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Attendance Information Note - Explaining Processes and Terminology

There are two reporting mechanisms for attendance where attendance is reported to TUSLA, the child and family agency.

School Attendance Reports

There are two reporting periods in the year, September to December and January to June. We submit the school attendance returns now for September to December and again in June.

On this form we are required to list any pupils, over the age of 6, who have missed 20 school days for any reason. You will be informed if your child is included in the report. It is rare that these reports lead to any follow up, unless it was significantly more days missed, but it is possible. If it is followed up the Education Welfare Officer will ask if the absences were explained. Explained absences, due to illness etc, are not a cause for concern and shouldn't cause any worry at all. A large number of unexplained absences may lead to further involvement from the Education Welfare Officer.

The reports are not something to be concerned about and if you get a letter saying your child has been included in the report, please don't be concerned. While attendance is hugely important and good attendance correlates strongly with improved outcomes, there are also very valid reasons for children to miss school and this is understood.

Discretionary Referrals

Discretionary referrals are made where a school is worried about the attendance of a pupil. This might be due to a lot of unexplained absences, a pattern of absence, significant ongoing issues with punctuality leading to a lot of missed learning time etc. A school will refer a child to the Education Welfare Officer where they have these concerns. The role of the Education Welfare Officer is primarily to offer support to families to improve attendance.

The school will always contact parents before referring to the Education Welfare Officer and support where possible.

Key things to note

- When a child misses 15 days in a school year a courtesy text is sent to notify the parent/guardian.
- The aim of attendance and punctuality procedures are to ensure the child gets the best experience of education and maximises learning time. We are available to support as needed.
- There is no need for concern if you get a letter saying your child has been included on the attendance report. Explained absences are recorded as such.
- Be sure to enter your absence reason on Aladdin each time your child is absent, to keep that on record.
- Aim to have your child in school for 8.40am each day. We understand this isn't always possible, and understanding is always there for extenuating circumstances. Chat to your child's teacher or Róisín if it's an ongoing challenge and a note can be made of it.