

ST. MICHAEL'S N.S. CRIMLIN ATTENDANCE POLICY

The existing School Attendance Policy was reviewed and updated with reference to *Developing the Statement of Strategy For School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools* (Tusla, Child and Family Agency 2015)

The Board of Management of St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin notes its obligation under Section 22 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, to prepare and submit to Tusla Child and Family Agency a Statement of Strategy for School Attendance.

This policy was developed in consultation with the Principal, teaching staff, parents and pupils of St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin and advice was sought from the Educational welfare Officer based at Educational Welfare Service, Child and Family Agency, Unit 19 Sandyfort Business Centre, Grealishtown, Bohermore, Galway (Tel 091 385302)

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin understands that its Statement of Strategy For School Attendance can be reviewed by Tusla's Educational Welfare Services, and will make it available to the EWO on request, as well as to the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills.

Ethos and philosophy of St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin / Mission statement:

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin is a Catholic school. As such it is a caring and inclusive school, rooted in the local parish of Parke/Crimlin where it forms a central part of everyday life. Committed to the development of the whole person, it hands on Christian values and a shared Irish culture to the next generation. Education in St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin is guided by the life of Jesus Christ and the belief that every person is made in the image of God. Parents, teachers and the parish work together to provide a child-centred education which includes preparation for the sacraments.

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin is regulated by the Department of Education and Skills through the national curriculum. It teaches all aspects of the curriculum and is committed to a quality education built on the professionalism of teachers and other staff. The highest academic quality is aimed for, taking due account of individual pupils' ability. The school's Code of Behaviour aims to create the conditions necessary for each pupil to achieve his/her potential. Regular, punctual attendance at school is necessary in order to build the discipline, self-reliance and work ethic that is required for both the achievement of personal potential and the development of responsible citizenship.

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin believes in integration and promotes respect for diversity. Respect for all religions and for people of no faith is an important part of the life of the school. The Code of Behaviour aims to instill in pupils the values of respect, kindness, willingness to help, courtesy, good manners, fairness, readiness to use respectful ways of resolving conflict, and forgiveness.

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin has high expectations around attendance

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin always aims to promote full attendance by all pupils. Parents are responsible for the health of their children and will be the decision-makers where there is doubt around their child's ability to attend school. Sick children will not benefit greatly by attending class, and infection may spread as result of their contact with classmates. However, in practical terms there are many childhood illnesses that are both mild and

ST. MICHAEL'S N.S. CRIMLIN ATTENDANCE POLICY

repetitive, eg. sniffles, and in themselves are not a reason to deprive a child of education. The school will endeavour to work with parents to strike a balance between the need to allow the child to recover from illness / injury and the need for continuity of attendance.

Creating a supportive, positive and welcoming school environment

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin works to provide a supportive, positive and welcoming environment for pupils. The Code of Behaviour in place models, explains, expects, affirms and rewards positive, respectful behaviour. It also works to improve poor social skills which may negatively affect a pupil's ability to participate in the life of their school and community.

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin aims to enable pupils to experience the joy of working hard and satisfaction in a job done as well as they can. Thus effort is as important as achievement .

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin provides its pupils with a comprehensive list of garments that are accepted as uniform, with full flexibility in terms of which garments to wear and in what combination. This measure is aimed at ensuring the child's comfort, acknowledging that children have different physical attributes and needs.

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin acknowledges that the influence of family, community and the child's own characteristics can impact on school attendance.

Recording attendance

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin populates all its pupil enrolment data on the Department of Education's Primary Online Database. In the event that a pupil leaves the school, the Database is updated in accordance with the four steps outlined in Circular 0033/2015, Appendix 2.

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin also maintains the Roll Book (Leabhar Rolla) and Daily Attendance Book (Leabhar Tinrimh Laethúil).

Procedures for notification of pupil absences to the school

When a pupil is absent from school during part of a school day or for a school day, or for more than a school day, Section 18 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 places a legal duty on parents to notify the principal about the reasons for the child's absence.

Section 23 of the Act requires that the procedures to be followed by a parent for notifying the school about absence must be formalised by the school and form part of the school's Code of Behaviour.

Guidance regarding notification of absences will be put in writing and communicated to all parents and to other members of the school community, including pupils.

School opening times: 9.20am to 3pm. Infants: 9.20am to 2pm. Indicated on School Calendar.

