



**RED HILL SCHOOL**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Date of Issue: November 2013**

**Amendments/Reviewed: 27/03/17**  
**Review December 10<sup>th</sup> 2025**

**Aims of Policy:** We aim to:

- To give recognition to the special educational needs of the pupils attending Red Hill School, and that some pupils also present with serious illness at times.
- To identify pupils at risk of leaving school early.
- To identify students who may need to move to a reduced day to support their attendance.
- To promote and to foster positive attitudes to learning.
- In Red Hill School, we aspire to facilitate a curriculum which is relevant, flexible and catering to the needs of individual children, where children work in an environment which is safe and secure and conducive to work.

**Rationale:** The policy was drafted for the following reasons:

- The Board of Management wishes to comply with legislation such as: The Education Act, 1998, The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000.
- The Board of Management wishes to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning. The Board of

Management of a school is obliged to have an attendance policy which promotes attendance awareness and good practice and provides for monitoring and reporting of same.

- Poor attendance at school disadvantages children. Consistent, regular attendance maximizes children's development and progress.

**Oversight:** Appropriate agencies such as the Inspectorate of The Department of Education and Science and officers of The Education Welfare Board have a right to inspect school attendance figures of individual pupils. To that end, we aim to ensure that school registers are kept accurately. -The attendance figure for each pupil will be included in the annual report issued to each parent at the end of the academic year.

**Whole school strategies to promote attendance:** Red Hill School endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians which is conducive to the promotion of 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 are in place in accordance with Department of Education & Skills guidelines.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised, if necessary.
- The attendance rates of pupils will be monitored by the class teacher in the first instance, and the class teacher will notify the Principal of any concerns regarding the attendance of any child.
- Pupils with poor attendance record, will insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.

Traditionally school attendance is strong in Red Hill School. The school is conscious of the strong support from parents and the Parents' Association. Due to the category of pupils attending the school the special needs of our pupils may lead to non-attendance because of health or behavioural issues. It

is the practice of the school that the Principal and staff will work together in making best use of the grant for attendance and to put in place programmes to encourage attendance. Pupils are welcomed back after any absenteeism in a positive manner.

**Recording & reporting of attendance and non-attendance:** Data is kept in accordance with Department of Education & Skills guidelines.

Parent(s) /Guardian(s) are made aware of the official opening and closing time of the school. Red Hill School starts each day at 9.10 a.m. We recognize that pupils may be availing of school transport and procedures for the smooth drop of/collection of pupils are in place. Infant classes are dismissed at 1.50 p.m. and all other classes at 2.50p.m.

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her nonattendance will be recorded by the class teacher.

The daily school attendance of individual pupils is recorded electronically using the Student Management System (Aladdin). The calling of the roll takes place at 9.20am. If a child is not present by 10.00 a.m. and the school has received no notification from parents/guardians he/she will be marked absent whether or not the child arrives later. "Late Arrivals" will also be recorded as such on Alladin.

- If a child arrives in school on time with a note of a doctor's or dental appointment and will be returning to school after the appointment, then the child will be marked present.
- If the school receives notification from parent(s)/guardian(s) that a child has an appointment with a doctor or dentist and will be late for school that child will be marked present. However if the child does not appear in school the presence mark can be altered to an absence mark.
- Children will only be allowed to leave the school earlier than the official times if they are collected by parent(s)/guardian(s) or if there is a written request from parent(s)/guardian(s). Parent(s)/Guardian(s) must inform the class teacher. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are required to "sign out" their child in the appropriate recording sheet available at reception. The time and reason for early leaving must also be recorded.

- Sanctions are not imposed on children for being late for or being absent from school.
- If a child is absent for 20 or more days in a school year or if a poor attendance pattern is apparent the school must inform the Education Welfare Board. (Cumulative absence is automatically flagged by Aladdin). A letter will also be sent to parent(s)/guardian(s). See Appendix 2.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are requested to furnish the school with written explanation of absences through Seesaw. The class teacher will record this appropriately on Aladdin. If a parent/guardian rings to explain an absence the teacher/secretary should also record this appropriately on Aladdin.

