St. Attracta’s Community School,
Tubbercurry,
Co. Sligo.

ATTENDANCE POLICY
MISSION STATEMENT

St. Attracta’s is a Christian Community. We are committed to educate our pupils in an atmosphere of mutual respect, integrity, sincerity, honesty and tolerance in partnership with the Board of Management, teachers, parents, ancillary staff and the wider community.

A. SCOPE:

Basic Principles:

This policy is a school-wide policy, for implementation by all staff, students, parents and Board of Management.

This policy strives to set out the basic principles upon which the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance will be implemented, sustained and evaluated in our school.

This policy itself has been developed in consultation with the Board of Management, parents, staff and students.

B. RATIONALE:

1. Education is important:

In this school we are educators first. Education is the foundation stone upon which a child’s development for later life is built. Parents are primary educators and as such are primarily responsible for ensuring that their children receive the education which they have a right to and deserve. The school is here to support and enhance this education. Attendance at school and full participation in school life is therefore extremely important.

Research has shown that poor attendance and poor participation are directly linked to low educational achievement and early school leaving.

2. Environment where children want to come to school:

The school wants to work in partnership with parents to ensure that the environment is created where children want and look forward to coming to school and participating in school life.

The school wants to create conditions where children see that it is in their own interest to come to school regularly.
The school and parents have certain obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 regarding attendance and participation.

C. POLICY GOALS:

1. Meeting educational and personal needs:

This policy statement will assist towards developing a school environment where all students feel welcome in the school, and where their educational and personal needs are met within the resources provided to the school.

2.

- Implement the monitoring and recording aspects of the School’s Attendance Strategy.
- Highlight the importance of regular attendance
- Encourage regular attendance and participation in school life
- Encourage good communication between parents and the school.
- Establish procedures for the monitoring of attendance and non-attendance
- Establish procedures for attendance record-keeping for the school, students, parents and TUSLA.
- Develop working partnerships between the school and other relevant agencies and services, such as the TUSLA.
- Support students and parents where there are attendance problems.

D. CONTENT OF POLICY:

Parents:

1. Expectation of all students:

The school expects all students registered in the school to attend all timetabled classes every day. If your son/daughter is absent then the school will require an explanation, in writing, from you the parent(s)/guardian(s). Notes are available in the student journal.

2. Legal responsibility:

If your son/daughter is under 16 or she has not yet completed 3 years at post-primary school, it is your legal responsibility to ensure that your child attends school every day, and if he/she is absent, that you explain to the school why he/she has been absent.

3. Referral to TUSLA:
If your son/daughter is absent for a total of 20 days or more during the school year, the school is obliged in law to report this to TUSLA. This report must be made irrespective of the reasons your son/daughter is absent.

If the school is very concerned about the pattern of your son/daughter’s absences, then the school is also obliged to inform TUSLA.

The school will always inform you if a report is being made to the TUSLA.

4. School Calendar and Timetable:

Please see the School Calendar for the opening and closing times of the school, and the school holidays. Also contained is information about parent-teacher meetings and staff meetings. Parents/guardians will be provided with a copy of the school calendar (which may be subject to change) at the commencement of each school year. The calendar will also be published on the school website www.stattractas.ie

Your son/daughter will be expected to be in school during the normal school hours. Please ensure that you are familiar with his/her class timetable.

5. Medical appointments etc.:

If your son/daughter has your permission to leave the school early for e.g. a medical appointment, please ensure that you have given him/her a note in the student journal. (Permission to Leave Note). This note must be presented to the Deputy Principal before 9am. A Parent/Guardian must present at the front office to sign-out their child. The student will sign-in on their return.

6. Holidays:

Please do not take your son/daughter out of school for holidays. This has the potential to damage his/her education. It is very difficult for any child to catch up with what has been missed when out of school for an extended holiday.

There are, of course, exceptional circumstances where parents may have to take their son/daughter out of school during term time. However, you should be always aware of the potential risk to his/her education, and therefore these situations should be kept to an absolute minimum.

Please note also that a report will have to be made to the TUSLA if the total absences over the year is in excess of 20 days or if the school is concerned.

7. Contacting the School:
Please contact the school as soon as you can to inform us that your son/daughter is absent. This can be done by phone to the Secretary’s office (Phone 071-9120814)

8. Explanation for Absence:

If your son/daughter has been absent with e.g. sickness for a number of days, she should have a note from you in his/her student journal with an explanation for the absence. (Absence Note) This note should be given to the Class Teacher during the Roll Call on his/her first day back.

9. Extended Absences:

If he/she has been absent for more than 10 days and has attended a doctor, please send us a doctor’s note.

Good communication is vital, and we would prefer if you would keep us up-to-date about your child’s condition.

Please keep in touch with the Principal, Deputy Principal or Year Head.

If the school is not satisfied with the level of information about your child’s extended absence, then the school may have no option but to make a report to the TUSLA.

If you need assistance in ensuring your child attends school please contact the school immediately and we will do our best to support you. Alternatively you may contact the Educational Welfare Services at TUSLA in Galway on 091 385302.

10. Recording of non-attendance:

The Class Teacher will record your son/daughter’s attendance or non-attendance at school during the first timetabled class in the morning. These records are entered electronically on the Vware system.

If you son/daughter is late (i.e. later than 9:00 a.m.) he/she should on arrival go directly to the school office with the written explanation from you (Late for School Note) and have the time of arrival recorded. He/she will not then be recorded as absent. If he/she is late without permission from you, this will be recorded and dealt with under the Code of Positive Behaviour.

11. School Reports:
End of Term reports will contain the number of days that your son/daughter has missed to date. If you have any queries about this please contact the school office.

12. Communication:

At the core of all relationships in the school is mutual respect and understanding, supported by good communication.

Our School Attendance Policy will only work if there is good communication between the school, yourself and your son/daughter.

On any given day the parent(s)/Guardian(s) of up to 10% of those absent will be contacted by the school attendance officer.

Please feel free at any time to contact the school if there are any matters of concern. All matters will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

13. Implementation:

This policy will be implemented by the Board in a spirit of partnership through consultation with the school partners, within the available resources of the school.

The use of school resources is at all times subject to the permission of the Board of Management.

E. REVIEW PROCEDURES:

The Board of Management in consultation with the school partners will see that this policy is reviewed on a regular basis.

01/18