When parents should advise the school about absence: On the second consecutive day of the child's absence, phone the school to advise the principal of the reason for the absence and the estimated time of return to school. Also provide a written explanation for the absence, using the Absence Note provided by the school, on the day that the child returns to school. This Absence Note is required by the school to account for each and every day's absence.

ST. MICHAEL'S N.S. CRIMLIN ATTENDANCE POLICY

Pupils are expected to arrive in school at 9.20am and report immediately to their class teacher.

The Roll will be called at 10.20am. Pupils arriving after this time will be marked absent. A note may be made on a pupil attendance sheet (Appendix B) which would then be kept in the Roll Book.

If a pupil arrives later than 9.40am, s/he will be spoken to quietly by the class teacher in order to ascertain the reason for the latecoming. This may be noted on a pupil attendance sheet which would then be kept in the Roll Book.

If a pupil needs to leave school before the end of the school day, the parent will be asked to inform the class teacher in advance, by note in the pupil's diary. The pupil should be instructed to present this note to his/her teacher on arrival in school that morning. The parent may also telephone to give notice verbally.

The class teacher may note the time and date of the child's departure on a pupil attendance sheet which would then kept in the Roll Book.

A report on each pupil's attendance and punctuality will be included in the annual written report provided to parents at the end of the school year.

Obligations regarding reporting and referral of pupils to the Educational Welfare Services of Tusla

St. Michael's N.S.Crimlin (Crimlin N.S.) acknowledges its obligation by law under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 to submit reports on (a) individual pupils and (b) overall school attendance to the Educational Welfare Services of the Child and Family Agency.

(a) St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin acknowledges its obligation to submit Student Absence Reports four times each year on those students with serious attendance issues that have been identified during the current academic year i.e. students falling within the following criteria:

a student has been absent from school for a cumulative total of twenty days or more
a student's name is to be removed from the school register for any reason
a student has been suspended for a cumulative total of six or more days
the school has expelled a pupil
a principal is concerned about a student's attendance

(b) St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin also acknowledges its obligation to report on the levels of attendance at the end of each academic year as follows:

Total number of days lost through student absence in the entire school year.

Total number of students who were absent for 20 days or more during the school year.

Total number of students expelled in respect of whom all appeal processes have been exhausted or not availed of during the school year.

Total number of students who were suspended for any number of days during the school year.

Absences due to term-time holidays

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 (Section 17 of Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Only absences relating to activities organised by the school or in which the school is involved can be authorised by the principal

ST. MICHAEL'S N.S. CRIMLIN ATTENDANCE POLICY

(Section 21(9) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000). Therefore, the school cannot give "permission" for holiday absences during term time.

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin strongly discourages parents from taking pupils on holidays during term time. If a parent decides to take a child out of school for holidays, the principal may request the parents to provide a letter to the school to say they are doing so and are aware of the implications. Where there are regular holiday absences, St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin will remind parents of the educational and potential legal impact of removing pupils from school for periods of time. (*Tusla: Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools 2015*)

Setting attendance targets

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin will access www.tusla.ie for its previous year's attendance data and use it as a baseline to work to improve attendance levels. Monthly figures will be communicated verbally to pupils. (Appendix C)

Raising awareness of the need to achieve good school attendance

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin will strive to raise awareness of the need for good school attendance by, for example:
including updates on its attendance in the termly newsletter sent to parents,
highlighting the importance of attendance at school assemblies and acknowledging good attendance,
positively affirming attendance when the Roll is being taken.

A record of attendance will be included in the pupil's end of year written report.
Tusla's Educational Welfare Services' leaflet *Don't Let Your Child Miss Out* will be distributed to parents.
A record of a pupil's attendance will be included in his/her Education Passport (*Circular 0027/2015*)

Rewarding good attendance

Section 22(a) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 requires each school to reward pupils who have good attendance records as part of their School Attendance Strategy.

Attendance will be affirmed as one of the good behaviours approved of by the school. This will include being thanked for showing a good work ethic by turning up for work on time and working steadily throughout the day.

Positive attention will be given to pupils who have good attendance records. For example at the end of the month, the principal may comment positively on pupils who have missed no day that month.

Pupils will be encouraged to enjoy the satisfaction of completing a day's work.

At the End of Year assembly, a prize will be given to each pupil who has full attendance.

Parents will be thanked for their support of the above measures.

