If a note/letter isn't forthcoming the school secretary will contact the parents requesting a letter of explanation. If not supplied after this request the absence will be recorded as unexplained.
- Children are expected to be at school at 9.00am
- All children are expected to complete a full day at school

If there is difficulty with poor attendance:

- Class teacher will talk to parent about the matter and remind them of their statutory duty as to ensure that their child is sent to school and to see if the school can assist
- When a child has missed 10 days a standard message will be sent via Aladdin as a reminder, highlighting this, regardless of absence
- If there is no improvement after this communication the principal along with class teacher will have further discussion with parent
- A formal letter will be sent when a child is 15 days absent to highlight this and encourage improved attendance
- The principal may formally contact a parent if improvement is not seen following this communication

- A letter will be sent to parents of pupils who have missed 20 days or more, regardless of reason for absences, informing them that this information will be reported to TUSLA and the Board of Management
- The Education Welfare Officer (EWO-TUSLA) and principal will work together to support families of children with particularly poor attendance if necessary
- All attendance will be reported to parents half way through the school year and on the end of year school report

Punctuality

- School receives children from 8.50am when doors open for start at 9.00am.
- All doors are locked for security reasons at 9.00am.
- Anyone arriving after 9.00am should be accompanied by a relevant adult and brought to the main door and handed off to a member of staff.
- Appointments for students should be made outside of school time.
- The principal will meet with the parents of children who are continually late or refusing to come to school to discuss strategies to improve punctuality. If following school intervention and strategies punctuality does not improve, the principal will report the case to the Education Welfare Officer for further intervention and action.
- Where a Parent wishes to take a child/children out of school for holiday purposes they need to put it in writing to the school at least 2 weeks beforehand.

Removal of a Pupil during School Day

It is expected that all pupils remain in school for a full school day. It is also important so as to ensure the accountability of all pupils during any emergency evacuations.

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

If a pupil needs to leave early for an unavoidable medical appointment, a letter should be sent in beforehand from his/her parents or a phone call made to the school office.

If a child is sick during the school day, the Class teacher/ secretary will firstly ring the parent and if uncontactable, will ring the emergency contact number. Ensure all numbers are up to date. When collecting the child, the parent should report to the main door, wait in reception while the teacher/secretary collects the child from the classroom. The teacher will fill in Early leaving on Aladdin.

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

Our school day begins at 9.00am. If a child has a medical, dental or unavoidable morning appointment or emergency, a letter should be sent in beforehand or explanation given by way of phone call to the school. The school rolla is taken daily before 11am. In this case the rolla will be kept open for this child until 12pm (maximum). After this time, the child has missed half the school day and will be marked absent.

3. **Emergencies**

The parent should ring the school enroute and explain the situation. The secretary/ teacher can have the child collected and ready for collection..

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 TUSLA to resolve any attendance problems
- Discussing planned absences with the school
- Refraining from taking holidays during school time as per TUSLA recommendation – see TULSA website
- Showing an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework
- Encouraging them 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, are arranged for times outside of school hours.
- Notifying, in writing, the school if their child/children are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.

The Board of Management:

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 the needs of the individual child
- The school will promote development of good self-concept and self-worth in children
- Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education and Youth Guidelines
- The assistance of the Education welfare Officer will be utilised, if necessary
- The attendance rates of the pupils will be monitored by class teacher in the first instance and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding attendance of any child
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve poor attendance

School Principal:

The School principal will:

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer/TUSLA: (a) if a pupil is not attending school regularly. (b)When a pupil has been absent for 20 days or more during the course of the school year. (c) If a pupil has been suspended
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer of concerns regarding a pupil

- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.

The Class Teacher:

The Class Teacher will:

- Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences on Aladdin.
- Handwritten notes kept on pupils file.
- Ask the school secretary to contact parents in instances where absences are not explained in writing
- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually
- Inform the principal of concerns s/he may have regarding attendance of any pupil
- Contact parents/guardians where punctuality and attendance concerns begin to arise

Recording and Reporting Attendance

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) on the 'Aladdin' database of each class on a daily basis. This automatically updates the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) which is held on 'Aladdin' along with the annual attendance of each individual pupil being recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register) which is also available and updated automatically on 'Aladdin'.

