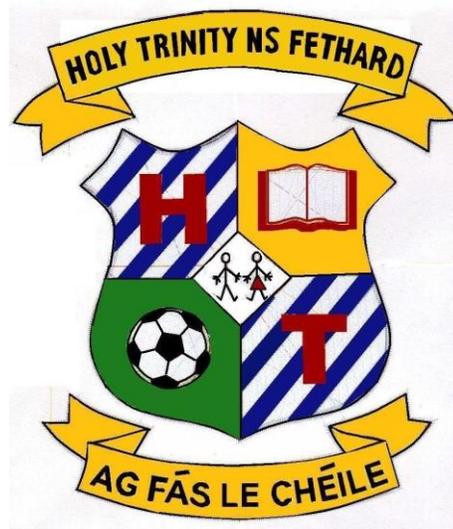


**Holy Trinity National School,  
Fethard**



**Attendance Policy**

<b>Start of Review:</b>	<b>October, 2022</b>
<b>Pupil Input:</b>	<b>January, 2023</b>
<b>Parent/Guardian Input:</b>	<b>January and February 2023</b>
<b>Staff Input:</b>	<b>January, 2023</b>
<b>Ratified by the Board of Management:</b>	

**Introduction:**

Holy Trinity NS is a co-educational school that caters for children from junior infants to 6th class. The school community strives to create a learning environment that provides its pupils with the academic, social and emotional training necessary for success in life.

The school is a designated DEIS, Urban, Band 1 school.

**Rationale:**

The Attendance Policy has been reviewed and developed as part of Holy Trinity NS commitment to providing a supportive learning setting, which allows all students who attend the school to achieve their full potential.

- Holy Trinity NS endeavours to co-operate with parents/guardians in promoting the full and balanced development of their children and in instilling in parents/guardians and pupils the importance of attendance and punctuality
- To promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning
- Attendance at school and full participation in school life is extremely significant in a child's development - academically, socially and emotionally
- The school has a duty to monitor attendance and to act on non-attendance so that every child is supported to receive a full education
- Legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998
- The role of the TUSLA Education Support Service and the Education Welfare Officer

**Aims and Objectives:**

The revised policy is geared towards:

- Ensuring that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensuring that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Encouraging full attendance where possible
- Identifying pupils at risk at the earliest opportunity
- Promoting a positive learning environment

- Ensuring learning opportunities are availed of to the maximum level possible
- Raising awareness of the importance of school attendance, amongst parents/guardians and children
- Fostering an appreciation of learning
- Identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- 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.

### **DEIS Plan:**

Key elements in achieving educational equality are attendance, punctuality and participation. As part of our DEIS plan we aim to promote regular attendance among our students in order that they can benefit fully from their education. Participation in school encourages regular attendance by ensuring that the experience of students is both engaging and beneficial. The promotion of attendance works effectively to enhance educational outcomes for all students.

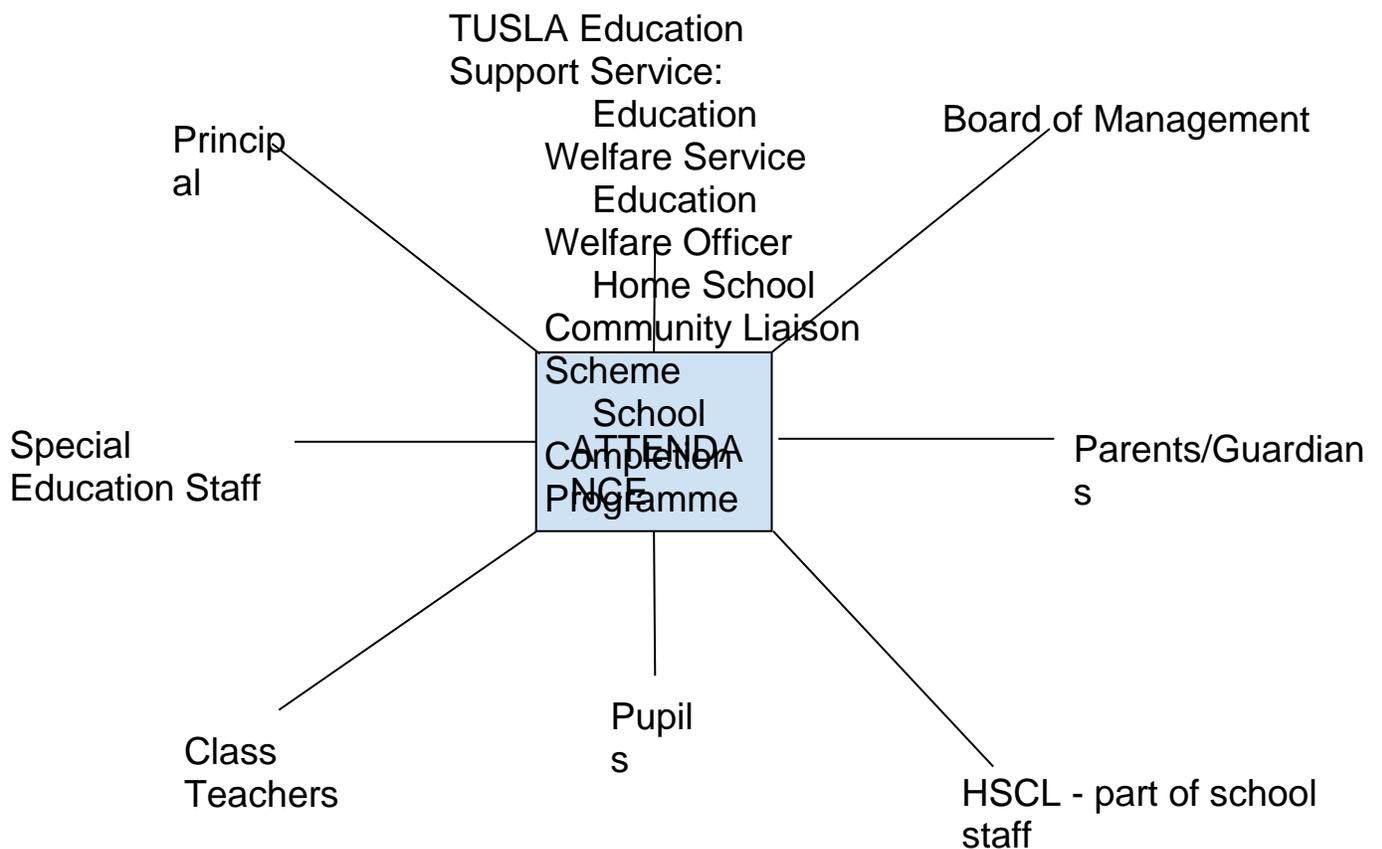
### **Our Attendance Ladder:**

<b>0 Days</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>2 Days</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>5 Days</b>	<b>97%</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
<b>10 Days</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>Room for Improvement</b>
<b>15 Days</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>Poor Attendance</b>
<b>20 Days</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>Very Poor Attendance - Serious Concern</b>
<b>25 Days +</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>Extremely Poor Attendance - Very Serious Concern</b>

**Compliance with 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:**



**Parents/Guardians:**

This policy adopts the legal definition of parent as set down in the Education Act, 1998.

- The policy recognises that parents play a pivotal role in developing, promoting and supporting the growth of their child both at home and within the school by encouraging good attendance and participation.
- Parents play a vital role in shaping their children's attitude to school. A supportive home environment shapes attitudes that promote the holistic development of the child. It is important that parents are aware of and support this policy together with other school policies and procedures. Parents are further encouraged to involve themselves in positive participation in school life in order to facilitate the development of mutual and beneficial links between school and home.

**The Parents' Association**, too, in hosting seminars, meetings and information evenings with external agencies builds the personal capacity of parents. The National Parents' Council Association also facilitates regional development and information meetings. Parents can also participate in school life through:

- i. Consultation with school staff
- ii. Attendance at relevant information and other meetings at school
- iii. Contributing to the development and review of school development and policies

### **Board of Management:**

The Board of Management has a responsibility to ensure that attendance in the school is of the highest possible standard. The Board of Management manages the school in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

### **The School Principal and Management:**

The Principal controls the internal organisation and management of the school and monitors attendance levels of all pupils on a daily basis.

The School Principal will:

- ensure that the school register of children is maintained in accordance with regulations
- inform Education Welfare Service:
  - if a pupil is not attending school regularly
  - 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
- Where a school principal has a concern in relation to a pupil's school attendance and where the school has made all local efforts to resolve the problem and the school still remains concerned about the student's attendance a referral can be made to Education Welfare Services

- insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among children, parents and staff

The Deputy Principal is in charge of the school in the absence of the Principal. In the absence of the Principal and Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal is placed in charge of the school. The Senior Management team also have a responsibility to ensure that Attendance Policy is implemented fully.

**TUSLA Education Support Service:** TESS operates under the Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, a piece of legislation that emphasises the promotion of school attendance, participation and retention. TESS has three strands namely the Statutory Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and the two school support services the Home School Community Liaison Scheme (HSCL) and the School Completion Programme (SCP). The three TESS strands work together collaboratively with schools, families and other relevant services to achieve the best educational outcomes for children and young people.

### **Education Welfare Service (EWS):**

Educational Welfare Officers (EWOs) work as part of the Education Welfare Service and are based throughout the country to offer advice and guidance to parents who need support in ensuring that their child attends schools regularly. The Education Welfare Officers is informed if;

- A child is expelled - Once the BOM has agreed an expulsion a [Notification of Intention to Expel](#) should be completed and sent to tess, Tusla Head Office, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.
- A child is suspended - If a pupil is suspended for a period of not less than 6 consecutive school days then the school is obliged to report this to TUSLA Education Support Service. If a student is suspended for a shorter period(s) then it must be counted in the aggregate number of absences and if the student exceeds 20 days absence (including any suspensions) then this should be reported through the normal referral and reporting processes.

