



St. Patrick's Primary School,
Hazelhatch Road,
Celbridge,
Co Kildare.
W23Y300
Roll number: 20257C

ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

STATEMENT OF STRATEGY FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Vision and Values

At St. Patrick's Primary School, we aim to ensure that each child reaches their full potential in all areas of learning and development. In order for this to happen it is essential that all children attend school as much as possible. We encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality. We aim to build a culture of high expectations for each student's learning, participation and attendance.

Aims

- To raise awareness of the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that the school has procedures in place to promote attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure there is a standard system in place for keeping records about arriving late, leaving early, attendance and non-attendance.
- To identify pupils who may be at risk of developing school attendance problems.
- To develop links between the school and the families of those children who may be at risk of developing attendance problems.
- To ensure compliance with relevant legislation, circulars and statutory guidelines.

Punctuality

School begins at 8:50am. If children arrive before this time parents/guardians must be aware they are not supervised. The Board of Management cannot accept any responsibility whatsoever for children who arrive before the stated times or who remain on the premises after collection time. The school doors are open from 8.50 am and children can enter the school from this time. The entry doors to the school will be closed shortly after 9.00 am. If a child arrives at school after the doors have closed, it is the duty of the parents/guardians to ensure that the child enters school safely.

Monitoring Attendance

With the introduction of the Primary Online Database (POD) and Aladdin, we record pupil enrolment and attendance details in electronic format. Each teacher will record attendance/absence on Aladdin by 10.00 am daily. Parents/Guardians should enter the reason for a child's absence on Aladdin.

Attendance Targets

We at St. Patrick's Primary School are committed to promoting good attendance. Regular attendance has a significant impact on a child's success at school. To achieve this, a high level of attendance must be maintained throughout the whole year.

In the 2024/2025 school year we aim to:

- Improve our annual attendance figure by 2 % (90.8% to 92.6%)
- Focus our efforts on improving the attendance of chronic attenders (last year's top 10) by monitoring their attendance and meeting with parents/guardians when necessary.
- Reduce the number of chronic attenders from 10 to 5 (those who have missed 70 days or more).
- Reduce the highest absent rate from 102 days to 70 days (reduction of 30%)

Whole School Approach

There will be regular communication between parents/guardians and the school regarding absenteeism and punctuality. We will support and work with parents/guardians in cases where children have poor attendance. Our approach is based on:

- promoting a positive learning environment
- promoting a school culture where every child feels valued, trusted and respected
- facilitating children to have a voice in school matters
- encouraging full attendance where possible
- encouraging punctuality
- fostering an appreciation of learning
- raising awareness of the importance of school attendance
- raising everyone's expectations of our school attendance
- ensuring that child attendance is recorded daily
- ensuring that children are registered accurately and efficiently
- ensuring awareness of and compliance with the requirements of the relevant legislation
- identifying children at risk
- developing, subject to available resources, links between the school and the families of children who may be at risk of attendance problems. An Aladdin notice is sent home to parents/guardians if their child has missed 10 days and again at 15 days. A letter is sent home if a pupil has missed 20 day or more informing parents/guardians that Tusla's Educational Welfare Services will be notified.
- identifying and removing, insofar as is practicable, obstacles to school attendance
- rewarding good attendance and improvements in attendance

Promoting Good Attendance

Class teachers and Principal will give praise for good attendance and punctuality.

The following are strategies employed by the school to promote good school attendance:

- Promoting a positive learning environment
- Staff meet and greet with families in the yard every morning (Principal and Assistant Principals)

- Discussion about attendance at Parents Association meetings, annual parent-teacher meetings, class meetings at the start of the year and information evenings with new parents/guardians.
- Regular updates on the school's attendance in the school newsletter.
- Positive affirmation of attendance when the roll is being taken
- Highlight the importance of attendance during school assemblies
- Record of attendance in child's annual school report
- Distribution of Tusla's Educational Welfare Services' leaflet entitled 'Don't Let Your Child Miss Out' at new parents/guardians' information evening.
- Provision of extra-curricular activities after school
- Sporting activities throughout the school year
- The school calendar for each academic year is distributed the previous June to make parents/guardians aware of school holidays, to avoid holidays being taken during term time.
- Children who have a poor attendance record and their families will be supported in an effort to improve their attendance.
- The Principal will meet with the parents/guardians of the three most chronic poor attenders at the start of the school year

Responding to Poor Attendance

The Board of Management of St. Patrick's Primary School acknowledges that despite the best efforts of the school and of families, some children will need extra support to prevent patterns of poor attendance developing. The following are strategies employed by the school to respond to poor attendance:

- The teacher will follow up on absenteeism notes
- An Aladdin notice will be sent to parents/guardians after their child has reached 10 absences through the Aladdin attendance system
- An Aladdin notice will be sent to parents/guardians again when a child reaches 15 absences.
- A letter will be sent to parents/guardians when their child has reached 20 absences. The school must notify the Education Welfare Officer when a child is absent 20 days or more
 - If a child reaches 20 absences, they will then receive An Aladdin notice every day that their child is absent asking them to contact the school
- Working with groups or individuals who may need additional support (Guidelines for Schools, p.30)
- Engaging in early dialogue with parents/guardians and students
- Using school-led, multi-agency support processes where required
- Referral to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services if school led interventions are not helping to improve attendance

Approach to attendance concerns – School Based

Where there is a concern regarding a child's level of attendance or pattern of absenteeism, the Deputy Principal or Principal will speak to the parents/guardians. An Aladdin notice will be sent to parents/guardians informing them of when their child has reached 10 days and 15 days of absenteeism. A letter will be sent when their child has reached 20 days of absenteeism. Parents/Guardians will also be informed when the school has made a referral to Tusla's Educational Welfare Services regarding attendance.

