

# Attendance Policy

*The central objective of Douglas Rochestown Educate Together National School's Attendance Policy is to promote and encourage regular attendance as an essential factor in our pupils' learning. The policy is cognisant of requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998*

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## School Details:

Name: Douglas Rochestown Educate Together National School

Address: Carr's Hill, Douglas, Cork

Telephone: 021 489 0122 / 085 2428753

Email: info@dretns.ie

Roll Number: 20413N

Principal: Dr. Alan Sheehan

The school premises consist of the area within the school boundaries/fence at Carr's Hill. School start/end times are as follows:

Start Time:	End Time:
8.30 am	1.10 pm/2.10 pm

The school doors open at 8.20am. The school provides supervision of pupils within the school grounds only from 8.20am – 1.20pm for Junior and Senior Infants and from 8.20am – 2.20 pm for all other Classes. Please note that no responsibility is accepted for anyone in the areas outside the school fencing. Please also note that no responsibility is accepted for pupils arriving before 8.20am or for supervising pupils after 1.20pm/2.20pm.

## General Information:

Douglas Rochestown ETNS is under the patronage of Educate Together. It is based on four key principles: Child-centered, Co-educational, Democratic and Equality-based.

Douglas Rochestown ETNS follows the curricular programmes prescribed by the Department of Education and Science, which may be amended from time to time, in accordance with Sections 9 and 30 of the Education Act (1998).

## Aims of Policy:

The aim of the Attendance policy of Douglas Rochestown ETNS is to encourage attendance as an essential factor in pupils' learning. The policy aims to:

- Ensure that pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Ensure that pupil attendance is recorded daily
- Encourage full attendance where possible
- Identify pupils at risk

- Promote a positive learning environment
- Enable learning opportunities to be availed of
- Raise awareness of the importance of school attendance
- Foster an appreciation of learning
- Identify pupils at risk of leaving school early
- Ensure compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- Develop, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of developing attendance difficulties
- Identify and remove, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance.

## **Rationale**

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount. This policy was developed in accordance with legislative requirements such as the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Education Act, 1998. It also identifies the supportive role of Tusla, the Child and Family Agency, and outlines the school's legal obligations to report absences.

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

All staff has an input into the implementation of the policy. Class teacher's record individual patterns of attendance and the school Principal or secretarial staff make returns to Tusla. The Principal has responsibility for maintaining the Leabhair Tinreamh.

It is the responsibility of the Principal and staff to implement this policy under the guidance of the school's Board of Management.

## **Punctuality:**

School begins at 8.30am. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time. The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late. The school defines consistently late as five days over a ten day period. The Principal is obliged under the Education Welfare Act, to report children who are persistently late, to Tusla.

## **Recording and Reporting Attendance:**

The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded on the school's online administrative system, Aladdin. Class attendance data is recorded daily in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book) on Aladdin. The annual attendance of each individual pupil is recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register), together with information provided in enrolment forms (Pupil's Name, Date of Birth, Address, and Religion).

If a pupil does not attend on a day when the school is open for instruction, his/her non-attendance will be recorded by the class teacher or by the parent using the Aladdin Connect app. There are seven categories of absence to be recorded as follows:

- A = Illness
- B = Urgent Family Reason
- C = Expelled

D = Suspended  
E = Other  
F = Unexplained  
G = Transfer to another school

The roll call is taken before first break using the online administrative system, Aladdin. Any pupil not present will be marked absent for the day. A note from parents/guardians is required to explain each absence. Such notes will be retained by the class teacher until the end of the school year when they are filed in the pupil's record file in the office. Alternatively, parents can record this using the Aladdin Connect app. Parents/guardians must also provide a note if a child departs early during the school day and sign the Pupil Early Leave form in the reception area or submit the reason on the Aladdin Connect app. These notes are dated and kept in a central location (office). Late arrivals and early departures are recorded by the class teacher or by the parent using the Aladdin Connect app.

Parents/guardians are made aware of the requirements of Tusla particularly the by-law relating to absences of more than 20 days per school year. This information is detailed in the Information Booklet, which the parents receive on enrolment of their child. They are notified in writing on the end of year report of the total number of absences during the school year.

#### Referral of absences to Tusla

The school informs the parents in writing if their child has been absent for 15 days and reminds parents of the school's requirement to report absences of 20 days to Tusla. Pupils whose non-attendance is a concern are invited to meet with the Principal during Parent/Teacher meetings or at other points in the school year and are informed of the school's concerns. When a pupil has been absent for 15 days, the class teacher will complete the Pre-Referral Checklist (Appendix 1). The purpose of the Pre-Referral Checklist is to help the school briefly note any action(s) taken to date in relation to the child in question and to prompt discussion at school level as to other interventions that may be considered and put in place prior to making a formal Referral.