We aim to identify poor attendance at an early stage and to that end the following steps shall be taken:

1. Children who have been reported to NEWB in the previous academic year shall be highlighted for the new class teacher to be monitored.
2. As soon as any child reaches 12 days of unexplained absences the class teacher will notify the Deputy Principal and a letter will be sent to the parent(s). See Appendix 1.
3. Every reasonable effort will be made to resolve the issue of persistent absenteeism through consultation with parent(s)/guardian(s), school staff and NEWB.
4. Allowances will be made for children with serious illness/specific reasons for poor attendance at the discretion of the school.
5. Reminders re school attendance will be posted on school newsletters.

**The School Principal/Deputy Principal will:**

- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- Inform the Education Welfare Officer if:
  1. A pupil is not attending school regularly without explanation.
  2. When a pupil has been absent for 20 or more days during the course of a school year (online returns notice).

3. If a pupil has been suspended for a period of six or more days.
  4. When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 will:** • Record school attendance on Aladdin.

- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences on Aladdin.
- Contact parent(s)/guardian(s) in instances where absences are not explained in writing. (This may be done via Seesaw or recorded on telephone log sheet).
- Inform the Principal/Deputy Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil, thus ensuring appropriate appendix letter is sent to parent(s) and/or guardian(s) in a timely manner.

**Role of the Parent/Guardian:** Education Welfare Act: Parent(s)/Guardian(s) have an obligation to send their children to a recognised school.

Guidance for Parents Section [(21) (9)] of the Acts 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 holidays during school term. 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.

**Parent(s) / Guardian(s) 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.

- 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.
- 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. Children attending a doctor or dental appointment may submit a letter from that practitioner.
- Contacting the school immediately, if they have concerns about absence or other related school matters.
- Notifying in writing, the school if their child/children are to be collected by someone not known to the teacher.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are obliged to have their children engaged in full time education from 6-16 years of age.

**Role of TUSLA Education Welfare Service:** Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that the "parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognized school on each school day". Section 21 of the act obliges schools to inform the Education Welfare Officer if a child is absent on more than 20 days in any school year, or if a child does not attend school on a regular basis. In such cases the Education Welfare Officer (following all reasonable efforts by the Education Board to consult with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the Principal of the school) may serve a "School Attendance Notice" on any parent who s/he concludes is failing or neglecting to cause the child to attend the school. A successful case taken against the parent may result in a fine and / or imprisonment. Reasons for absences are recorded and reported to the Education Welfare Board during the school year through the online system. An annual report is submitted – not

more than six weeks following the end of the school year – detailing the overall level of attendance at the school during that school year.

**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. When a Principal receives notification that a child has been registered elsewhere s/he must notify the Principal of the pupil’s new school, of any problems in relation to attendance at the pupil’s former school and of such matters relating to the child’s educational progress as he or she considers appropriate. This applies to pupils who transfer between primary schools and to pupils who transfer from primary to second level education.

It is the responsibility of the Principal, staff, Board of Management, and parent(s)/guardian(s) of students to be compliant with their legal obligations under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000.

**Implementation:** This policy will be implemented immediately following ratification by the Board of Management. The policy will be communicated to the Parents Association and posted on Red Hill School web-site.

This policy will be subject to periodic review.

Signed:  Date: 10/12/28

Chairperson:

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

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

Chairperson:



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Appendix 2: 20 Day Absence

Date:

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify Túsla if a child is absent for 20 days or more in the school year, 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. 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 Túsla.

The categories of absence submitted have been recorded and Túsla may examine this data further.

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 of Red Hill School to encourage children to attend school every day. Parents can help to develop a positive attitude to school attendance by supporting their children to come to school every day and also by ensuring that all absences are explained in writing. Our Attendance policy is available to view on our website.

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours sincerely,

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Elaine Benson Ryan  
Principal

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Shirley Coll  
Deputy Principal



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Appendix 1

Letter template for 12 Days Absence.

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Under the terms of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the school is obliged to notify Túsla if a child is absent for 20 days or more in a school year, 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 12 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 of Red Hill School to encourage children to attend school every day. Parents can help to develop a positive attitude to school attendance by supporting their children to come to school every day and also by ensuring that all absences are explained in writing. Our Attendance policy is available to view on our website.

We thank you for your cooperation in this.

Yours sincerely,

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Elaine Benson Ryan  
Principal

\_\_\_\_\_  
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