**ST. PATRICK’S SENIOR N.S.**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

# Introductory Statement

This policy was revised and updated by the school staff in March 2017 and February 2023. It will be presented to the Board of Management for ratification and will be circulated to parents.

# Rationale

This policy was drafted by the school to comply with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000 (Section 22).

The school further wishes to ensure that each child will get an opportunity to realise his/her potential and regular attendance at school is a prerequisite of this.

Regular attendance is recognised as a priority by the staff.

St. Patrick’s Senior NS. was allocated DEIS rural status in July 2022 and promoting good attendance is an important part of our DEIS action Plan. (refer to DEIS plan 22-25 for further details)

# Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

Our vision for St. Patrick’s Senior N.S. is that children will develop a sense of personal responsibility and an appreciation of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance in achieving their full potential as learners and individuals.

# Aims

1. To promote good attendance.
2. To establish behaviour that will serve children well in the future.
3. To ensure children do not become alienated from the Education System through poor attendance.
4. To have clear procedures in dealing with problems of poor attendance.
5. To develop an awareness among parents of the importance of regular attendance.

**Punctuality**

* School begins at 9.20 am
* All pupils and teachers are expected to be on time.

Promoting Punctuality:

The school will promote punctuality by:

* Informing parents on enrolment of school times, expectation of punctuality and attendance and the reasons for this.
* Reminding parents at the start of the school year of school times, expectation of punctuality and the importance of school attendance.
* Ensuring that school starts and finishes punctually.
* Varying the morning timetable occasionally to motivate pupils.
* Parents are asked to record details on Aladdin connect if a child has an appointment and needs to leave school early before the end of the school day. Parent/guardian must sign out the child in the Sign In/Sign Out book in the school’s office.

# Problems with Punctuality

* Where there is a problem with punctuality the teachers will keep a record of arrival times and dates on Aladdin: electronic on line system
* The school will contact parents/guardians in the event of pupils being consistently late.

**Recording and Reporting Attendance**

* Attendance and non-attendance is recorded on Aladdin (an electronic on line system for recording and monitoring attendance). The school attendance of individual pupils is recorded in Aladdin in the Leabhar Rolla (Roll Book) of each class on a daily basis. Class attendance is automatically recorded in the Leabhar Tinrimh (Attendance Book). The annual attendance of each individual pupil is automatically recorded in the Clár Leabhar (Register).
* Roll will be called at the same time each day, normally within the first hour after the commencement of the five hour forty minute day (Circular 33/2015)
* If a child is absent at the time of roll call he/she will be marked absent for the day.
* If a child arrives in after roll is called he/she must be signed in in the sign in/sign out book in the school office.
* If a child arrives late after attendance has been taken he/she will be marked as late and absent at the time of the roll call and the number of minutes late can then be recorded on the Aladdin system.
* In the event of a late arrival parents should notify the school on Aladdin connect.
* Parents should record pupil’s absence on Aladdin connect. These absence notes will be retained by the school on Aladdin.
* After 15 days the school will inform parents in writing of their child’s absence.
* Once a child has reached 20 days absences this will then be reported to Tusla (Child and Family Agency).
* In the event of a class teacher being absent the substitute teacher will inform the principal of the attendance and the principal will call the roll.
* In the event of the principal being absent the substitute teacher will inform the school secretary of the attendance for that day. The school secretary will then record the roll on Aladdin.

**Tusla**

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 Report Form which is completed on-line.

# Whole school strategies to promote attendance

* **General awareness raising and setting high expectations** e.g. discussion at parent-teacher meetings, highlight the importance at school enrolment meetings, positive affirmation when roll is being taken, records of attendance in student’s school reports, records of attendance in a student’s Education Passport.
* **Involving parents in high expectations** e.g. high levels of parental involvement in all aspects of school life, involving parents in decision making.
* **Providing support programmes** to enhance attendance e.g. art, music, drama and sporting activities, Green Schools initiatives, World book day, Grandparents Day, Maths for Fun, Wellbeing initiatives, SPHE programmes.
* **Reward Systems** e.g. Attendance certificates at end of school year.
* **Building community support** for attendance through links with other schools and community groups e.g. Drangan/Cloneen Community Playgroup, local secondary schools, local GAA club, Green Schools Programme, Clonmel Swimming Pool, local principal’s network to share practice experience, joint school holiday planning to support attendance from families with children attending different local schools etc
* **We promote a warm, open, happy environment**. It is important that teachers will display a considered understanding towards non-completion of homework. Non-completion of homework on a regular basis will be seen as a breach of our homework policy.

# Strategies in the event of non-attendance

* Working with groups or individuals who may need additional support
* Tailoring whole school approaches to group or individual needs
* Engaging in early dialogue with parents and students
* Using internal school processes to provide individualised support
* Using school led multi agency support processes
* Referral to Tusla’s Educational Welfare Services

**Re-engaging students**

* Make parents aware of their statutory duties re Education Welfare Act.
* We will communicate this each September and to new admissions.
* It is our policy not to set homework for a child who is absent.
* After 15 days we will inform parents in writing of their child’s absence. Once a child has reached 20 days absences this will then be reported to Tusla.
* In the event of prolonged unexplained absences the school may request a meeting with the parents of the child to try to identify and remove any barriers to attendance.

**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.

Procedures in relation to removal from register/transfer from another school

We are aware of procedure re transfer and removal from register, we follow directives.

In accordance with circular 33/2015

* Schools using an electronic system must ensure that it provides that a pupil’s name will be recorded as removed from the roll on the electronic system on the next school day following 20 consecutive absences.
* Schools are reminded of the requirement under the Education Welfare Act 2000 that they must also notify the Education Welfare Service of TUSLA when the aggregate number of school days on which a pupil is absent during a school year reaches 20 days.

# Roles and Responsibility

**School Principal**

* Provides leadership for the creation of a school ethos and climate that is supportive of high levels of engagement and attendance.
* Leads on the review and implementation of the school’s Attendance Strategy.
* Puts arrangements in place for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the school’s Attendance Strategy.
* Provides opportunities for staff to engage actively with the development and monitoring of the school’s Attendance Strategy.
* Initiates links with other schools and relevant bodies on school attendance issues.
* Notifies Tusla’s Educational Welfare Services and the relevant EWO of particular problems in relation to attendance.
* Furnishes pertinent attendance documentation to officers of relevant government departments.

**Teachers**

* 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 punctuality and attendance in their classrooms.
* To agree punctuality and attendance standards with students as part of classroom rules.
* Set example by their own punctuality.
* To ensure attendance data are recorded accurately and reviewed in line with school procedures.
* Alert relevant staff if there are concerns about student absences.
* Support the attendance plan for students who have difficulty in attending school on a regular basis.
* To support students on return when they have missed periods of schooling.

**Parents**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child who is attending a recognised school is at school on every day that the school is open unless there is a genuine reason not to attend (Section 17 of Education Welfare Act 2000)

* 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.
* Avoid taking their child out of class unless there is a serious reason.
* Parents are strongly discouraged from taking students on holidays during term time.
* Parents are required to notify school in writing on Aladdin connect of reason for all absences.

# Success Criteria

* Roll Book indicating high levels of attendance will show success of policy.
* Positive feedback from staff and parents.
* Reaching targets in DEIS plan

### **Timeframe for Implementation**

* The policy will be implemented on ratification by the Board of Management

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Patrick’s Senior N.S. on 7th March 2023.

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

Chairperson, Board of Management