If a pupils has been absent for 20 days or more, the school is make a formal Referral to Tusla via the school's Educational Welfare Officer (Appendix 2). The school is required to complete the Pre-Referral Checklist as part of a formal Referral.

The school must inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing, where a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular, where a pupil is removed from the school register and where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more.

### **Promoting Good Attendance:**

Douglas Rochestown ETNS promotes good attendance by:

- creating a safe and welcoming environment
- developing good communications with our parent body
- displaying kindness, compassion and understanding
- being vigilant so that risks to good attendance such as disadvantage, bullying etc. are identified early
- Rewarding good attendance with certificates

## **Tusla (Child and Family Agency)**

The Education Welfare Officer is informed if:

- A child is expelled
- A child is suspended
- A child has missed more than 20 days.

Tusla is furnished with the total attendances in the school year through the Annual Attendance Report, which is completed on-line by the Principal.

## **Whole School Strategies to Promote Attendance:**

Douglas Rochestown ETNS endeavours to create a safe, welcoming environment for our pupils and their parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are consulted in drafting and reviewing policies with the aim of promoting a high-level of co-operation among the school community. The teaching staff collaborates in the planning and implementation of the primary school curriculum, so as to provide a stimulating learning environment for all pupils.

School attendance is strong in our school. However, the staff remains vigilant so that pupils who may be at risk of poor attendance are identified early. These 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. Appropriate contact takes place between the school and parents/guardians either via a letter or a note in the homework diary when this occurs. 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 Officer.

New entrants and their parents/guardians are invited to engage in an induction process, through which the school's policies and procedures in relation to attendance are explained. This involves an Information Evening for parents of new Junior Infant pupils before their child commences schooling. For pupils enrolling in any other class, the principal will inform the parents of these policies and procedures. There is a focus on the value of regular attendance and on the importance of developing good attendance habits from Junior Infants onwards.

The school's expectations in terms of the quantity of homework assigned and in the quality of homework presented is clearly explained. There is a consistent approach to homework throughout the school.

The calendar for the coming school year is published on our school website annually in May and a copy is emailed to all of our parents. A reminder is also emailed at the commencement of the new school year in late August/September. It is hoped that this approach will enable parents/guardians to plan family events around school closures, thus minimising the chances of non-attendance related to family holidays during the school term.

Parents/guardians are informed if a child has no lunch, and if one cannot be provided for him/her, the school will provide Liga, raisins and a drink of water.

Cork County Council provides certificates to pupils who have full attendance during the school year. These certificates will be presented by the Principal at a school assembly. Certificates are also available to pupils who improve their attendance over a short period of time, and to pupils who improve their overall attendance.

The question of equality of access is addressed through the school's Admissions and Participation policy.

#### Strategies in the Event of Non-Attendance

Section 17 of the Education (Welfare) Act (2000), states that 'the parent of a child shall cause the child concerned to attend a recognised 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 Tusla to consult with the child's parents and the Principal of the school) may serve a 'School Attendance Notice' on any parent who he/she 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 absence are recorded and reported to Tusla at least two times during the school year through an online system end of December and end of June. 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. This information will be communicated to the school community via email.

### **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 he/she 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.

### **Communication:**

The school has developed a good relationship with the local Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and there is ongoing communication in relation to children who are at risk of poor attendance.

The school will maintain communication with local pre-schools and second-level schools in order to make the transition for pupils as easy as possible.

#### Communication with Parents/Guardians

The school circulates information about its reporting obligations regularly throughout the year. This information is provided in the school's Information Booklet for new parents and is discussed at an induction evening for parents of new Junior Infant pupils.

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 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.
- 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.

#### Communication with other Schools

- When a child transfers from Douglas Rochestown ETNS to another school, the school's records on attendance and academic progress will be forwarded on receipt of written notification of the transfer
- When a child transfers into Douglas Rochestown ETNS confirmation of transfer will be communicated to the child's previous school, and appropriate records sought
- Pupils transferring from Douglas Rochestown ETNS to a post primary school will have their records forwarded on receipt of confirmation of enrolment via the NCCA's Education Passport materials.

### **Success Criteria:**

The success of any Attendance Policy is measured through:

- Improved attendance levels as measured through Leabhar rolla records and statistical returns
- Happy confident well adjusted children
- Positive parental feedback
- Teacher vigilance.