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher. The roll call is taken at 11.00am each morning. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day.

Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance

Grangemockler NS endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

- Appropriate contact takes place between the mainstream class teacher and parents/guardians either via a letter or a message on Aladdin or a phone call, when there is a concern regarding attendance. A meeting between parents and the principal may be set up if attendance does not improve after this time.
- New entrants to Junior Infants and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction meeting, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance and good punctuality habits from Junior Infants onwards. See TUSLA –Don't Let You Child Miss Out
- The calendar for the coming school year is published annually in June for the following school year. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events during school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.
- Gold/ Silver & Bronze Certificates will be awarded at end of June to promote good and/or improved attendance up to those dates. An overall certificate will be awarded to those who have not missed a day of school during the year.
- School attendance drive - rewarded

Transfer to Another School

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.

A principal may only remove a pupil's name from the school register(POD) 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 or is in receipt of out-of-school education.

Communication

The school maintains communication with TUSLA the organisation that monitors attendance in schools. The school maintains communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to outline patterns amongst other issues.

Communication with other Schools

- When a child transfers from Grangemockler NS 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 from another school to Grangemockler NS, confirmation of enrolment will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from Grangemockler NS to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment – NCCA Education passport.

Communication with Parents

The following applies in terms of communicating with the parents:

- Attendance Policy circulated to all families at the beginning of each school year
- School calendar for next school year communicated in June of the previous school year
- Reminders of importance of punctuality and attendance in newsletter
- When a child has missed 10 days of school a standard text, regardless of reason for absence, to notify and remind parents that their child has missed 10 days (2 weeks) of school is sent
- 15 day absence letter - Standard letter sent to parents, regardless for reason for absence, to notify them that their child has missed 15 days (3 weeks) of school
- 20 day absence letter – Standard letter sent to parents, regardless of reason for absence, to notify parents that the absence is now reported to TUSLA.

- Update on absence – Standard letter to parents will inform all parents of number of days a child has missed in school, regardless for reason for absence, half way through school year.
- Parent Teacher Meetings are held in November of every school year. Parent's will be informed of how many days a child has missed of school at this meeting
- End of school report communicates the number of days missed in the school year.
- Pupils' teacher and/or principal will contact parents when appropriate and as outlined above in this document.

The school circulates this information regarding attendance at the induction meeting of the Junior Infants parents/guardians.

Communication with TUSLA/Education Welfare officer

We are obliged to inform TUSLA if:

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

We are obliged to furnish TUSLA with numbers of pupils absent for 20 days or more on two occasions during the school year (Christmas & Summer).

The Board of Management is also informed of the numbers of students who have missed 20 days or more at school

Evaluation

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through

- Maintenance and improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar Rolla records and statistical returns.
- Happy, confident, well-adjusted children.

- Improvement on punctuality of children
- Positive parental feedback and cooperation with policy in its entirety.
- Teacher vigilance in terms of poor attenders

Review and Implementation

This policy was reviewed in January 2026.

The Attendance Policy was formally approved by the Board of Management at its meeting 11/2/26

Signed: Vera Powell Date: 11/2/26

(Person Responsible: DP)

Signed: [signature] Date: 11/02/26

(School Principal)

Signed: [signature] Date: 11/2/2026.

(Chairperson B.O.M.)

Appendix 1 – 10 Days Message

Good afternoon,

Please don't panic about the below message. It is procedure as part of our school attendance policy.

Dear Parents, Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify TUSLA 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 message on Aladdin of children's absences, when these absences are 10 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 notice is to inform you that our records show that has_____ been absent from school for 10 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 at Grangemockler NS 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 ensuring that all absences are explained in writing.

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours Sincerely,

Vera Power

Deputy Principal

Appendix 2 – 15 day absence letter

Dear Parents,

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify TUSLA 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 at Grangemockler NS 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.

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours Sincerely,

_____

Vera Power

Deputy Principal

Appendix 3 – 20 day absence letter

Dear Parents,

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify TUSLA 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 TUSLA.

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 at Granemockler NS 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.

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours Sincerely,

_____

Vera Power

Deputy Principal