



St. Patrick's N.S,

Bruree,

Co. Limerick

Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

The school Vision and Values in relation to attendance

St. Patrick's N.S. recognises the importance of good school attendance. The statement affirms our commitment 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 responsibilities as outlined in the Education Welfare Act.
- Identify pupils who may be at risk if developing school attendance problems.
- Ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote 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.

School's High Expectations around attendance

- Supervision is provided from 9.00 a.m. All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time.
- All absences from school no matter if they are partial or full absences **must have a written note explaining the reason for the child's absence.** Parents must furnish the note when the student returns to school. Such notes will be filed away by the school.

- A record of children arriving frequently late to school will be documented through the Aladdin System. If your child will be arriving late to school (in the case of St. Patrick's after 9.20 a.m.) they must have a written note explaining the reason for their late arrival.
- Pupils who arrive late or leave early for any reason during the school day must produce a written note signed by his/her parent(s) explaining the reason for absence. A school must keep such notes of partial absence on file.
- If a child is being taken home early from a school activity e.g. GAA match a teacher must be notified.
- We ask where possible parents **do not** take term-time holidays.

Monitoring Attendance

- Pupil attendance is recorded daily using the school's Aladdin System.
- Attendance will be accurately recorded at the beginning of each school day. As provided for in Rule 55 (school hours, school meetings, Roll Call) in the Rules for National Schools 'Roll call should be completed not later than 40 minutes after the time fixed for the commencement of formal instruction at the school meeting. Unless the school receives prior written notification, children who are not present in school before 10 a.m. are marked absent.
- Parents or guardians are contacted when reasons for absences are unknown or have been communicated.
- Parents of children with regular absences are informed of the effects such absences have on their children's learning and of the need for regular attendance at school.
- School attendance statistics are reported as appropriate to Educational Welfare Officer in TUSLA.

Targets

1. To increase the number of explained absences.

2. The school had an excellent average monthly attendance of 96% in 2017/2018. We will work on maintaining these excellent attendance records.
3. Decrease the small number of pupils who consistently arrive late to school.

Whole School's Approach to attendance:

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 (see above).
- A special reward system will be introduced for promoting good attendance in school. Full Attendance Certificates and a small prize will be awarded at an end of year ceremony.
- The assistance of the Education Welfare Officer will be utilised.
- Pupils with a poor attendance record will, insofar as is practicable, be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.
- 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.

Promoting good attendance

General awareness raising strategies

- A section in our September Newsletter will outline the schools and parents/guardians obligations under the Education Welfare act.
- Updates and reminders about attendance will appear in newsletter regularly.
- The importance of attendance will be highlighted to pupils.
- Pupils will be positively affirmed when roll is being taken.
- Records of attendance will be included in pupil's school reports.
- A link to TUSLA'S Education Welfare Services leaflet entitled 'Don't let your child miss out' is on the school website and parents will be notified of same.

Involving parents in high expectations

- Parental involvement in all aspects of school life will be promoted and encouraged.

Parents have a particular role in setting high standards for their child around attendance and punctuality. Where there is a problem with a child's attendance/punctuality, the following will be highlighted to the parents/guardians

- The negative effects of absences on the student's achievement.
- The impact on the whole class, if the teacher needs to spend time helping students to catch up on missed lessons.
- Raise awareness of the problem that lateness can cause for the student and teacher, particularly when a student misses the same subject on a regular basis or misses out on resource teaching due to poor punctuality.

Rewarding good attendance:

- A special reward system will be introduced for promoting good attendance at school – Full Attendance Certificates and a small prize at the end of the school year.