Approach to attendance concerns – Tusla

The school is obliged to notify Tusla's Educational Welfare Services if a child is absent for 20 days or more, or where absences/patterns of absence give rise to concern. If a child is sick or is absent for another explained reason, no action is likely to be taken by Tusla. However, if there is a concern about a child's attendance at school or about the reasons given for absenteeism, families may be visited by an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to discuss the situation. Unexplained absences are of particular concern to the school and to Tusla.

The school is obliged to report regularly to Tusla regarding attendance. The report is generated by the school, based on the guidelines provided by Tusla.

Any child who has missed 20 days or more, or any children about whom there are absenteeism concerns, must be reported to Tusla in these periodic reports.

Tusla Child and Family Agency is also informed if a child is suspended for 6 days or more, or in the case of the expulsion of a child.

School Roles

The Board of Management acknowledges a collective responsibility for the promotion of attendance. The following outlines the roles and responsibilities of people within the school community regarding attendance:

Principal

The school Principal will provide leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance. It is the responsibility of the Principal to lead the development and implementation of this policy, under the guidance of the Board of Management. The Principal will undertake the following responsibilities in relation to this plan:

- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality among pupils, parents/guardians and staff
- Provide opportunities for staff to engage actively with the development and monitoring of the school's Attendance Strategy.
- Engage with parents/guardians regarding attendance concerns.
- Explore with parents/guardians how school can support attendance
- Meet with parents/guardians of chronic poor attenders
- Prepare a report on attendance for the Board of Management on a yearly basis, or as the need arises.
- Comply with the provisions of the Education Welfare Act
- Make periodic returns to Tusla and notify Tusla's Educational Welfare Services and the relevant EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance and ensure support for the work of the EWO with students who have chronic attendance difficulties.

Staff

All staff have input into the implementation of this attendance policy. It is the responsibility of teachers to:

- Use their own attendance and punctuality to lead by example

- 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 attendance and punctuality in their classrooms
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality – discuss with parents/guardians as required
- Class teachers have responsibility for: recording daily attendance accurately, inputting reasons of absenteeism (if a note is provided) on the Aladdin system, recording on Aladdin the time - if a pupil arrives late or is leaving early, and requesting parents/guardians explain absences on Aladdin.
- Class teachers have responsibility for: ensuring daily attendance is reviewed, informing the Principal of any concerns he/she may have regarding the attendance of any child in relation to absences/punctuality in line with school procedures, as set out below
- In the event of a class teacher's absence, the roll will be taken by the support teacher assigned to the class. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure the roll is up to date and taken on the first day they return to school.
- Alert relevant staff (i.e. Principal/Deputy Principal) if there are concerns about student absences, e.g. patterns of non attendance Monday/Friday, reaching 10/25/20 days of absence
- Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis

Parents/Guardians

The Board of Management acknowledges the important role of parents/guardians in the attendance of their children at school. In line with Tusla's guidelines for school (p.44), parents/guardians are expected to:

- 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.
- Record reason for child's absence on the Aladdin system or provide class teacher with an absence note
- Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason. If a child must be taken from class early, parents are responsible for informing the school in advance, via the Aladdin system. The time of departure and reasons must also be recorded on the system.
- Avoid taking their child on holidays during term time.

Partnership Arrangements

The Board of Management acknowledges the importance of partnership arrangements and a multi-disciplinary approach, where relevant, in supporting the attendance and punctuality of children at school. In relation to attendance, the school community may involve staff members, parents/guardians, students, other school, community groups and Tusla, among others.

Monitoring the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance

The Board of Management and the Principal will monitor the implementation of the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance on an ongoing basis by doing the following:

- Opportunities will be provided for staff to share experiences about how the strategy is working and to review progress towards attendance targets (in the form of monthly staff meetings)
- The Principal will update on attendance levels at each Board of Management meeting, with reference to the school's attendance targets.

Communication

This policy will be communicated to staff and the school community as appropriate and will be subjected to regular review.

Review Process

In accordance with the systematic cycle of review of policies adopted in St. Patrick's Primary School, it will be reviewed initially after one year and then every three years, unless there is a compelling reason to review it earlier.

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

Reviewed & Ratified by the Board of Management, St. Patrick's Primary School, Celbridge, Co. Kildare.

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Principal

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Chairperson

This statement was reviewed on _____ Date: ____/____/____