### **Ratification and Review:**

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 29th August 2018.

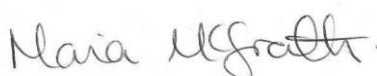
The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 21st November 2018.

The policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 18th May 2022.

### **Communication:**

The policy has been made available to school personnel via the school website ([www.dretns.ie](http://www.dretns.ie)). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron (Educate Together) if requested.

Signed:



Maria McGrath  
Chairperson of the Board of Management

## Appendix 1: Pre-Referral Checklist (Tusla)

### EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICES PRE-REFERRAL CHECKLIST (FOR SCHOOL REFERRALS ONLY)

Prior to submitting a referral form to the statutory educational welfare service, it is expected that the school has made attempts to resolve attendance issues. The purpose of this checklist is to note the actions taken prior to referral to the EWS. **This checklist should always accompany a referral form.**

To be completed in discussion with the Class Teacher (Primary)/ Year Head (Post Primary) or a nominated teacher/principal.

Name of Pupil	
Class	
Class Teacher/Year Head	
Number of school days absent this school year out of a possible number of school days open	

Checklist actions to address poor attendance	Date and by whom
In-school discussion with pupil	*
Contact between school and parent/guardian to express concern e.g. phone call, letter, discuss at parents evening	*
Specific meeting in school with parent/guardian to identify problems and agree interventions	*
Concerns and agreements communicated in writing to parent/guardian	*



Implementation of any appropriate in-school measures (e.g. change of class, 'contact person' in school, support in class etc.)	*
Use of appropriate interventions with pupil (e.g. attendance charts/ attendance report, incentives, rewards etc)	*
Other school interventions (eg. care team, pastoral care team, student support team etc.)	*
Previous EWS involvement in this case	*

Does the school have	Interventions to date (include date and by whom)
School Completion Programme (SCP) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Home School Community Liaison (HSCL) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

**Signature of Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Appendix 2: Referral Form (Tusla)

# EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICES REFERRAL FORM

### Section 1 (to be completed in the case of any referral)

Child's Name		Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/>	Female <input type="checkbox"/>
Address				
Date of Birth		PPSN		
Ethnicity		Language Spoken at Home		

Mother's Name		Tel No.	
Address if different from the child's			
Father's Name		Tel No.	
Address if different from the child's			
Details of Guardian/Carer if child is not residing with parent/s			
Relationship to the child		Tel No.	
Are other siblings known to EWS			

# EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICES

## REFERRAL FORM

### **Section 2** (to be completed **only** in the case of school referrals)

Child's Name	*		
School Name	*	Roll No.	
Address	*	Tel No.	*
Email			
DEIS	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

No. of school days absent this school year to date	*		
Total no. of school days absent last school year	*		
Date parents/guardian were informed of referral to EWS?	*		
If Post Primary – Year group of pupil	*	If Primary – Class group of pupil	*
Date pupil entered the school	*		
Summary or reason for referral to EWS	*		

Previous school/s	*
Does this child have special educational needs?	*
Has the child been assessed (or is assessment pending) by the National Educational Psychological Service?	*
What resources (if any) have been allocated to meet the child's needs?	*

Does the child have any health issues?	*
Does the school have knowledge of other agencies involved with the child or family? If so which?	*
Has the school referred the child or family to another agency? If so what agency?	*
Has the school made a referral to the Social Work Department of the Child and Family Agency in respect of child protection or welfare concerns?	*
Is there any additional information that you feel is relevant for this referral?	*

**Note:**

A referral received by the statutory educational welfare service respects the responsibility of the referring school continually to support the child as required and to work in collaboration with the service in that regard.

Signature of Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

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

For EWS use only			
Case to open? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		Referral Reference No:	
Reason for decision			
Signature of EWO		Date	
Signature of SEWO		Date	

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## EDUCATIONAL WELFARE SERVICES REFERRAL FORM

### Section 3 (to be completed for referrals other than from schools)

Child's Name		
Name of person referring		
Name of organisation		Title
Address		
Telephone number	Landline	Mobile
Email address		
Nature and extent of contact with Child/Family		
Date of referral		
Reason for referral		
Signature of referrer		
Date		

#### Note:

A referral received by the statutory educational welfare service respects the responsibility of the referring agency continually to support the child as required and to work in collaboration with the service in that regard.

For EWS use only			
Case to open? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>	Referral Reference No:		
Reason for decision			
Signature of EWO		Date	
Signature of SEWO		Date	