Responding to Poor Attendance /Punctuality

Responses to Poor attendance/punctuality include

Engaging in early dialogue with parents and students

- Section 22 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. Early dialogue with parents is therefore essential to ensure that non-attendance does not persist. The following forms of dialogue may be utilized.
- Informal correspondence e.g. Telephone calls, letters, inviting parents to discuss matters of non-attendance and the parent's responsibilities.
- Parents will receive a text message automatically through the Aladdin System when their child misses 10, 15, and 20 days. Parents will be informed about this in the September Newsletter.
- Standard letters with a response requirement.
- All written communication will be mindful of parent's literacy and language challenges.
- Attendance targets for improved attendance will be set in collaboration with parents. Where improvements have been recorded, improvements will be acknowledged with parents via telephone call or letter.
- Dialogue with students (where appropriate).
- The school staff will do their utmost to understand and respond to the underlying reasons for non-attendance (e.g. Sickness, bullying, teaching approaches, inappropriate curriculum).
- The use of specific targets in relation to attendance for individual students.
- Individual / group Rewards system could be used to motivate and encourage pupils.
- Differentiated curriculum. The school will make every effort to ensure the needs of the pupil are catered for and will ensure that the pupil can access the curriculum at his/her own level.

- Use of extra-curricular activities: identifying specific activities that may motivate and encourage engagement and attendance.
- Transitions and milestones: paying particular attention to attendance among students making the transition to secondary school.
- Build links with youth and community groups such as traveller support groups, migrant right groups, church groups, disability organisations, support and welfare organisations which may be able to offer support for attendance.
- Referral to TUSLA's Education Welfare Service
- Referral to support agencies such as TUSLA, HSE, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

- **Partnership Arrangements**

Contact with the following bodies will be fostered and developed in order to promote the good attendance of students in St. Patrick's N.S.

- NEWB
- Other schools in vicinity
- School Completion Programme
- NEPS
- Local GAA clubs, soccer clubs, etc.
- Community Gardaí

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

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

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the school community have a part to play in ensuring that every student can get the benefits of good engagement with learning through being in school every day. Key roles include:

Principal:

- Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance.
- Puts arrangements in place for the monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the school's Attendance Strategy.
- Provide opportunities for staff to engage actively with the development and monitoring of the school Attendance Strategy.
- Ensure that the school register of pupils is maintained in accordance with regulations.
- 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.
- When a pupil's name is removed from the school register.
- Inform parents of a decision to contact the Education Welfare Office of concerns regarding a pupil.
- Insofar as is practicable, promote the importance of good school attendance among pupils, parents and staff.
- Furnishes pertinent attendance documentation to officers of relevant government departments.

Teachers

- Maintain the electronic roll book in accordance with procedure.
- Keep a record of explained and unexplained absences.
- Promote a reward system for pupils with exceptional attendance.

- Encourage pupils to attend regularly and punctually.
- Inform the Principal of concerns s/he may have regarding the attendance of any pupil.
- Provides 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.
- Set example by their own punctuality.
- Be actively involved in devising an attendance plan in consultation with school principal and relevant services for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis.
- Support students on return when they have missed periods of schooling when possible.

Parents/guardians

- Ensure regular and punctual school attendance.
- Set high expectations for their child in relation to attendance and punctuality.
- Work with the School and education welfare service to resolve any attendance problems.
- Make sure their children understand that parents support and approval of school attendance.
- Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason.
- Discuss planned absences with the school.
- Refrain if at all possible, from taking holidays during school time.
- Show an interest in their children's school day and their children's homework.
- Encourage them to participate in school activities.

- Praise and encourage their children's achievements.
- Instil 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, the children's appointments (with dentist etc.)
- 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.
- Parents particularly in junior classes are responsible for checking their child's schoolbags for correspondence from school.

Pupils

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

Monitoring

This Attendance strategy will be monitored by the principal and staff of St. Patrick's N.S.

Implementation Date

The policy will be implemented from Oct 2018.

Timetable for Review

This policy will be reviewed in 2020. This review will be co-ordinated by the Principal.

Ratification and Communication

The policy was ratified by the Board of Management and communicated to the parents.

Signed:

Chairperson.

Principal

Date.