Responding to poor attendance

Section 22(c) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 requires that schools make every effort to engage with parents when attendance problems emerge and work collaboratively with them to try to understand the in-school and / or out-of-school factors influencing attendance.

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin will, if necessary, intervene before a habit of poor attendance takes hold, engaging in dialogue with the parents of the child, using the suggestions in Tusla's *Developing a Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools*.

ST. MICHAEL'S N.S. CRIMLIN ATTENDANCE POLICY

If a pupil's needs are complex, or where brief or one-off supports have not been successful, St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin will adopt an individual planned approach, drawing on guidelines and support provided by the Special Education Support Service and the National Educational Psychological Service. The assessment / problem-solving framework provided by Tusla will be used to help prepare a plan. Other agencies may also be consulted in an effort to resolve the issue of poor attendance.

EWO-led process: Referral to Tusla's Educational Welfare Service

When the school has exhausted all efforts and there is no improvement in attendance, St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin will make a referral to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services. At this stage, the school will have spoken to, written to and met with both the pupil and parents.

On receipt of a referral from the school, Tusla's Educational Welfare Services may allocate an Educational Welfare Officer to the case. S/he will lead a plan to try and resolve the attendance issue, and St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin will remain involved in this plan. The focus at this point will be to exhaust all possible welfare interventions to address the attendance issues.

Where there is improved attendance, the plan can be stepped down and those involved can offer less intensive support, while ensuring that the gains made are maintained.

Where there is evidence that the parents are not making efforts to support their child's attendance, prosecution under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 will be considered. The Act requires that all welfare approaches be considered before legal action can be taken against a parent who is failing to ensure their child attends school.

Supporting re-engagement

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin will make every effort to help a pupil to re-engage with learning and to catch up on missed material following a prolonged absence.

Building linkages with other schools, youth organisations and local organisations.

St. Michael's N.S. Crimlin works to make the transition from primary to post-primary school as easy and positive as possible for the pupils. This includes attending open days, concerts, etc that are arranged by post-primary schools and to which our pupils have been invited.

Communicating the Strategy

All staff, parents and pupils will be provided with a copy of the updated Strategy.

Implementing the Strategy

All members of the school community have their part to play in ensuring that every pupil gets the benefits of good engagement with learning through being in school every day. Key roles are set out in Appendix A.

Checking how well the Strategy is working

Staff will share experience about how the strategy is working.

Formal end-of-year review of the Statement of Strategy as part of preparation of the Board of Management's annual report on attendance (Section 21(6)(a)(b) of Education (Welfare) Act 2000) to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services.

CHAIRPERSON: DATE:.....

PRINCIPAL: DATE:

ST. MICHAEL'S N.S. CRIMLIN ATTENDANCE POLICY

APPENDIX A KEY ROLES IN IMPLEMENTING THE STATEMENT OF STRATEGY

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance;

Leads on the review and implementation of the school's Attendance Strategy;

Puts arrangements in place for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the school's Attendance Strategy;

Provides opportunities for staff to engage actively with the development and monitoring of the school's Attendance Strategy;

Initiates links with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues;

Notifies Tusla's Educational Welfare Services and the relevant EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensures support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties;

Furnishes pertinent attendance documentation to officers of relevant government departments.

TEACHERS

Provide a classroom climate and classroom management that support participation and engagement, especially with students who may be at risk of poor attendance;

Actively use the school's Attendance Strategy to promote attendance;

Set high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classrooms;

Agree punctuality and attendance standards with pupils as part of classroom rules;

Set example by their own punctuality;

Ensure attendance data are recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures;

Alert relevant staff if there are concerns about pupil absences;

Support the attendance plan for pupils who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis;

Support pupils on return when they have missed periods of schooling.

PARENTS

Set high standards for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality;

Engage with the school if there is a problem about their child's attendance and support plans to address the problem;

Ensure that their child regularly attends and arrives at school on time;

Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason;

Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time.

ST. MICHAEL'S N.S. CRIMLIN ATTENDANCE POLICY

APPENDIX C MONTHLY FIGURES FOR ATTENDANCE YEAR.....

	ABSENCES INFS-2ND	ABSENCES 3RD - 6TH.
SEPT.
OCT.
NOV.
DEC.
JAN.
FEB.
MAR.
APR.
MAY
JUNE
TOTAL: