**Attendance and Participation Policy**

**Galbally National School Attendance and Participation Policy**

**Introduction:**

This policy has been developed by the whole school community. This policy is a school - based policy, for implementation by all staff, students, parents and Board of Management.
In this school we are educators first and recognise that parents are the 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. This policy was updated in January 2020

Galbally NS has deemed it necessary to review and update our Attendance policy to ensure compliance with the following legislation and guidelines:

* Children First National Guidance 2015
* Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017
* Data Protection 1998 – 2018 and EU General Data Personal Regulation 2018 (GDPR)

**Rationale:**

The school wants to work in partnership with parents to ensure that an environment is created where children 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.

**Aims/Objectives:**

The aims of the attendance policy in Galbally National School are to:

* Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually.
* Share the promotion of school attendance amongst all in the school community.
* Inform the school community of its role and responsibility as outlined in the Education Act.
* Identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
* Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance/participation.
* Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
* Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

The school will ensure that:

* The importance of school attendance is promoted throughout the school.
* Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently.
* 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 observed daily.
* School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to:
	+ The Education Welfare Board
	+ Education Welfare Officer
	+ Board of Management

**Role of Parents:**

Section [(21) (9)] of the 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 school principal cannot authorise a child’s absence, for example, holidays during school time. However, it is essential that parents inform the school of such arrangements.

Reasons for pupils’ absences must be communicated in writing, by parents/guardians to the school and will be retained by the school. If a child is absent, when the child returns to school s/he should give/send a written note to the class teacher, which contains the child’s name, the dates of absence and the reason for the absence. These notes will form a record, which may be inspected by the Education Welfare Officer on a visit to the school.

The school day is from 9.20a.m. to 2.00p.m. for junior and senior infants and 9.20 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. for all other classes. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time.

The Education Welfare Board also request information regarding pupils who are consistently late. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to the Education Welfare Board.

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 and approve of 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.
* 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.

**Role of Pupils:**

* Pupils have the clear responsibility to attend school regularly and punctually.
* Pupils should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence.
* Pupils are responsible for promptly passing on absence notes from parents to their class teacher.
* Pupils are responsible for passing school correspondence to their parents where necessary.

**Role of 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 the children.
* Support for pupils, who have special educational needs, are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Science guidelines.
* Internal communication procedures are in place to inform teachers of the special needs of pupils.
* A special reward system will be introduced for promoting good attendance at school.
* The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
* The class teacher will monitor the attendance rates of pupils in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
* Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

**Role of School Principal:**

The School Principal will:

* Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
* Acknowledge pupils with exceptional attendance during Assembly.
Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff
* Inform parents by letter when a pupil has been absent for 15 days enclosing a letter outlining their role in ensuring good attendance and also explaining the role of the NEWB.
* Inform the Education Welfare Officer:
* 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.
* Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Officer if concerns exist regarding a pupil.

**Role of Class Teacher:**

The class teacher will:

* Maintain the school roll-book in accordance with procedure.
* Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
* Contact parents in instances of unexplained absences. If no written explanation is forthcoming then the class teacher will note no explanation as the reason for the child's absence.
* Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
* Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.

**Record/Communication:**

Subject to the restrictions of the Data Protection Act attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer to another primary school will be passed to the Principal of the school, by post, as soon as we receive written notification of transfer.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of children who transfer from another primary school will be sought directly from the previous school.

Attendance, behaviour and academic records of pupils transferring to a second level school will be sent to the school, if requested, once enrolment has been confirmed.

Senior Education Welfare Office, Stuart Maloney

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**Links to other policies and to curriculum delivery**

Our school policies need to be consistent with one another, within the framework of the overall School Plan. Relevant school policies already in place or being developed or reviewed, shall be examined with reference to the *Attendance Policy* and any implications which it has for them shall be addressed.

The following policies may be among those considered:

* Pupil Online Database (POD): Collection of the data for the purposes of complying with the Department of Education and Skills’ pupil online database.
* Child Protection Procedures
* Code of Behaviour
* Enrolment Policy

**Implementation Date:**

This policy is effective from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  All records held from before that date will continue to be maintained.

**Review/Ratification/Communication:**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It will be

reviewed at the end of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school year and amended whenever it becomes necessary.

**APPENDIX**

**GALBALLY NATIONAL SCHOOL**

 **HOLIDAY NOTIFICATION LETTER.**

Child’s name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Class Teacher’s name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Class level (circle):  JI       SI      Rang 1    Rang 2 Rang 3 Rang 4 Rang 5 Rang 6 Realtaí

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child who is attending a recognised school is at school on every day that the school is open, unless there is a genuine reason for him or her not to attend (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, S. 17).

Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal (Education (Welfare) Act, 2000, Section 21 (9)).

Therefore, the school cannot give “permission” for holiday absences during term time.

We, the parents of the above named child are taking our child out of school for holidays from (date) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ until (date) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

We fully understand that this is contrary to our legal obligation under the Education Welfare Act, 2000.

We further understand that should our child’s absences reach or exceed 20 days in a year the school is obliged to report this to the Education Welfare Board/TÚSLA.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
(Parent/Guardian)                                       (Parent/Guardian)

Where there are two guardians, both must sign.