- A child has missed more than 20 days - A School Absence Report will issue to TESS.

TUSLA Education Support Service is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Report Form.

### **Home School Community Liaison:**

In line with the vision and values of the HSCL scheme the HSCL Coordinator (Ms. Miriam O'Connell) shall encourage, support and facilitate partnership between parents and teachers to enhance the education, attendance and participation of children through building bonds of trust between home and school. By working with staff to develop an understanding of educational disadvantage the HSCL shall promote innovative approaches and methodologies to address it. A focus of the work of the HSCL is to actively develop and promote parental involvement as an integral part of the school development / DEIS planning process and in their work, to support the development, implementation and review of the whole school plan of which the Attendance Policy forms a key part. The HSCL will also support the establishment and further development of links between primary schools, parents, families, schools and communities to support children across the education continuum.

### **Class Teachers and Special Education Teachers:**

Class teachers are responsible for taking the roll in their classes each day. Class teachers have the final line role of responsibility for the education of all pupils in their classes and where a pupil is struggling with school attendance, special education teachers may be in a position to offer assistance as part of a school support plan - relating to school refusal, anxiety etc...External agencies may need to be consulted also where necessary and appropriate - NEPS psychologist Kate Ryan Lonergan.

## **Policy Content**

### **1. Punctuality:**

School begins at 9.20am. All pupils are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Education (Welfare) Act, to report children who are

persistently late, to the Education Welfare Service, part of TUSLA Education Support Services.

## **2. Recording:**

Individual school attendance is recorded on Aladdin daily. This is the Student Management System used by the school. Once a child has been marked absent on Aladdin, a notification is automatically sent to the parent/guardian on their Aladdin App and the parent/guardian can then input the reason behind the child's absence from school. A parent/guardian also has the option to input the reason prior to school.

Where a parent/guardian is not using Aladdin Connect, a note is required to cover each absence and these are dated and kept on each child's attendance file. Parents/Guardians are made aware of the fact that the school has a legal obligation to report absences of 20 days or more to the Education Welfare Service, by way of a School Attendance Report.

## **3. School Strategies:**

### **Promoting Attendance:**

The school promotes good attendance by;

- Creating a safe and welcoming environment
- Ensuring children are happy
- Displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- Being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early
- Teachers use reward systems for achievement and progress – Happygrams in homework journals, postcards or phone calls home, class dojo, and pupil of the week.
- School rewards at whole class level for classes with improvements in attendance - hot chocolate, pizza, tea and cake
- HSCL teacher also works with children where there are attendance issues to promote any improvement in attendance with phone calls home, letter/text home, cert for the child

- Pupils are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities to promote friendships and develop new skills
- Themed weeks facilitate deeper enrichment of learning, e.g. Seachtain na Gaeilge, Maths Week, Science Week, Friendship Week.
- Having regular Attendance Drives - November and February annually

#### **4. Communication with Parents/Guardians:**

##### **Guidance for Parents/Guardians:**

“Parents/Guardians are obliged, by the Education Welfare Act 2000, to explain their child’s absence from school”. Section [(21) (9)] of the Education Welfare Act, 2000 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 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 must be recorded on Aladdin Connect or else communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school.
- These notes will form a record which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school
- The school will contact parents when a written explanation for the child’s absence is not received by the school.
- Teachers will not assign work for children who are absent from school because of holidays.

Staff remains vigilant so that at risk pupils are identified early. At risk pupils can be categorised as those who miss more than 5 days in a 20 day period without an accompanying note of explanation from parents/guardians - i.e. not related to illness..

Parents/guardians are made aware of 10, 15 and 20 day absences via notification on Aladdin Connect.

A meeting between parents and the Principal may be set up if deemed necessary. Absences of more than 20 days are automatically referred to the Education Welfare Service - namely the Education Welfare Officer.

Where the school has made all local efforts to resolve the problem of poor/concerning attendance and the school still remains concerned, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service - the Education Welfare Officer.

In a case where a school has tried contacting the parent/guardian through all existing means including a home visit then if the student has been absent for 20 or more days a referral to the Education Welfare Service will be made clearly indicating that the parent has not responded to school communications.

**Parents/guardians can promote good school attendance by:**

- ensuring regular and punctual school attendance.
- notifying the school using Aladdin Connect, by phone or by email if their child/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 their 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 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.
- 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.

**5. Communication with other Schools:**

- When a child transfers from Holy Trinity N.S. to another school, the school records on attendance, academic progress etc will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer and with the written permission of the parents/guardians
- When a child transfers into Holy Trinity N.S. confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from Holy Trinity N.S. to a Post Primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment and the written permission of the parents.

**Evaluation:**

The success of any Attendance policy is measured through;

- Improved attendance levels on an ongoing basis
- Improved attendance levels of children who are considered at risk
- Happy confident well adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Positive teacher feedback
- Positive pupil feedback

**Implementation/Ratification and Review:**

This policy will be reviewed again in 2025.

Ratified by \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson BOM

Date: \_\_\_\_\_